

EXCERPTS FROM

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THE LINK

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"...ENQUIRE, AND MAKE SEARCH, AND ASK
DILIGENTLY; AND BEHOLD IF IT BE TRUTH, AND
THE THING CERTAIN." (Deut. 13:14)

Down through the centuries A.D. there have been differing lines of thought regarding the SECOND ADVENT OF CHRIST. In the main these can be summarized under three headings (admittedly with slight variations within each).

1. POSTMILLENNIALISM.

This interpretation maintains an ultimate triumph of the Gospel, resulting in a long period of spiritual prosperity. Not that every person will be regenerated, neither will sin be abolished; rather that evil in all its many forms will be very greatly reduced, and Christian principles will be the norm and not the exception. Great emphasis is placed upon the power of the Gospel. This GOLDEN AGE will be followed with the RETURN OF CHRIST, the FINAL JUDGMENT and the ETERNAL STATE.

2. PREMILLENNIALISM.

The underlying thought within this school is that the SECOND ADVENT will be preceded by a great falling away, times of dire trouble and distress, followed by the Lord's return. This will usher in a period of peace and righteousness, as Christ will reign over the earth in person, for one thousand years. Satan will be imprisoned, but sin will not have been eradicated, only restricted. This period will be followed by a GREAT REVOLT, then, the LAST JUDGMENT, followed by the ETERNAL STATE.

3. AMILLENNIALISM.

This is rather an obscure term, and to many, greatly misunderstood. Amillennialism is a spiritual interpretation. It also holds the view that the Book of the Revelation is for the people of God of all ages, that its message has reference to events which occurred in John's day but as it was intended for the Church the message is relevant to all generations; some parts being much more meaningful, obviously, to believers in certain areas of the world at certain periods in human history,

than others. Amillennialism holds the millennial age to be spiritual and the thousand years of Revelation chapter 20 to be symbolic, as indeed, is the major part of the Apocalypse. This indefinite period of time will be marked at its close by great apostasy, followed by the COMING OF CHRIST IN JUDGMENT, after which will be ushered in the ETERNAL STATE.

These are but sketchy outlines of historic schools of prophetic thought, and great men of God have been found in all three, but none would go as far as to say that there were no difficulties and that all points were clear. ALL the truth may not be found in any one of these interpretations, yet, much truth is found in each, and no one should form fixed ideas about such matters before making a thorough investigation, coming to the Word of God with an UNBIASED mind, not simply basing a theory on isolated verses of Scripture, but to view the matter in the light of the WHOLE OF SCRIPTURE.

Added to these three HISTORIC lines there crept in a fourth - DISPENSATIONALISM. In some respects this is much akin to Premillennialism. indeed many, in ignorance, would say that it was one and the same. This is far from the truth. All Dispensationalists are Premillennialists, but all Premillennialists certainly, are not Dispensationalists.

Dispensationalism is comparatively modern. It made tremendous inroads into Evangelicalism in the first half of the 19th Century through the influence of Edward Irving (founder of the Apostolic Church), and John Nelson Darby (founder of the Brethren movement).

There can be no doubt but that church set-up and prophecy was an obsession with these men. Of the early Brethren, it is stated by Neatby in his HISTORY OF THE PLYMOUTH BRETHREN, "The study of unfulfilled prophecy was a prominent feature of the movement from the first; or, perhaps it would be more correct to say that it was one of the main foundations of the whole system" (Page 12). "Brethrenism may even be held to derive its very existence, in part, from the new prophetic studies to which, the unsettlement of mens' minds, consequent on the long agony of the Napoleonic wars, gave rise". (Page 38)

It was at this period (1827) that the Aldbury Park Prophetic Conferences were established (the seat of Henry Drummond). Lady Powerscourt, too, commenced similar prophetic meetings at her home in County Wicklow. In the early days both Irving and Darby were supporters of these gatherings. Neatby records - "Darby often spoke for hours on end at these conferences; present also would be Wigram, Bellett, and the Irvingites," (Page 38-39). It is evident from a study of this, that here was the launching pad of Dispensationalism. But, was this the birth-place of this theory? Decidedly not!

In order to trace the ORIGIN of Dispensational Prophetic Outline one has to go back to the end of the 16th Century, to a Spanish Jesuit, FRANCESCO RIBERA. It was he who, with the assistance of Cardinal Bellarmine, changed the interpretation of both the Book of Daniel and of Revelation and brought into being a line of interpretation which has become known, theologically, as FUTURISM.

At this point it should also be mentioned that following on this work, at the very beginning of the 17th Century another Jesuit by the name of ALCAZAR set on foot another prophetic theory known as PRAETERISM. Its teaching is that all the events of Revelation - except the last two chapters - are past; that they are a description of events and of the church in the days of the Caesars, and all had been fulfilled with the fall of the Roman Empire.

These two Jesuits, Ribera and Alcazar, with their respective lines of prophetic interpretation were commissioned, with three or four other carefully selected supporters, to infiltrate the ranks of Christianity and spread these strange theories of Bible prophecy.

The great design behind all this was to divert the attention of Protestants from the dogmas and activities of Rome, because at this point (following the Reformation) Rome was openly spoken of as ANTICHRIST. Hence, her desire to propagate these teachings, (a) That the days of antichrist had long since passed, or, (b) That it was away in the future, and, in any case, only confined to a seven year period. Rome was not concerned which line of teaching took root so long as the stigma of ANTICHRIST was diverted

from her. It was a 'Counter Reformation' device to penetrate the Protestant churches: 'Conquer by Confusion' being the caption.

Praeterism gained a strong foothold in the great schools of learning, and in turn filtered into the modernistic sections of Christendom, whilst Futurism gained ground more amongst Evangelicals.

Later, toward the end of the 18th Century another Jesuit - MANUEL-DE-LACUNZA produced a large work entitled "The Coming of the Messiah in Glory and Majesty". There can be no doubt that this gave tremendous impetus to Futurism. It was written under the assumed name of BEN EZRA and was published in Spanish.

Edward Irving, upon discovering this work, had it translated into English. It had a wide circulation and was used extensively at the Aldbury Park conferences and became the basis of much which was to follow.

It was at this time (first half of the 19th Century), through the instrumentality of these two powerful personalities - Irving and Darby - that Dispensationalism began to get firmly entrenched. Voices were raised against this. Edward Henry Bickersteth issued the following stern warning»- "The variety of new systems of the Apocalypse is a serious evil and it is hoped that the present list of books may help to check this evil. Men of talent, imagination, and piety are in danger of forming to themselves a system of the Apocalypse without any careful study of even leading writers who have gone before them. With great ingenuity they turn the figures of the Book to their own views, and build up a beautiful theory; parts of which may indeed be true; but not having cautiously gone over the ground, nor duly considered the researches of their predecessors, they lose the full benefit which their ability and piety directed to the elucidation of this book, might have imparted. The warnings against false prophets (Matt.24:21-24) may teach both authors and readers the danger of false interpretation of prophecy calculated to deceive the very elect" (Bickersteth on The Prophecies Page 379).

However, such warnings as this and others, in no way put a rein on these men, many of whom by now had come to the conclusion that all Christendom was in error, and that to them had been revealed afresh, truth which had been lost since the days of the Apostles! "For them, essentially, the garnered experience of eighteen Christian centuries was as though it were not". (Neatby Page 3). Indeed, the claim was now being made that "Between the first and nineteenth centuries no Christian assembly had any status before God". Further: "The denial that any company of Christians meet in the name of the Lord except those that practice open ministry" (Page 201-202 - History of the Plymouth Brethren).

All this was followed, in the early part of the present century, by the publication of the Schofield Reference Bible, which was based upon Darby's outline. This has probably done more to popularize Dispensationalism than any other single agency. What are the main features of this school of thought? The following is a brief summary:

- (a) The departmentalizing of the Word of God.
- (b) Seven dispensations as set out by Dr. Schofield on page 5 of his reference Bible.
- (c) A sharp distinction between the Old Testament and New Testament, of Law and Grace.
- (d) A 'Parenthesis Church' which interrupts the fulfilment of the Kingdom promises to Israel.
- (e) An 'any moment secret rapture' followed by a seven year period (a most complicated series of events and judgments).
- (f) That the major part of the book of Revelation is only concerned with this minute part (seven years) of human history.
- (g) The re-establishing of the Jewish order.
- (h) Literally, Christ's reign on earth for one thousand years; an age which will not be sinless; nevertheless, evil will be restrained. Into this scene, saints who have been glorified, whose bodies

have put on IMMORTALITY and have been in heaven for at least seven years, will return to mingle with the MORTAL and unregenerate for that long period.

- (i) Following the reign of Christ which is to be both visible and personal in Jerusalem, comes the GREATEST REBELLION OF ALL HUMAN HISTORY prior to the FINAL JUDGMENT and setting up of the ETERNAL STATE.

Again, this is but a sketchy summary of this more modern school of thought, but being by far the most complicated, it has been given a little more detail. This latter, is a theory which has swept through Evangelicalism to an alarming degree over the past one hundred years, but, if carefully thought through, presents serious theological difficulties. Indeed, some of its aspects, if carried to their conclusion, constitute ANOTHER GOSPEL.

It is a scheme which has been thorough in its execution and has been successfully put across, and thousands have unwittingly accepted it, believed it, and preached it. Once a person has imbibed such an outline it becomes the very 'warp and woof' of their thinking. What is sadder still, fellow Christians who are caught up in this web, in the main, seem quite unwilling to examine both Biblical and Historical evidence, or to assess their personal belief and position.

Surely, the source of this line of interpretation alone, should alert the true people of God. "TAKE HEED THAT YE BE NOT DECEIVED" (Luke 21:8).

W. H. Molland

"An honest heart is the first quality the Lord predicated of the good-ground hearer, (Luke 8:15) ... There can be no advance made in our spiritual apprehension of the Truth until we are ready to submit our ideas and sentiments to the teaching of God's Word. While we cling to our preconceived opinions and sectarian partialities, instead of being ready to abandon all beliefs not clearly taught in Scripture neither praying or studying can profit the soul."

A. W. Pink

Note – At this point, the original 1983 Q2 Link contained five pages of illustrations and diagrams relating to the historical events and characters mentioned in the foregoing article. Owing to the quality and content of these, they have not been reproduced in this electronic edition.

"IT IS THE LAST TIME"

Chas. D. Alexander

Little children, it is the last time« and as ye have heard that antichrist shall come, even now are there many antichrists; whereby we know it is the last time.

1 John 2:18

Every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God: and this is that spirit of antichrist, whereof ye have heard that it should come, and even now already is in the world.

1 John 4:3

John's was the last apostolic voice to sound across the ages, and to him it was given, in virtue of his office, to warn the Church to the end of time, of the subtle dangers through which she must pass, and against which she must contend. Long after all other apostles had gone to their eternal reward, John still remained with the Church, and saw when a prisoner of Caesar on the convict isle of Patmos the apocalyptic visions which we know as the Book of Revelation.

Hear then the inspired John warning us of the unseen enemy who, with power and subtlety, cruelty and deception would seek to destroy the Church and her witness. Among the more obvious of those subtleties (in our view) would be the deception that only at the end of the ages, in the last fragment of time before the Lord's return, would Antichrist appear, a view which prevails amongst good evangelical people to this day. Despite the assurance of the apostle John that Antichrist was already in active manifestation in his (John's) day, several generations of the Lord's people in these late times have been persuaded, not only that Antichrist has not yet come, but that when he does appear the Church will no longer be on the earth!

Against this strange and delusive opinion, we must set the words of John quoted at the head of this study and add to them the words of Paul to Timothy, "The Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits and doctrines of devils" (1 Tim.4:1. cf 2 Tim. 3:1, and Hebrews 1: 2).

"The last days" are therefore the entire dispensation of the Gospel, which so far has lasted some 2,000 years, but (as we shall see) now shows signs well-nigh unmistakable, that time is rapidly running out.

We assert therefore, on the authority of Paul and John, that the "last days", or the "last time", is the gospel time, for what use would it be for the two great apostles to warn the Church of their own day, that Antichrist would not appear for another 2,000 years?

The identity of the Antichrist presents no difficulty to those who realise that THE LAST TIME mentioned by Paul and John, is the time of the gospel, which began with the Incarnation, the Crucifixion and the glorious Resurrection and exaltation of the Son of God, and which will end when He returns (as we pray earnestly that He may indeed "come quickly" - a petition which would have neither rhyme nor reason if the time of the Church on earth were not "the last time").

The antichristian warning would have no meaning if it related only to a fragment of time at the end of the ages. Long before Rome and its pope sat for the portrait of antichrist in the generations succeeding the age of the Fathers, there were already many antichrists. The pope undoubtedly became one of the most formidable of this brood, but the growth to maturity was slow and subtle, for which no doubt we can thank the Devil who at that stage of his career was scarcely troubled about the shortness of his time - as he now is, as we hope shortly to prove. The papal antichrist has without doubt lost a good deal of his power since the blow he received at the time of the Reformation, and we now find he is not alone, for the Protestant antichrist is in full cry. The denial of the Holy Scriptures, the fearful overturning of the Ten Commandments, and the threatened destruction of every vestige of the Christian faith - is a fearfully menacing

feature of the latter-day apostasy (of which more, presently).

Let us return briefly to a more comprehensive view of THE LAST TIME as disclosed in Scripture and observed in history. John tells us that the "last time" had already begun in his day. It is the time of the full manifestation of the purpose of God in the creation of the world, and it is called the Last Time, because there cannot be any 'time' after the Last Time. The tremendous event of the Incarnation, the atoning death and glorious resurrection and ascension of Christ, was a shattering blow to the usurpation of Satan. He knows he has but a limited time in which to exercise his crippled powers against the Kingdom of Christ. Since the resurrection and ascension of the Son of God to the right hand of power, Satan has launched the absolute maximum of his permitted power against Christ's kingdom of grace and truth, by creating a counterfeit Church and a counterfeit gospel. He has diversified his activities during the immense period of time since the resurrection of Christ (far longer than any previous dispensation), so that there are now many antichrists, "by which" as John reminds us, "we know that it is the last time." During this great stretch of time, Satan has employed a ceaseless succession of agents, adapting his tactics to the ever-changing scene of human history. Always his plan has been to deceive and destroy by creating a false Church, thus poisoning the true springs of divine truth.

For long he adopted the robe of bishopric, and claimed to be the true leader of the Church, while he manipulated Church history and practice, and dazzled generations of the Church's history by arraying himself in the earthly splendour, wealth, gorgeous robes and crowns, and repetitive devotions, such as the heathen have always loved. The history of the true Church - the persecuted, scattered people of God - has disclosed how consummate is the art of Satan in persuading the earthly minded multitudes that truth exists in gaudy colours, immense wealth and pretentious power. The worldly mind of the natural man loves to have it so, and as a consequence the true Church is despised.

John, the last New Testament writer, lived long enough to see the beginning of it, and in the Book of Revelation the Lord gave him a map of the inner history of the Church in her conflict with error and the black darkness of Satan's usurpation and cruelty, from the time of Patmos, to her glorious arrival in the paradise of God.

Satan has good cause to fear and to hate the last Book of the Bible, and has done his utmost to persuade the people of God that the Book of Revelation is not the Book of the Church at all, and that the events of the Book are confined to a very few years (seven at the outside) during which frightful troubles will arise on a worldwide scale, but will be over in a few short years. A far call is this from the Holy Spirit's warning to John at Patmos that the events of the Book were imminent - "Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein: for THE TIME IS AT HAND" - that is, it was about to begin, when John was on Patmos nigh upon 2,000 years ago (Rev.1:3).

The entire Book of Revelation is therefore the history of the Church but presented (as prophecy is so often characterised) in mysterious terms, in accordance with the Saviour's words, "I thank thee Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes. Even so Father, for so it seemed good in thy sight" (Matt.11:25-26).

The anti-christian subtlety of Satan has in these last days taken a new and ominous form. Are we now witnessing the onset of Satan's "little season" of final liberty which shall be the prelude to his own destruction and the end of the world? (Rev.20:3). We may not dogmatise, for it is given to no-one to pry so far into the divine secret. Yet so much is revealed as to raise the hopes and the expectancy of Christ's tried and troubled Church.

Hitherto, Satan, throughout the Christian era, has acted the part of a religious devil, clothing himself in ecclesiastical garments and with great subtlety steering thought away from the Bible to the attractive scene of religious pomp and circumstance. Something new is happening now before our eyes. The devil is throwing off all disguises and coming forth as the devil which he is,

as though he knows - as indeed he does know - that he has but a short time. He is no longer acting the part of a religious devil (except in a very minor degree). We behold him today throwing off all his ecclesiastical disguises, whether as Bishop, Pope, Biblical "scholar", or black-gowned nonconformist. He now emerges as an atheistic devil, breathing contempt not only on ecclesiastical pomp and ceremony, but of any pretence of belief in God.

His business now - knowing he has but a short time - is to come forth as an atheistic devil taking control of science, and culture, turning music and art, poetry and education, into one frightful maelstrom of iniquity, pollution, and of darkness impenetrable - in a last bid to destroy and discredit the divine image in man.

Antichrist, therefore is none other than the Old Serpent who deceived our first parents in the Garden, and who, as the Devil and Satan, the Adversary of God and Man, has from the beginning sought to destroy the work of God, by subtlety, by deceit, by lies, or by naked warfare against God and Man (as in the case of Job). His designation an Antichrist could only have been given after the Incarnation and the Crucifixion, because Christ was not fully manifest till then. That there are also 'many antichrists' means that Satan diversifies his warfare against the Church, as in the centuries immediately following the establishment of the Church, he sought to destroy the church by a variety of errors. When open persecution and martyrdom failed to prevent the increasing growth of the Church, men arose in century after century, out of the bosom of the Church, to draw disciples after themselves, and by diverse and strange doctrines to undermine the witness of the Church and destroy her unity. Thus it came about that Satan reinforced his own personal assault upon the Church by adding to bloodthirsty persecution an entire brood of his own devilish agents poisoning the doctrine of the Church by raising up deceived and deceiving men who drew disciples after themselves. Thus it came about that there were many antichrists as well as the chief and leader of the Satanic brood.

In age after age that assault has been maintained, constantly diversified to meet the changing conditions of

history, but always it has been countered, not by strength but by weakness, as the Lord has raised up devoted men who by the truth alone have defeated and turned aside the antichristian subtlety of Satan. The idea, propagated by earnest though mistaken men in these latter days, that a visible antichrist is due to appear who by his dazzling appearance - a real super-man! - will lead the nations after himself savours more of an utterly discreditable "science fiction" far more likely to divert the attention of simple-minded Christians from the real enemy - Satan - than a sober and restrained study of Church history. A recent example of the readiness of good people both to invent and to accept these sensations, is the emergence of an American author whose book (in which he received much help from a professional journalist) entitled "Late Great Planet Earth" has sold in millions and netted for the joint authors many millions of dollars. We do not begrudge these gentlemen their success, but merely mention the fact as a caution to wise and discerning Christians not to be carried away by dramatic and exciting prospects of doom. No doubt Satan, who is no fool, whatever else he may be, is not at all displeased that attention should be diverted from his real self and subtlety, by this periodic excitement of evangelical readership especially when the same thing has been done in print and pulpit since the beginning of last century - but the Christian public (like any other kind of public), has short memory and in these matters, never learns!

We return to a more sober appraisal of the true situation, to trace Antichrist's serpentine career in its four most significant phases down to the present day.

The incarnation of the Lord as the Babe of Bethlehem sent Satan and all his host reeling. The flight into Egypt, the baffling silence of the long years in Nazareth, the sudden emergence of John the Baptist followed by the appearance of God the Son, Jesus the Christ, at the Jordan, the three and a half years of mighty ministry, the closing in of the powers of darkness upon that solitary Figure in the last hours in Gethsemane, the arrest, the dilemma of the Roman governor and his wife, the Satanic urge among the priests of Israel to have done once and for all with this man - in all this we see the sovereign hand of God and His eternal wisdom and grace, using even the powers of darkness as He

works out the mystery of redemption. Redemption accomplished at the Cross opens the way for the worldwide triumph of the Kingdom of God. The baffled Satanic power tries in vain to destroy the infant Church with the sword of persecution. Always Satan is baffled and apparent success is turned to failure, as the subsequent history of the Church shows.

1. THE APOSTOLIC ERA

The four ages of the Church's conflict begin with the apostolic era, when the chief enemy is Jewry. This era ended with the destruction of the nation and the fall of the temple, and all Old Testament order. Paul warned in 2 Thess.2, of the speedy coming of "the Man of Sin - the Son of Perdition" and the destruction of the Jewish order paved the way for this apparition. Few if any of the apostles survived the disaster of the Roman war, the exception being the apostle John, the last inspired voice to sound through all the subsequent ages. To him, probably in A.D.96 while a prisoner of Rome on the convict isle of Patmos# off the coast of Asia Minor, the Lord bestowed that Book of Revelation which was designed to be the pilgrim plan for the Church during all the succeeding ages. The appalling error of modern times that this Book has no relevance except to some day yet future when its entire programme will be fulfilled in the brief period of seven years or less, during the absence in heaven of the Christian Church, and that during those seven years Antichrist would appear, is the incredible folly of good men who when it comes to the spirit of prophecy clutch only at shadows.

2. THE AGE OF THE FATHERS

The apostolic age melted into the Patristic Age, the age of the Church Fathers, from Polycarp (who was a companion of the apostle John) to Augustine 400 years later. During that period, Antichrist attacked every fundamental doctrine of the Christian Church, but God overruled all (as is His wont) for good, for out of that colossal struggle there emerged the full doctrine of the Holy Trinity. This, the theological definition of the Godhead, was the first great task and the triumph - of the Church. In Augustine's day, Rome fell to the barbarian Goths, themselves a heretical sect of the Church.

3. THE TYRANNY OF THE POPES.

The age which succeeded the Fathers is usually referred to as the Dark Ages because Christendom then was a medley of conflicting elements of Truth and Falsehood, of Death and Life. Again, it would be wrong for any to conclude that there was no light whatsoever during those 1,000 years, for God is never without His witnesses; and in that period there were bright and shining lights such as Bernard of Clairvaux, John Wycliffe, and many others. However, during that period the thrust of Satan is seen in the development of a new antichristian system within the Church itself, known as the Papacy - the reign of the Popes.

Ritual gradually unfolded itself, even in regions which never owned obedience to the Roman antichrist, for the Greek church maintained its independence of Rome during the centuries when the Eastern Emperors survived the Roman disaster. But the axis of Satan's usurpation was Rome, and there Satan by his subtlety had himself crowned king of kings and lord of lords. Antichrist triumphed, but not universally. During the long ages of the Papal usurpation, the Spirit of God entered into the hearts of a long succession of gracious men (and women), who, by their writings and preachings kept the true faith alive in the world. There were peoples like the Waldensian remnant, which in the mountain fastnesses of Europe kept the faith alive when all the world seemed to be under the heel of Antichrist. In the Roman dominion itself also, men arose in Europe who in century after century maintained the standard of faith. Movements of the Holy Spirit, specially in northern Europe, brought forth men and women, Beghards and Beguines, Lollards, and numerous others whom Church History has largely overlooked, who with a deep piety which puts much of our present-day evangelicalism to shame, maintained the faith and proclaimed Christ.

At last, when the almighty hand of the Lord had prepared the ground for a mighty deliverance, came Luther and the Reformation of which we evangelicals are the inheritors.

4. THE AGE OF REASON.

The Fourth (and we believe, the last) age of the Church is now upon us, and Antichrist is at this very moment throwing off all religious devices, coming forth as the naked devil that he is, for he knoweth that he hath but a short time.

We are living now in the days of the last apostasy. Antichrist has shed all his disguises and the churches are falling. The ancient Paganism which we thought had been buried for ever has risen from Its grave. Creeds have tumbled into insignificance. The sins of Sodom and Gomorrah are not only being openly practised but actually legislated for by nations where the gospel enjoyed its greatest triumphs. Britain has taken the lead in these sins. There is no retracing of steps. Like a maddened horse, western civilisation which sprang out of Christian teaching, has surrendered itself to the devil. It may soon be a crime to be a Christian - for it is certainly no crime any longer to be guilty of the foulest and most disgusting practices that ever dishonoured the name of Man. Antichrist has triumphed after all - but no! It is only that his end will be all the more sure. The Judge is at the gate. Look up ye saints of God! In an hour when the world thinketh not, He will come whose right it is, to judge the world and to exalt the saints. Satan is weaving his own final condemnation, while the saints of the Lord obey the call to steadfastness: "When these things begin to come to pass, then look up, for your redemption draweth nigh".

Jesus, the Saviour, reigns,
The God of truth and love
When he had purged our stains,
He took his seat above.

His kingdom cannot fail;
He rules o'er earth and heaven;
The keys of death and hell
Are to our Jesus given.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Please note that visiting Preachers and Special Meetings for this quarter are as follows:

Sundays

1st May..... Mr.J.Thackway from Devizes.
8th May..... Mr.M.Watts from Salisbury
26th June... Mr.H.Roberts from Penzance.

Thursdays

14th April (at 7.30 pm.) Mr.J.Roberts
General Secretary of THE LORD'S DAY OBSERVANCE
SOCIETY.

EDITORIAL

This time our magazine features a theme which [inevitably is perceived] to be controversial. This, however, is not our intention. It is for the provoking of thought, for there are a great many Christians today who know little, if anything, about the subject referred to; others hold to a given line of interpretation simply because they have had such presented to them (in isolation) from earliest days, and any deviation would be regarded as ill taught or even heretical. These are matters which are complex and involved, and need to be prayerfully studied and pondered, not argued over, nor used in a point-scoring contest, as it is feared has often been the case. Two books which would be helpful for further study are:

PROPHECY AND THE CHURCH by Oswald T. Allis
THE MOMENTOUS EVENT by W.J.Grier.

Both these can be obtained from the Book Room.

Editor (L.W.Gee)

"...The way of controversies is dusty, and contentious disputes raise this dust, and blow it most into their eyes that gallop fastest in it, so that they miss the truth, which humble souls find upon their knees at the throne of grace. When the apostles were quarrelling, then they got nothing from Christ but a chiding, Luke 22:14 &c; but when they were praying together earnestly, then he sent the Spirit to teach them, Acts 2. William Gurnall

"He that answereth a matter before he heareth it, it is a folly and a shame unto him" (Proverbs 18:13).