

therefore, before the Tribulation, for the Antichrist is the author of the time of trouble such as never has been and never will be again. Strange to say, these views, so novel, and confessedly without one single passage of Scripture to maintain them, have found acceptance amongst the largest part of the Anglo-Saxon Christians who are Pre-millennialists. Lately a great reaction has come. Brethren are seeing that the Coming, Appearing and Revelation of Christ are but different aspects of one event. It is fast coming to be recognized that the Turkish Empire must fall, so as to give an opportunity for the reforming of the old Roman Empire with its ten Confederate Kingdoms. It can scarcely be said to be questioned any longer, that the Jews must return to their own land in some considerable numbers and rebuild their Temple in disbelief of Christ. The most earnest Christians are intense in their conviction that the "Body" of Christ, now being formed, must be made up of representatives from every kingdom, tongue and tribe on earth, and therefore the whole world must be evangelized before the Lord can come. It is now conceded by many of the ablest men who have considered the Papacy as the Antichrist that there will be a final some one, who will fulfill, as no past Pope ever has done, all the terrible things said of the Antichrist. And so it is becoming possible to "watch" the course of events, so that when we see certain "things begin to come to pass" we can lift up our heads, "for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh." It can be seen at a glance that if no events are to precede the Coming, then we have no signs of the times, no means of learning the nearness of the Advent, no ground for watching—in fact no word of prophecy, shining in a dark place, unto which we do well to take heed in our hearts. But as a matter of fact those who deny the certainty of intervening events are most earnest in pointing out those things which do show that the Coming of the Lord draweth nigh.

"IN HIM WAS LIFE; AND THE LIFE WAS THE LIGHT OF MEN."

A. J. GORDON.

I.—*The light reveals our sins.* "All things that are reprov'd are made manifest by the light. For whatsoever doth make manifest is the light."

Now the great and principal need is that we should know ourselves. Evil thoughts and wrong motives do not show on a background of the same color. That is to say, one whose character is selfish will not be aware of his selfish motives; and one whose life is thoroughly worldly will not recognize his ungodly spirit. And so, until the light of the knowledge of the glory of God shines into men's hearts, it is quite useless to talk to them about the sin of unbelief. It seems like an idle tale to them, and they understand not what you say. "Unbelief," they say, "why I am not aware of any unbelief in my heart. I don't make any profession of religion to be sure. But then, I am not an opposer." And so you almost believe that not to deny Christ is to confess him. That is your dream, and one never knows that he has been dreaming till he wakes. Only when the daylight comes will the delusions of your night thoughts be revealed. So true is this principle, that the enemy makes special use of it in his tactics. For he always teaches men to call darkness light, so that they may not be alarmed. Did you ever know one to embrace any deadly error, that he did not at once begin to talk about the new light that had come to him. Spiritualism, rationalism, materialism, agnosticism, these are all gloried in as rays of new light that have burst upon the benighted world; when they are really only brilliant flashes of old Egyptian darkness. But they must be labeled as "new light" or else men would not touch them. "And no marvel," says the apostle, "for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light." He knows that if he came as an angel of night his shadow would frighten people, and so he changes his costume, and, like God

himself, clothes himself with light as with a garment. Jesus Christ is the true "angel standing in the sun" who alone casts no shadow—so holy and white and transparent is he, that his image is light and not darkness. And Satan takes on the disguise of Christ, and fills you with such thoughts about the superior light which you enjoy that you are quite insensible of his presence. Oh, if once your soul could be illuminated by the Spirit, how much you would see in yourself to weep over—your selfishness, your pride, your envy, your vanity, your unbelief. These things are in your heart, and you don't know it, and therefore you enjoy perfect self-satisfaction. Oh, if you could only see what opposition to God, what disobedience to Christ, what rebellion against God's will lurks in your heart you would be penitent instead of careless. I saw the other night a little box covered with that newly invented luminous paint, so that in total darkness I can discern the box as clear as day. And I said would that an angel could go into the hearts of my hearers, and touch their sins with some luminous substance that would make them stand out in conspicuous reality—reveal them in the darkness, and then I am sure that instead of saying "I am as good as others," they would cry out, "God be merciful to me a sinner."

And it is not the present sins and the surface sins alone that need to be revealed, but the sins of the past which have been covered up. They lie buried and under layer after layer of forgetfulness. We think that they are not there because we do not see them, but they will all be made manifest in the hour of the last judgment when, as Jesus says, the hidden things shall be brought to light, "For there is nothing covered that shall not be revealed; neither hidden which shall not be made manifest!" I speak thus because I believe that in this superficial and flippant age there is nothing so important as the knowledge of God and the knowledge of self that follows as a consequence. We live under the

government of a holy God. He requires a holy heart in us. It is not simply truth in our conduct, and truth in our business and truth in our creeds that he demands, but truth in the heart. "Thou requireth truth in the inner part and in the hidden part thou wilt make me to know wisdom." I think it all important to enforce this truth because in these days it is so well nigh impossible to get men to confess that they are sinners. They want to argue the question and palliate their faults. Do you think that this is really wrong and that there is any harm in this? Am I to blame for doing this and saying that? John Owen says, "If men's sins were to be written in visible letters, on their foreheads the streets would be deserted and the world would be a wilderness." But there is something worse than this which might happen and will happen to the unbeliever. "Thou Lord hast set my secret sins in the light of thy countenance."

II.—*The light reveals Christ himself.* Now when I have said all this I am well aware that the great end of preaching is not conviction but conversion. "The Son of man is not come to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved," says Christ. The gospel is not a *branding-iron* for burning the record of men's sins into their foreheads and so compelling them to stand as convicted culprits before the bar of God. And the minister who only accomplishes this has failed in his mission just as utterly as one who only covers up men's sins and hides them from observation. I am anxious to convince you of your sins only that you may have those sins blotted out and remembered no more against you forever. Indeed I do not want you to look at your sins and dwell upon them any longer than just to see them and forsake them. *For one look at sin take twenty looks at Christ, the sin-bearer and Saviour.*

Some who want to make thorough work of religion are inclined to linger in the shadows of repentance too long; they continue in the sorrow and

gloom of contrition till they are utterly wretched. *Now that is not right.* The only thing for us is to turn our back upon our sins as quick as we have been made sensible of them. It is said that when Alexander's favorite horse Bucephalus was brought to him one day, he was found to be so restive and wild that it was impossible to mount him. Alexander, after looking a moment, discovered the reason and, taking his steed by the bridle, he turned his head towards the sun and then he stood still as a rock. He had been frightened at his own shadow, and by turning him to the sun the shadow was thrown behind him. Who is there among us that walketh in darkness and hath no light; let him look unto "Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith." Fix your eye on him and all the shadows will fall behind you. For condemnation is the shadow of our soul that is turned away from Christ. "This is the condemnation that light is come into the world and men have loved darkness rather than light." Peace is the light of a soul which has turned its face towards Christ. "He that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life."

Are any of you walking in gloom and darkness and sorrow, notwithstanding you have owned and confessed Christ Jesus as your Saviour? It is your own shadow coming between yourself and Christ that has caused this darkness. "The face of the Lord is against them that do evil," but it is always turned in open blessed reconciliation towards those who believe and confess the Lord Jesus. It is not God's averted face that brings you into darkness, but your averted face. Turn your face to the sun and all will be light. Are any of you drawn to the earth by an inordinate desire after wealth or for enjoyment? And is covetousness throwing its dark shadow over your countenance, so that the image of the holy and self-denying Christ is obscured? Turn your face to the sun. Christ draws our affections to him, as the sun draws up the mists and vapors. He can dis-

enchant you from your idols. Is your heart darkened with the shadow of some secret enmity, so that you cannot forgive a wrong that has been done to you, and therefore are moping in gloom and dissatisfaction when you ought to be happy? Turn your face to the sun and this shadow of enmity will fall behind you. Hatred can no more exist in the light of Christ's countenance than mists can remain in the face of the sun.

Now the great open secret of religious light is in following the Lord Jesus. The Christian life is not a flight but a walk. Hence the scriptures are filled with exhortations in regard to the manner of our Christian walk. "Walk in the Spirit;" "Walk in love;" "Walk in the truth;" "Walk circumspectly;" "Walk as children of the light." But a walk can only be successful by taking step after step. That is, by doing duty after duty; performing service after service; exercising obedience after obedience. Hence Jesus says, "He that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life." Every step which we take after Christ is a step into the light. So that will be fulfilled which is written in the scriptures. "The path of the just is as a shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day." And yet how many just stand still and refuse to move because, as they say, they have not sufficient feeling on the subject to warrant their going on. We find some just standing still and pouring out their complaint thus:

"I cannot feel as once I felt,
And yet I know not why,
But 'tis the greatest grief of life
To feel all feeling die."

Now, if the one who is chiming this mournful strain would just press on in the way of God's commandments, doing every duty, obeying every command of the Lord he would soon find his feeling.

He that followeth me.—Get the eye off of self—Don't think about enjoying yourself, or enjoying your mind, or enjoying religion. Don't try to