

## OCCUPY TILL I COME 2

Were the Apostles thinking that period was from his death to his resurrection?

It is no answer to all this to tell us that it is impossible to carry out the principle of a literal interpretation, and that Christ was not a literal "door," nor a literal "branch," nor the bread in the sacrament His literal "body." I reply that when I speak of literal interpretation, I require no man to deny the use of *figurative* language. I fully admit that emblems, figures, and symbols are used in foretelling Messiah's glory, as well as in foretelling Messiah's sufferings. I do not believe that Jesus was a literal "root out of dry ground," or a literal "lamb," (Is 53). All I maintain is, that prophecies about Christ's coming and kingdom do foretell literal facts, as truly as the prophecy about Christ being numbered with the transgressors. All I say is, that prophecies about the Jews being gathered, will be as really and literally made good as those about the Jews being scattered.

It is no good argument to tell us that the principle of literal interpretation deprives the Church of the use and benefit of many parts of the Old Testament. I deny the justice of the charge altogether. I consider that all things written in the Prophets concerning the salvation of individual souls, may be used by Gentiles as freely as by Jews. The hearts of Jews and Gentiles are naturally just the same. The way to heaven is but one. Both Jews and Gentiles need justification, regeneration, sanctification. Whatever is written concerning such subjects, is just as much the property of the Gentile as the Jew. Moreover, I hold believing Israel to include the whole body of believers in Christ. I consider that believers now to be grafted into that "olive tree" and may take the comfort of every promise of pardon, comfort, and grace which is addressed to Abraham's seed. Such words I regard as the common portion of all believers. All I maintain is, that whenever God says He shall do or give certain things to national Israel and Jerusalem in *this world*, we ought entirely to believe that to be literal, national Israel and Jerusalem those things will be given and done.

It is no valid argument to say that many who think as I do about prophecy, have said and written very foolish things, and have often contradicted one another. All this may be very true, and yet the *principles* for which we contend may be scriptural, sound and correct. The infidel does not overturn the truth of Christianity, when he points to the existence of Antinomians, Jehovah Witnesses, Christian Scientists, Mormons, etc. The worldly man does not overturn the truth of real evangelical religion when he sneers at the differences of Calvinists and Arminians. Just in the same way one writer on prophecy may interpret Revelation or Daniel in one way, and another in another. One man may take on him to fix dates, and prove at last to be quite wrong; another may apply prophecies to living individuals, and prove utterly mistaken. But all these things do not affect the main question. They do not in the least prove that the advent of

Christ *before* the millennium is not a Scriptural truth, and that the principle of interpreting Old Testament prophecy literally is not a sound principle.”

This is Al Wagner, a minister of the APC, coming to you for the word of God and the testimony of the Lord Jesus Christ. My objective once again is to show you that the Bible is the word of God by the O. T. prophecies that have been fulfilled in the person of the Lord Jesus. Many interpreters unfortunately, though they exemplify a reverent spiritual tone and manifest a great deal practical teaching in many prophecies, allegorize and spiritualize references to the Kingdom of God on earth, where our Lord will come back to earth to rule from pole to pole and from sea to sea and where national Israel will be restored. This is the Kingdom that our Lord taught us to pray for in His teaching on prayer. *Thy kingdom come!* The Lord Jesus taught his disciples concerning this Kingdom in Lk 19:11-27 in the *Parable of the Pounds*.

At the beginning of His ministry the Lord Jesus preached, *Repent: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand*. The kingdom of heaven and the Kingdom of God are one and the same. Toward the close of His ministry, however, the Lord Jesus preached that the kingdom was not near. The Lord Jesus knew from the prophets that national Israel would reject their Messiah. Moses in Deut 31:27 said of Israel, *I know thy rebellion, and thy stiff neck: behold, while I am yet alive with you this day, ye have been rebellious against the LORD; and how much more after my death?* In the time of Samuel Israel when the LORD was their King, Israel demanded, *Make us a king to judge us like all the nations*, 1 Sam 8:5. In the latter part of that chapter Samuel told them what that king would be like, and it was not good. He would take their sons and make them his servants, his farmers, and his soldiers. He would make their daughters his handmaids. He would tax them and oppress them so that they would cry out to God, but He would not hear!

God in mercy would give them a good king in David, but even David was not good like God! Eventually even David's throne would be cast to the ground, Ps 89:38-52. The LORD said through Isaiah, *how is the faithful city become an harlot! Thy princes are rebellious, and companions of thieves; every one loveth gifts, they judge not the fatherless, neither do the cause of the widow come unto them*, Is 1:21,23. The LORD said, *I will overturn, overturn, overturn (that is the King and the Kingdom): and it shall be no more, until he come whose right it is; and I will give it him*, that is Christ. Ezek 21:27.

When the Messiah came, national Israel cried, *Crucify him, We will not have this man to reign over us*, Matt 27:22, Lk 19:14.

When the representatives of the nation met in the council and conspired to put him to death, Christ proclaimed, *The kingdom of God shall be taken from you and given to a nation bringing*

*forth the fruits thereof*, Matt 21:43. This statement shows two things. First, the kingdom of God was connected with Israel. Even when they desired an earthly king, he was to be a subordinate king to God. Gideon was offered the kingship, but refused it saying, *the LORD shall rule over you*, Judges 8:22,23. God, foreseeing that the nation of Israel would reject Him, made provision for it previously, thereby showing His foreknowledge, by giving specific directions, Deut 17:14-20. This king (a) would be one of God's choosing, (b) not a stranger, (c) was not to multiply horses for battle, nor wives, nor gold (d) was not to lead the people back to Egypt, but (e) was to *write a copy of this law and read it all the days of his life to the end that he may prolong his days in his kingdom in the midst of Israel*. Second, the kingdom of God was taken from national Israel and given to another nation. Who was this *nation* that was to *bring forth the fruits thereof*? Peter tells us in 1 Pet 2. The N. T. division of the church is *a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people*. To national Israel, the Messiah was *a stone of stumbling and a rock of offence*. Today this *holy nation* is made up mostly of Gentiles, with only a remnant of national Israelites, 1 Pet 2:1-10. Peter explains the N. T. division of the Church are *lively stones, built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ...Unto you he is precious*. May the Lord Jesus be precious to you, and not a stone of stumbling or a rock of offence! May it not be true of you that you *received not the love of the truth, that you might be saved*, 2 Thess 2:10.

So now toward the end of his ministry the Lord Jesus taught that the Kingdom was not near! The parables of the King's Son, Matt 22:1-14, and the Great Supper, Lk 14:15-24, were given shortly after Christ's statement that *the kingdom would be taken from national Israel*. These parables taught that (1) the Jewish nation was invited, but refused to attend the marriage and the supper, and therefore, was shut out (2) individual Jews and Gentiles were invited, but (3) false professors were also shut out.

The Parable of the Pounds taught, very forcefully, that the kingdom of God was not near. *A certain nobleman went into a far country to receive for himself a kingdom and to return*. This nobleman represents the Lord Jesus Christ. Like the nobleman, the Lord Jesus is gone into a far country to receive for himself a kingdom and then return. He told his disciples on the night he was betrayed, *If I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself*, Jn 14:3. He has not yet received the kingdom in possession, though He has it in promise.

Many are confused at this point. Has Christ not triumphed over death? Has he not ascended to the right hand of God? Has he not been *highly exalted and given a name which is above every name: that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth*, Phil 2:9,10? *Hath not God set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every*

*name the is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come, and hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be head over all things to the church, Eph 1:20-22?*

There is a present aspect of that kingdom now. He is king over the hearts of His believing people, and they are all his faithful subjects. That He has a controlling power over the world, as God, is without controversy. In that sense He is King of kings and Lord of lords. *By Him all things consist*, and nothing can happen without His permission. But His real, literal, visible, complete kingdom, promised to David, the Lord Christ has not yet received. To use the words of Heb 2:8, *We see not **yet** all things put under Him*. To use the words of Psalm 110:1, *He sits on the right hand of the Father **till** His enemies are made His footstool*.

*The devil is the prince of this world* during the present dispensation. (John 14:30, Eph 2:2) The vast majority of the inhabitants of the earth choose the things that please the devil far more than the things that please God. Little as they may think it, they are doing the devil's will, behaving as the devil's subjects and serving the devil far more than Christ. This is the actual condition of Christendom as well as of heathen countries. After 2000 years of Bible and Gospel preaching, there is not a nation, or a country, or a long established congregation, where the devil has not more subjects than Christ! Of course Satan can only do what God allows him to do! So fearfully true is it that the world is not yet the kingdom of Christ.

The Lord Jesus during the present period of time is like David between the time of His anointing and Saul's death. He has the promise of the kingdom, but He has not yet received the crown and throne. (1 Sam 22:1, 2)

He is followed by a few, and those often neither great nor wise, but they are a faithful people. They are persecuted by His enemies, and oftentimes driven into the wilderness, and yet His party is never quite destroyed. But He has none of the visible signs of the kingdom at present: no earthly glory, majesty, greatness, obedience. The vast majority of mankind see no beauty in Him. They will not have Him to reign over them. His people are not honored for their Master's sake. They walk the earth as princes in disguise. His kingdom is not yet come. His will is not yet done on earth, excepting by a little flock, and that imperfectly. It is not the day of *His power*. The Lord Jesus is biding His time, *waiting until his enemies are made His footstool*.

Reader, I entreat you to grasp firmly this truth, for truth I believe it to be. Great delusion abounds on the subject of Christ's kingdom. Take heed lest any man deceive you by purely traditional teachings about prophetic truth. *Hymns* are composed and sung which darken God's counsel on this subject by words without knowledge. *Texts* are wrested from their true meaning, and accommodated to the present order of things, which are not justly applicable to any but the period of the second advent. Beware of the mischievous infection of this habit of text-wresting. Beware of the sapping effect of beautiful poetry, in which unfulfilled promises of

glory are twisted and adapted to the present dispensation. Settle it down in your mind that Christ's kingdom is yet to come. His arrows are *not* yet sharp in the hearts of His enemies. The day of His power has *not* yet begun. He is gathering out a people to carry the cross and walk in His steps; but the time of His coronation has not yet arrived. But just as the Lord Jesus, like the nobleman, *went to receive a kingdom*, so, like the nobleman, the Lord Jesus intends one day to return.

The words of the Angels (Acts 1:11) shall have a complete fulfilment: This same Jesus which was taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen Him go into heaven." As His going away was a real literal going away, so His return shall be a real literal return. As He came personally the first time with a body, so He shall come personally the second time with a body. As He came visibly to this earth and visibly went away, so when He comes the second time He shall visibly return. And then, and not till then, the complete kingdom of Christ shall begin. He left His servants as "a nobleman," He returns to His servants as "a King."

*Then* He intends to cast out that old usurper the devil, to bind him for a thousand years, and strip him of his power. (Rev. xx. 1.)

*Then* He intends to make a restitution of the face of creation. (Acts iii. 21.) It shall be the world's jubilee day. Our earth shall at last bring forth *her* increase: the King shall at length have His own again. At last the ninety-seventh Psalm shall be fulfilled, and men shall say, "The Lord reigneth: let the earth rejoice!"

*Then* He intends to fulfil the prophecies of Enoch, John the Baptist, and St. Paul: "to execute judgment *upon* all the ungodly" inhabitants of Christendom— "to burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire,"—and "in flaming fire to take vengeance on them that know not God and obey not the Gospel." (Jude 15; Matt. iii 12; 2 Thess. i. 8.)

*Then* He intends to raise His dead saints and gather His living ones, to gather together the scattered tribes of Israel, and to set up an empire on earth in which every knee shall bow to Him, and every tongue confess that Christ is Lord.

When, how, where, in what manner, all these things shall be, we cannot say particularly: enough for us to know that *they shall be*. The Lord Jesus has undertaken to do them, and they shall be performed: the Lord Jesus waits for the time appointed by the Father, and then they shall all come to pass. As surely as He was born of a pure virgin, and lived on earth thirty three years as a servant, so surely He shall come with clouds in glory, and reign on the earth as a king.

Reader, I charge you to establish in your mind among the great verities of your religion, that Christ is one day to have a complete kingdom in this world,—that His kingdom is not yet set

up,—but that it will be set up in the day of His return. Know clearly whose kingdom it is now: not Christ's, but the usurper Satan's. Know clearly whose kingdom it is to be one day: not Satan the usurper's, but Jesus Christ's. Know clearly when the kingdom is to **change** hands, and the usurper to be cast out: when the Lord Jesus returns in person, and not before. Know clearly what the Lord Jesus is doing now: He is sitting at the right hand of the Father,—interceding as a high priest in the holy of holies for His people,—adding to their number such as shall be saved by the preaching of the Gospel,—and waiting till the appointed "day of His power," when He shall come forth to bless His people, and sit as a priest upon His throne. Know these things clearly, and you will do well.

Know these things clearly, and then *you will not cherish extravagant expectations* from any Church, minister, or religious machinery in this present dispensation: you **will** not marvel to see ministers and missionaries not converting all to whom they preach; you will not wonder to find that while some believe the Gospel, many believe not; you will not be depressed and cast down when you see the children of the world in every place many, and the children of God few. You will remember that "the days are evil," and that the time of general conversion is not yet arrived. You will thank God that any are converted at all, and that while the Gospel is hid to the wise and prudent, it is yet revealed to babes. Alas, for the man who expects a millennium before the Lord Jesus returns! How can this possibly be, if the world in the day of His coming is to be found as it was in the days of Noah and Lot? (Luke xviii. 26-30)

Know these things clearly, and then *you will not be **confounded** and surprised by **the** continuance of immense evils in **the** world*. Wars, and tumults, and oppression, and dishonesty, and selfishness, and covetousness, and superstition, and bad **government**, and abounding heresies, will not appear to you unaccountable. You will not sink down into a morbid, misanthropic condition of mind when you see laws, and reforms, and education, not making mankind perfect; you will not relapse into a state of apathy and **disgust** when you see Churches full of imperfections, and theologians making mistakes. You will say to yourself, "The time of Christ's power has not yet arrived. The devil is still working among his children, and sowing darkness and division broadcast among the saints: the true King is yet to come."

Know these things clearly, and then *you will see why God delays the final glory*, and allows things to go on as they do in this world. It is not that He is not able to prevent evil,—it is not that He is slack in the fulfilling of His promises,—but the Lord is taking out for Himself a people by the preaching of the Gospel. (Acts xvi. 14; 2 Peter iii. 9.) He is longsuffering to unconverted Christians. The Lord is not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance. Once let the number of the elect be gathered out of the world,—once let the last elect sinner be brought to repentance, and then the kingdom of Christ shall be set up, and the throne of grace exchanged for the throne of glory.

Know these things clearly, and then you will *work diligently to do good to souls*. The time is short. "The night is far spent: the day is at hand." The signs of the times call loudly for watchfulness, and speak with no uncertain voice. The Turkish empire is drying up; the Jews are cared for as they never have been for nineteen hundred years; the Gospel is being preached as a witness in almost every corner of the world. Surely if we would pluck a few more brands from the burning before it is too late, we must work hard and lose no time. We must preach,—we must warn,—we must exhort,—we must give money to religious societies,—we must spend and be spent far more than we have ever done yet.

Know these things clearly, and then *you will be often looking for the coming of the day of God*. You will regard the second advent as a glorious and comfortable truth, around which your best hopes will all **be** clustered. You will not merely think of Christ crucified, but you will think also of Christ coming again. You will long for the days of refreshing and the manifestation of the sons of God. (Acts iii. 19; Rom. viii. 19.) You will find peace in looking back to the cross, and you will find joyful hope in looking forward to the kingdom.

Once more, I repeat, know clearly Christ's present position. He is like one who is "gone into a far country to receive a kingdom, and then to return."

III. The third and last question I wish to consider, is this: *What is the present duty of all Christ's professing disciples?*

When I speak of present duty, I mean, of course, their duty between the period of Christ's first and second advent. And I find an answer in the words of the nobleman, in the parable, to his servants: he "delivered them ten pounds, and said unto them, Occupy till I come."

Reader, I know few words more searching and impressive than these four: "Occupy till I come." They are spoken to all who profess and call themselves Christians. They address the conscience of every one who has not renounced his baptism, and formally turned his back on Christianity. They ought to stir up all hearers of the Gospel to examine themselves whether they are in the faith, and to prove themselves. Listen to me for a few minutes, while I try to impress them on your attention. For your sake, remember, these words were written: "Occupy till I come."

The Lord Jesus bids you "*occupy*." By that He means that you are to be "a doer" in your Christianity, and not merely a hearer and professor. He wants His servants not only to receive His wages, and eat His bread, and dwell in His house, and belong to His family,—but also to do His work. You are to "let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works." (Matt. v.16.) Have you faith? It must not be a dead faith: it must "work by love." (Gal. v. 6.) Are you elect? You are elect unto "obedience." (1 Pet. i. 2.) Are you redeemed? You are redeemed that you may be "a **peculiar** people, zealous of good works." (Tit. ii. 14.) Do you love Christ? Prove the reality of your love by keeping Christ's commandments. (John xiv. 15.) Oh, reader, do

not forget this charge to "occupy!" Beware of an idle, talking, gossiping, sentimental, do-nothing religion. Think not because your doings cannot justify you, or put away one single sin, that therefore it matters not whether you do anything at all. Away with such a delusion! Cast it behind you as an **invention** of the devil. Think of the house built upon the sand, and its miserable end. (Matt. vii. 24-27.) As ever you would "make your calling and election sure," be a **doing** Christian.

But the Lord Jesus also bids you "*occupy your pound.*" By this He means that He has given each one of His people some opportunity of glorifying Him. He would have you understand that everyone has got his own sphere,—the poorest as well as the richest; that everyone has an open door before **him**, and may, if he will, show forth his Master's praise. Your bodily health and strength, your mental gifts and capacities, your money and your earthly possessions, your rank and position in life, your example and influence with others, your liberty to read the Bible and hear the Gospel, your plentiful supply of means of grace,—all these are your "pounds." All these are to be used and employed with a continual reference to the glory of Christ: all **these** are His gifts. "Of Him come riches and honour." (1 Chron. xxix. 12.) "His is the silver, and His the gold." (Hagg. ii. 8.) "His is your body, and His is your spirit." (1 Cor. vi. 20.) "He **appoints** your habitation: He gives you life and breath." (Acts xvii. 25, 26.) You are not your own: you are bought with a price. (1 Cor. vi. 20.) Surely it is no great matter if He bids you honour Him and serve Him with all that you have. Breathes there the man or woman among the readers of this **tract** that has received nothing at the Lord's hand! Not one, I am sure. Oh, see to it, that you pay out your Lord's money well and honestly! Take heed that you do not bury your pound!

But the Lord Jesus bids **you** also to "*occupy till He comes.*" By that He means that you are to do His work on earth, like one who **continually** looks for His return. You are to be like the faithful servant, who knows not what hour his master may come home, but keeps all things in readiness, and is always prepared. You are to be like one who knows that Christ's coming is the great reckoning day, and to be ready to render up your account at any moment. You are not to suppose that you have any freehold in this world, nor even a lease: the greatest and the richest of mankind is only God's tenant-at-will. You are not to neglect any social duty or relation of life because of the uncertainty of the Lord's return. You are to fill the station to which God has called you in a godly and Christian way; and you are to be ready to go from the place of business to meet Christ in the air, if the Lord shall think fit. You are to be like a man who never knows what a day might bring forth and, therefore, to put off nothing till a "convenient season." You are to rise and go forth in the **morning**, ready, if need be, to meet Christ at noon. You are to lie down in bed at night, ready, if need be, to be awakened by the midnight cry, "Behold the Bridegroom cometh!" You are to keep your **spiritual** accounts in a state of constant preparation, like one who never knows how soon they may be called for. You are to measure all



your ways by the measure of Christ's appearing, and to do nothing in which you would not like Jesus to find you engaged. This is to "occupy" till Jesus comes.

Think, reader, how *condemning* are these words to thousands of professing Christians! What an utter absence of preparation appears in their daily walk and conversation! How thoroughly unfit they are to meet Christ! They know nothing of occupying the gifts of God as loans for which they must give account. They show not the slightest desire to glorify Him with "body and spirit which are His." They give no sign of readiness for the second advent. Well says old Gurnal, "It may be written on the grave of every unconverted man, Here lies one who never did for God an hour's work." Who can wonder in a world like this, if a minister often cries to his congregation, "Ye must be born again:" "Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven." (John iii. 7; Matt. *xviii*. 3.)

Think *again*, how *arousing* these words ought to be to all who are rich in this world, but do not know how to spend their money rightly. Alas, there are many who live on as if Christ had never said anything about the difficulty of rich men being saved! They are rich towards their own pleasures, or their own tastes, or their own families, but not rich towards God! They live as if they would not have to give an account of their use of money; they *live* as if there was no reckoning day before the bar of Christ: they live as if Christ had never said, "It is more blessed to give than *to* receive." (Acts xx. 35.) "Sell that ye have, and give alms; provide yourselves bags which wax not old, a treasure in heaven that faileth not." (Luke xii. 33.) Oh, if this tract should by chance fall into the hands of such a one, I do beseech you consider your ways and be wise. Cease to be *content* with giving God's cause a few shillings, or an occasional guinea; give far more liberally than you have done yet: *give* hundreds where you now give tens; give thousands where you now give hundreds. Then, and not till then, I shall believe you are "occupying," as one who looks for Christ's return. Alas, for the covetousness and narrow-mindedness of the Church of these days! May the Lord open the eyes of rich Christians.

Think again, how *instructive* are these words to all who are troubled by doubts about mingling with the world, and taking part in its vain amusements. It is useless to tell us that races, and balls, and theatres, and operas, and cards, are not *forbidden* by name in Scripture. The question we should ask ourselves is simply this,— "Am I occupying, as one who looks for *Christ's* return, when I take part in these things? Should I like Jesus to return suddenly and find me on the race-course, or in the ball-room, or at the theatre, or at the card-table? Should I think I was in my right place, and where my Lord would have me to be?" Oh, dear reader, this is the true test by which to try all our daily occupations and employment of time! That *thing* which we would not do if we thought Jesus was coming tonight, that thing we ought not to do at all. That *place* to which we would not go if we thought Jesus was coming this day, that place we ought to avoid. That *company* in which we would not like Jesus to find us, in that company we ought never to

sit down. Oh, that **men** would live as in the sight of Christ! not as in the sight of man, or of the Church, or of ministers,—but as in the sight of Christ! This would be "occupying till He comes."

But think how *encouraging* are these words to all who seek first the kingdom of God; and love the Lord Christ in sincerity. What though the children of the world regard them as "righteous overmuch!" What though mistaken friends and relations tell them they pay too much attention to religion, and go too far! Those words, "Occupy till I come," are words which justify their conduct. They may well reply to their persecutors, "I am doing a great work, and I cannot come down: I am striving to live so as to be ready when the Lord comes, 'I must be about my Father's business.'"

Let me conclude this tract by a few words of general application.

First, let me draw from the whole subject a word of *solemn warning* for every one into whose hands this tract may fall. That warning is,—that there is a great change yet to come on this world, and a change we ought to keep constantly before our mind's eye.

That change is a change of MASTERS. That old rebel, the **devil**, and all his **adherents**, shall be cast down. The Lord Jesus, and all His saints, shall be exalted and raised to honour. "The kingdoms of this world" shall "become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ." (Rev. xi. 15.) That change is a change of *manners*. Sin shall no longer be made light of and palliated. Wickedness shall no longer go unpunished and unreprieved. Holiness shall become the general character of the inhabitants of the earth: "The new heaven and new earth" shall be the dwelling of "righteousness." (2 Pet. iii 13,)

That change is a change of *opinion*. There shall be no more Socinianism, or Deism, or Scepticism, or Infidelity. All nations shall do honour to the crucified Lamb of God: all men shall know **Him**, from the least to the greatest. "The earth shall be full of the knowledge of Him, as the waters cover the sea." (Isa. xi. 9.)

I say nothing as to the time when these things shall take place. I object, on principle, to all dogmatism about dates. All I insist upon is this,—that there is a great change before us all,—a change for the earth, a change for man, and above all, a change for the saints.

I accept the prediction that "*there is a great improvement and development of human nature yet to take place.*" I accept it with all my heart. But how and when **shall** it be brought about? Not by any system of education! Not by any legislation of politicians! Not by anything short of the appearing of the kingdom of Christ. Then, and then only, shall there be universal justice, universal knowledge, and universal peace.

I accept the common phrase of many, "*There is a good time coming.*" I accept it with all my heart. I do verily believe there shall one day be no more poverty, —no more oppression, —no more ignorance, —no more grinding competition, —no more covetousness. But when shall that good time come? Never,—never till the return of Jesus Christ at His second advent! And for whom shall that time be good? For none but those who know and love the Lord.

I accept the common phrase, "*There is a **man** coming who will set all right that is now wrong. We wait for the coming man.*" I accept it with all my heart. I do look for one who shall unravel the tangled skein of this world's affairs, and put everything in its right place. But who is the great physician for an old, diseased, worn-out world? It is the man Christ Jesus who is yet to return.

Oh, reader, let us realize this point! There is before us **all** a great change. Surely, when a man has notice to quit his present dwelling-place, he ought to make sure that he has before him another home.

(2) Next, let me draw from the whole subject a *solemn question* for all into whose hands this tract may fall. That question is simply this: ARE YOU READY FOR THE GREAT CHANGE? Are you ready for the coming and kingdom of Christ?

Remember, I do not ask what you think about controversial points in the subject of prophecy. I do not ask your opinion about preterism and futurism; I do not ask whether you think revelation fulfilled or unfulfilled,—or whether you consider the Man of Sin to be an individual,—or whether you hold prophetic days to be years. About all these points you and I may err, and yet be saved. The one point to which I want to fix you down is this, "Are you ready for the kingdom of Christ?"

It is useless to tell me, that, in asking this, I put before you too high a standard. It is vain to tell me that a man, may he be a very good man, and yet not be ready for the kingdom of Christ. I deny it altogether. I say that every justified and converted man is ready, and that if you are not ready, you are not a justified man. I say that the standard I put before you is nothing more than the New Testament standard, and that the Apostles would have doubted the truth of your religion if you were not looking and longing for the coming of the Lord. I say, above all, that the grand end of the Gospel is to prepare men to meet God. What has your Christianity **done** for you if it has not made you meet for the kingdom of Christ. Nothing: nothing! Nothing at all! Oh, that you may think on this matter, and never rest till you are ready to meet Christ!

(3) In the next place let me offer *an invitation* to all readers who do not feel ready for Christ's return. That invitation shall be short and simple. I beseech you to know your danger, and come to Christ without delay, that you may be pardoned, justified, and made ready for things to come. I entreat you this day to "flee from the wrath to come," to the hope set before you in the

Gospel. I pray you in Christ's stead, to lay down enmity and unbelief, and at once "to be reconciled to God." (2 Cor. v. 20.)

I tremble when I think of the privileges which surround you in this country, and of the peril in which you stand so long as you neglect them. I tremble when I think of the possibility of Christ coming again, and of your being found unpardoned and unconverted in the day of His return. Better a thousand times will be his lot who was born a heathen, and never heard the Gospel, than the lot of him who has been a member of a Church, but not a living member of Christ. Surely the time past may suffice you to have delayed and lingered about your soul. Awake this day! "Awake thou that sleepest, and Christ shall give thee light." (Eph. v. 14.)

Lay aside everything that stands between you and Christ. Cast away everything that draws you back, and prevents you feeling ready for the Lord's appearing. Find out the besetting sin that weighs you down, and tear it from your heart, however dear it may be. Cry mightily to the Lord Jesus to reveal Himself to your soul. Rest not till you have got a real, firm, and reasonable hope, and know that your feet are on the Rock of Ages: rest not till you can say, "The Lord may come; the earth may be shaken; the foundations of the round world may be overturned; but thank God I have got treasure in heaven, and an advocate with the Father, and I will not be afraid." Do this, and you shall have got something from reading a simple tract.

(4) Last of all, let me draw from the subject *an exhortation* to all who know Christ indeed, and love His appearing. That exhortation is simply this,—that you will strive more and more to be a "doing" Christian. (James i. 22.) Labour more and more to show forth the praises of Him who hath called you out of darkness into marvellous light; improve every talent which the Lord Jesus has committed to your charge to the setting forth of His glory; let your walk declare plainly that you seek a country; let your conformity to the mind of Christ be unquestionable and unmistakable. Let your holiness be a clear plain fact, which even the worst enemies of the Gospel cannot deny.

Above all, if you are a student of prophecy, I entreat you never to let it be said that prophetic study prevents practical diligence. If you do believe that the day is really approaching, then labour actively to provoke others unto love and good works; if you do believe that the night is far spent, be doubly diligent to cast off the works of darkness and put on the armour of light. Never was there a greater mistake than to fancy the doctrine of the personal return of Christ is calculated to paralyze Christian diligence. Surely there can be no greater spur to the servant's activity than the expectation of his master's speedy return.

This is the way to attain a *healthy* state of soul. There is nothing like the exercise of our graces for promoting our spiritual vigour. Alas, there are not a few of God's saints who complain that they want spiritual comfort in their religion, while the fault is altogether in themselves.

"Occupy," "Occupy," I would say to such persons. Lay yourselves out more heartily for the glory of God, and these uncomfortable feelings will soon vanish away.

This is the way to *do good* to the children of the world. Nothing, under God, has such an effect on unconverted people as the sight of a real, thorough-going live Christian. There are thousands who will not come to hear the Gospel, and do not know the meaning of justification by faith, who yet can understand an uncompromising, holy, consistent walk with God. "Occupy," "Occupy," I say again, if you want to do good.

This is the way to promote *meetness* for the inheritance of the saints in light. There will be no idleness in the kingdom of Christ: the saints and angels shall there wait on their Lord with unwearied *activity*, and serve Him day and night. It is a fine saying of Bernard, that Jacob *in* his vision saw some angels ascending, and some descending, but none standing still. "Occupy," "Occupy," I say again, if you would be thoroughly trained for your glorious home.

Oh, brethren believers, it would be well indeed if we did but see clearly how much it is for our interest and happiness to occupy every farthing of our Lord's money, —to live very near to God!

So living we shall find great joy in our work—great comfort in our trials—great doors of usefulness in the world—great consolation in our sicknesses—great hope in our death—leave great evidences behind us when we are buried—have great confidence in the day of *Christ's* return—and receive a great crown in the day of reward.