

IN THE LAST DAYS

Part 1 – The End of the World

‘What is the world coming to?’ say our elders with a sigh as they look around and see how much ‘society’ has deteriorated since their day. Well, the simple answer is, ‘It’s coming to an end.’ The world is coming to an end.

The End of the World

This is a phrase which is usually relegated to being part of a trite reply to those who have experienced some mishap: ‘Oh, don’t worry, it’s not the end of the world!’ But *it is* soon to be the end of the world. This world – that is, all things that pertain to the realm of time – is to be brought to an end by the coming again of the Lord Jesus Christ, the ushering in of the day of judgment and of eternity.

When he comes everything of this world will be burnt up with fire from heaven, yea, even the elements shall melt with fervent heat, 2 Peter 3:10-12. Nothing will remain but the great mass of humanity – every one who has ever lived – resurrected, souls reunited to their bodies, appearing before the Judge of all the earth, Rev. 20:11-15. And at last on that day every mind will be absolutely concentrated on this one stupendous fact: This is the day of judgement! The man sitting on the throne of judgment is Jesus Christ! And I know what is about to take place!

I read somewhere once that it has been estimated that over the history of mankind upwards of sixty billion – 60,000,000,000 – people have inhabited this planet, and *every one of them* will appear on that day – including the reader. And what is more, all their names are recorded in heaven: either on the front cover of a book in which is written everything they have ever done, said, thought, or intended to do, say or think; or their names will be found written in a book called ‘the Lamb’s book of life’, which book contains no record of their sins and iniquities, because the cover has been sprinkled with sanctifying, justifying, atoning, and cleansing blood: the blood of the Lamb of God.

Those whose names are found on the cover of their own books will then see them opened to be judged by those things written therein. And as 'there is none righteous, no, not one', and as 'all have sinned', then this judgment will be a straightforward declaration of guilt and condemnation by the Judge with an immediate dismissal into the place of punishment – the lake of fire. There will be no court case with defence lawyers, no mitigating circumstances considered – like 'learning difficulties', 'diminished responsibility', 'disadvantaged upbringing', and whatever else is used today to justify sin – and there will be no appeals; there *will* be some desperate pleadings, cp. Matt. 7:22, but all to no avail. No, the day of judgement for these is a day in which the Judge will announce his guilty verdict, and carry out the sentence.

Meanwhile those whose names are written in the Lamb's book of life will immediately be declared 'not guilty' – for the Judge, seeing the blood, passes over them, declaring to have no memory of their sins, Heb. 8:12 – and ushered into the presence of the glory of God, forever to be with the Lord.

All these things godless man rejects. Scoffers who walk after their own lusts are willingly ignorant of the end of the world – and all that pertains to it – and are quite happy to believe that time and the world will go on in perpetuity, 2 Peter 3:3-7. But who cares, and what does it matter what godless men think; these 'wicked' shall soon be cut off in their ignorance, pride, arrogance, folly and unbelief, Ps. 37:9-13, for the revealed word of God tells us that the end of the world is a sure occurrence, 2 Peter 3:10-12; and as much as the unbelievers ignore it, so the children of God look for it, hope, watch and long for it; as it is the day of their ultimate salvation – in the fulness of what that means.

Carnal religious men, also, in effect, disannul any real expectation of the end of the world – at least in their own life-time – as they concentrate day by day on 'the here and now': on eating and drinking; buying and selling; building and planting; marrying and being given in marriage, etc., on striving to make sure that all things are secure for their lives ahead and 'for generations to come'. But why shouldn't the end of the world happen upon this generation? Upon *our* generation? Why can't people conceive of the idea that the rising generation could be the last? Because although they may have a doctrinal assent to 'the end of the world', they in reality

love this world, desire to live long happy lives in it and desire also that their children be given the best possible start in life so that they too can prosper throughout their lives and, hopefully, into retirement.

But it is to be my contention in this article – and it is my expectation – that the end of the world will occur before my natural life is expected to end – and I am now in my early fifties – and that today's youth need not worry about pensions, etc., for it will be very surprising if they get to old age. And I will immediately give one of my reasons for saying this; which reason I believe the spiritual will not find unconvincing nor scripturally unjustifiable.

At the time of writing it is what the world recognises as the year 2013. But I am not persuaded from scripture that God counts it as 2013, but rather closer to the year 1984. Bear with me, please.

The scriptural account of the creation of the world – and therefore of the beginning of time – has been accurately dated – drawing a time-line using, among other things, the 'begats' of Genesis chapters 5 and 11 – to around 4,000 BC. Therefore – forgetting 'science falsely so called' – the world has been in existence for about 6,000 years. Now I believe that, although the six days of creation were six literal – 24-hour – days, they also point to the history of time in which God 'works' before 'resting'. We are told in Genesis 2:3 of all God's work, and nowhere in the account are we led to believe that after one day's rest he intended to start working again. Genesis 1:31-2:3 speaks of finality regarding the work of God; he was now at rest.

So we can see this creation week as a picture or type of the whole history of the world, of time; in that 'one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day', 2 Peter 3:8. Now although that is a phrase which in its context is not necessarily meant to be a literal statement of actual fact, yet it is such an unusual use of language, and is such a striking phrase, that we can justifiably refer to it as a relevant truth when seeking to understand how God – who inhabits eternity – views time.

Therefore I conclude that it is not unreasonable to assert – and that without doing despite to the scriptures – that time could very well be

destined to run for six thousand years before its end comes and the eternal 'day of rest' is ushered in. But if that is the case then how is it that we have come to 2013 and are still here? Because, as I said, I believe that we are closer to 1984 than 2013 for a counting of years, and therefore our continued existence is not surprising.

How have I come to this? The answer lies in how God reckons the counting of time. This year is counted as 'the year of our Lord – *Anno Domini* – 2013'. This is because the years have been counted from the coming of Jesus Christ into the world, that is from his *birth*. But now it is generally accepted that the Lord was actually born at around what we would call 4BC – possibly as early as 7BC, which would make 2013 nearer to 2017 or even later. But if that is the case then how can we get back to 1984 or thereabouts? The answer lies in Exodus 12:2, which reveals how God counts.

The killing of the Passover was to be for the children of Israel 'the beginning of months'; for it was to be the 'salvation' of the people of God, and the means by which they were released from bondage in Egypt. And, as far as God was concerned, this was a new thing and a new beginning for his people. It is therefore again not unreasonable to conclude that as the Passover was a figure of Christ and his death for the salvation of his people – a releasing them from the bondage of sin and from this world, and a bringing in of the new covenant in his blood – that God actually counts *Anno Domini* from the *death* of his Son and not from his birth. If that is the case then we must shorten *Anno Domini* by approximately thirty-three years – the generally expected duration of the life of Jesus on earth – making 2017 1984. Therefore the year two thousand is still another sixteen years away – in what we would call 2029.

I must stress though that all these dates are approximate, there can be a margin of error of a few years either way. Therefore I am not making a prediction that 'The World is Going to End in 2029!' like some deluded modern day false prophet; but what I am saying – and this I will go on to prove – is that if we simply examine the testimony of scripture regarding the end of all things we must come to the conclusion that the Lord's return, the end of the world, and the day of judgment is very near – literally; and 'the signs of the times' prove it.

Now it is these ‘signs’ which so many today fail to read, notice, or even look for – such is our unwillingness to have the end of the world come and spoil our plans for the future. But the signs of the times are given for us to discern the imminence of the end, and ultimately to cause us to look up when our redemption draweth nigh, Luke 21:25-28. And I believe that the day in which we live – like no other day before us – is the day when these words are at last relevant: their fulfilment being nigh. I wonder how many of my readers read *The Times* every day but miss ‘the signs of the times’ altogether. But where else do you think the newspaper got its title but from this phrase of the Lord Jesus?

Now it is because we have been given signs ‘of the times’ – a phrase which points to a period of time rather than to a ‘day and hour’ – that we cannot and should not predict a specific date for the end of the world, Matt. 24:36; nevertheless we can say with some certainty that because there is next to nothing left to be fulfilled of Christ’s teaching regarding the state of the world before he comes, then the end must indeed be nigh. Therefore where is our ‘holy conversation and godliness’, and our ‘looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God’? Indeed, are we looking at all for ‘new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness’, or are we more or less content and even desirous to remain dwelling in ‘the world that now is’? 2 Peter 3:11-13, Phil. 3:17-21.

These things ultimately separate the children of God from those whose affection is set on the things of the earth: the inmost desires regarding the coming of the Lord Jesus. Nevertheless it is to ‘the signs of the times’ of the Lord’s coming that we will now turn.

The Signs of the Times

In Matthew chapter 16 we read of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming to Jesus to tempt him in asking of him a sign from heaven. In reply Jesus rebuked them for their hypocrisy and for their blindness that, although they could discern the next day’s weather by reading the signs in the sky, yet they could not discern the signs of the times in which they lived.

Here they were, the great leaders of the Jewish religion: supposedly being the custodians of the law, the interpreters of the prophets, and the teachers of the people regarding the coming of Messiah; but when he came they missed the ‘signs’ of his coming altogether. And yet what signs

there had been, and how striking it is that none of them were revealed ‘in secret’, as the following examples show:

Firstly there was the strange affair of Zacharias the priest who went into the temple of the Lord to burn incense: ‘and the whole multitude of the people were praying without – outside – at the time of incense’. But when he came out after ‘so long’ a time – much longer than they’d expected – they rightly ‘perceived that he had seen a vision’; but he couldn’t speak of it. In fact he had been told that his long-barren wife was to bear a son who would ‘make ready a people prepared for the Lord’, the very fulfilment of Malachi 3:1 and Isaiah 40:3. And when it all came to pass then ‘fear came on all that dwelt round about them: and all these sayings were noised abroad throughout all the hill country of Judæa. And all they that heard them laid them up in their hearts, saying, What manner of child shall this be!’ To which Zacharias immediately replied: ‘Thou, child, shalt be called the prophet of the Highest: for thou shalt go before the face of the Lord to prepare his ways; to give knowledge of salvation unto his people by the remission of their sins...’, Luke 1. A clear and open ‘sign’.

And then there were the shepherds. The angel of the Lord and ‘a multitude of heavenly hosts’ had appeared to them in the open countryside to declare the birth of ‘a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord’ – no mysterious riddle to unravel in that statement. And after they had gone into Bethlehem and seen the babe, we read, ‘and when they had seen, they made known abroad the saying which was told them concerning the child’ – that he was the Christ – ‘and all they that heard it wondered at those things which were told them by the shepherds’, Luke 2:8-20.

Then some months – even up to two years – later, a star appeared in the heavens, and wise men came to Jerusalem to ask the then king: ‘Where is he that is born King of the Jews? For we have seen his star in the east, and are come to worship him’, Matt. 2:1-3. At which question not only was the king troubled, but ‘the whole of Jerusalem with him.’ Manifest signs.

Then there were the striking conversations the twelve year old Jesus had had with the doctors – presumably the doctors of the law: eminent men – in the temple itself at Jerusalem: ‘And all that heard him were astonished at his understanding and answers’; not least his ‘parents’ when he spoke to them of ‘being about my Father’s business’, Luke 2:41-51. But then,

verse 52, nearly two decades must pass wherein ‘Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man.’

Until the time came for John the Baptist’s ‘showing unto Israel’, who appeared in the wilderness ‘preaching the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins. And there went out unto him all the land of Judea, and they of Jerusalem’ and heard him declare himself to be the voice of one crying in the wilderness who was come to prepare the way of the Lord. Therefore he said that there was one mightier than he who would come after him who, though he, John, baptised them with water, this other one would baptise them with the Holy Ghost, Mark 1. Strange message. Amazing and openly witnessed sign. But not so strange for those who had heard Zacharias’ words at the birth of his son thirty years earlier. If ever there had been a living ‘sign’ – even from his birth – it was John.

And presently there was the fulfilment of John’s testimony: Jesus’ appearing and baptism, with the testimony from heaven: ‘Thou art my beloved Son; in thee I am well pleased’; not to mention ‘the Holy Ghost descending in a bodily shape like a dove upon him’, Luke 3:21,22. And what about John’s testimony of the Person of him of whom he spoke: ‘Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world... and I bare record that this is the Son of God’, John 1:29-34. Again, all these things were done, and unequivocal testimony was given, in the open and clearly seen by all those who, like Simeon and Anna before them, ‘waited for the consolation of Israel’.

Signs? Well, just read Matthew’s gospel, even up until Jesus’ rebuke regarding ‘the signs of the times’; only the blind, or, rather, ‘a wicked and adulterous generation’ could fail to see them. And then read John’s gospel which used the actual word ‘signs’ in relation to Jesus’ appearing, miracles and doctrine: ‘this beginning of [lit.] signs did Jesus in Cana of Galilee, and manifested forth his glory; and his disciples believed on him’, John 2:11, 4:54; ‘And many other signs truly did Jesus...’ John 20:30.

Now, as there were so many signs that accompanied Jesus’ first coming, we must not be surprised to discover that there will be many to herald his Second. Indeed, there are to be many signs – there *are* many signs *in our day* – which point to his coming again. But are we to be as blind to these signs as the religious hypocrites were to the former signs? Apparently we

are. For if you start discerning the present signs of the Lord Jesus' imminent coming, and then seek to point them out to most professing Christians, you are likely to get an incredulous rebuff – 'Well, that's *your* opinion.' No, it's the signs of the times! And, by the way, they play out one of the signs themselves: they slumber and sleep; have no oil in their vessels with their lamps, and are too occupied with 'the future' on earth to be bothered to hear what you have to say – or, rather, what the Lord Jesus had to say. But his coming will take them unawares, cp. Luke 21:29-36, because, ultimately, they love this world, though they have an outward religious lifestyle and some sort of profession of the name of 'the Lord': just as those blind to the first signs had.

Nevertheless it is clear that the Lord Jesus taught his disciples to look for the signs of his coming. And, yes, he confirmed to them that there would be an 'end of the world'; for in explaining to them the parable of the sower he had said, 'the harvest is the end of the world', cp. Matt. 13:37-50. Therefore when he was asked by his disciples regarding 'the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world', he didn't rebuke them for their fanciful notions, but immediately answered, confirming and commending their soberness of thought: 'Take heed that no man deceive you', Matt. 24:3,4; cp. also verses 5,11.

'Take heed that no man deceive you'

Therefore we can see straightaway that the whole question of the end of the world can be subject to deceitful and false teaching. But the Lord Jesus, who is 'the truth', dismisses any doubts as to what the accumulating signs will be by teaching his disciples what to look for before 'the end shall come': notice in verses 6-14 the phrases, 'but the end is not yet... these are the beginning of sorrows... he that shall endure unto the end... and then shall the end come.'

So Jesus is saying that from then on – from the time of his first coming until his second – there will be stages passed through which will be signs to the spiritual – cp. 1 Cor. 2:14,15 – that the end is getting ever nearer. At the same time the unspiritual will rise up – although religious and even professing Christians – to deceive many with their false prophecy and teaching regarding the end times (or with their lack of teaching regarding the end at all). This of course has been fulfilled to such a degree that there is now an abundance of differing interpretations regarding the whole

subject of Christ's second coming and the end of the world – all supposedly gleaned from scripture – and if one were to be aware of but half of them one must suspect that there is a great deal of falsehood and deception in it all.

Now it is not my intention to look into the various schools of thought regarding these things, but just to try and bring forward something of what the Lord Jesus and his apostles taught without any preconceived ideas of what they must have 'meant'; and if we do that then we will each be able to examine 'what we think' by what the scriptures actually teach. And then, if the Lord opens our understanding to understand the scriptures, we will come into some appreciation of what the truth is.

If we look at Christ's answer to his disciples' queries as recorded in Matthew 24 verses 5 to 14 we will get some clear signs which are to be seen. Just read these verses through and see if you recognise in the world today anything of what the Saviour is speaking about.

Firstly he says, 'For many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ; and shall deceive many', verse 5. Jesus says that many who come in his name – in Christ's name – are deceivers. Therefore many 'Christian' teachers and preachers are false. Is this a teaching which is consistent with other scriptures and with the history of the new covenant age? It certainly is. If you read through the New Testament you will find many warnings regarding 'false prophets', 'deceitful workers', 'false brethren', and 'Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven'; though they'd prophesied in his name. It is a sobering fact that the man who stands in your pulpit next Sunday morning is likely a false prophet and therefore unregenerate – *and you are commanded to test that assertion for yourself and beware of him*, Matt. 7:15, 1 John 4:1.

And what of these who say, 'I am Christ'? what do they mean by that? Well, 'Christ' means 'anointed'; a Christ is an anointed one. How many 'anointed ones' have risen up in the world and in the church – especially in the last two hundred years or so? Countless. Some say they are 'anointed' to preach, but are not, for Jesus only is, Luke 4:18. Others say they have had a vision or revelation from God, but have been proved false because they speak error and do not preach 'the doctrine of Christ', 2 John 9,10. Some say they have seen visions of angels, or of Jesus, but whose

‘revelations’ and subsequent teachings have been at variance with what the Saviour himself taught.

And then there are those who have called men unto themselves ‘in the desert’, or ‘in the secret chambers’: i.e. apart from the rest: in communes, or perhaps in secret or closed societies where only ‘the chosen ones’ or the ‘initiates’ gather to learn ‘the secret doctrine’. These false Christs might also have attracted their followers with ‘great signs and wonders’, such great works and words apparently so similar to Christ’s doctrine and teaching – with pretty similar affects in those who hear – that even the very elect are in danger of being drawn in and deceived. But the true Christ says, ‘go not forth’ unto them and ‘believe them not, Matt. 24:24-26.

Again, many have come into or out from the midst of the professing church with doctrines which, upon honest interpretation of scripture, are shown to have no foundation in the apostles’ doctrine. Men have risen up to be some great one in the church – in Christ’s name – which have drawn men away after them, and away from the singleness which is in Christ. How many sects, churches and denominations have appeared which in some point or another have deviated from the one true gospel; from the narrow way; from the way of the cross; from the way of faith, into works, or law and bondage, into cunningly devised fables and the traditions of men? Many. Therefore the developers of these sects and propounders of these doctrines who come in the name of Christ must be false.

And how ‘many’ are led astray by it all! Said Jesus, ‘and shall deceive many’. Just look at the most popular types of churches today. In some places and under certain ministries literally hundreds, or even thousands of people gather. And it is more or less a universal verity that the most popular churches in any given town are the modern evangelical type – the bright and breezy, praise and worship type; with their modern Bibles – each one ‘corruptible seed’ – slick contemporary ministries, and plenty going on to feed the flesh; but if you examine the doctrine taught in these places – if any doctrine is taught – you will soon find a great departure from the doctrine of Christ: Arminianism in one form or another underpins them all.

Witness the charismatics, and the faith healers; move to the beat of the bands, the music groups and the modern worship songs: all fleshly religion and very popular with the 'many'. Observe the adherents to programmes like the *Alpha Course*, and just see how wayward these places are in their doctrine. But all in the name of Jesus! Unconvinced? When the *Alpha Course* first came out its own newspaper blatantly and repeatedly described *Alpha* as 'Fun and unthreatening, just like our Lord himself! The question doesn't really need asking: Which Lord? 1 Cor. 8:5.

But then there is another type of ministry to be wary of. The apostle John warns of those who, although they may come preaching many things which seem to be broadly in accordance with the truth of the gospel: using many scriptural words and phrases; nevertheless they very subtly *leave out* vital truths in their preaching. In 2 John 7 we read that 'many deceivers are entered into the world, who *confess not* that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh. This is a deceiver and an antichrist.' Then there are those who '*abide not* in the doctrine of Christ', verse 9; and who '*bring not* this doctrine', verse 10. See how subtle these things are? It's not what these people say as such, it's what they *don't* say. These ministers' failure to declare the whole of the doctrine is then called by John 'evil deeds'; so '...receive them not...' commands the apostle.

Just to be clear: there are many preachers who say many things in the name of Jesus, expounding the scriptures seemingly thoroughly, and even systematically, and yet all the while are imperceptibly side-stepping 'the doctrine of Christ'. Just go down to your local church, chapel or fellowship and sit under its ministry for the next six months and see if it be not so. (No, don't; I would spare you that.)

In this category also can be included specialist 'ministries' – groups or organisations which have been formed to propagate certain aspects of biblical truth – like Creationist ministries, or Bible Societies, for example; who, although professedly Bible-believing – and even AV-upholding – concentrate so much on their chosen topic that their preaching of the gospel leaves much to be desired; they 'bring not' the doctrine of Christ.

The Lord Jesus didn't begin his reply to his disciples' questions, then, in an arbitrary manner; immediately he said, "Take heed that no man deceive

you. For many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ; and shall deceive many.' And it has come to pass; and the many do not take heed.

Signs aplenty

Secondly, the Lord teaches that before his coming again, 'ye shall hear of wars and rumours of wars', verse 6. That is, there will be actual wars, and you will hear of the threat of wars. One of the great ploys of power seekers is to create circumstances in which the masses either fear war unless drastic measures are taken – usually involving the surrender of sovereignty or 'liberties': a rumour of war; or have actually manipulated wars into being so that a new 'order' can arise out of the devastation to secure 'lasting peace' – the old order necessarily being swept away forever.

Of course we are well aware of the history of this world over the last two hundred years or so to see the fulfilment of this sign. It is interesting also to note that, although the Lord Jesus specifically uses the word 'war', which literally means, 'much destruction', modern man – inspired no doubt by the prince of the power of the air, who hates the word of God and the words God uses – has substituted that word with many similes: so now we hear of 'hostilities', 'troubles', 'conflicts', 'campaigns', etc.; but call them what you will, they are still what Jesus called them: 'wars', and they each fulfil his words.

I once heard someone say that there had been only one day in the whole of the Twentieth Century in which there had not been at least one war going on somewhere in the world. Nevertheless 'see that ye be not troubled: for all these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet come.' No, nation must rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. As long as there are men in the world who lust after power, or for an overturning of the established order – whether they be known to the general population or not – there will always be a stirring up of strife: agitation; whether it be locally, regionally, or even at times internationally.

Then Jesus teaches that the world will also experience natural troubles as well as manmade ones: 'and there shall be famines and pestilences, and earthquakes, in divers places', verse 7. But wait, are famines and pestilences natural occurrences? What is a famine? It is lack of food. But is there not enough food in the world to feed everyone? Apparently there

is. I once heard that Britain scrapes eighty million tons of food off its collective dinner plates every year. No, famines are man made; droughts, which can cause famines, are sent by God.

But as Jesus' words are first and foremost spiritual then famines must be seen in the sense of famines 'of hearing the words of the Lord', Amos 8:11. The Lord seems rarely to be speaking in our day; there are many Bibles, much religion, some preaching, an abundance of worship and fellowship, but little hearing. Perhaps never more than in our day is it true that the vast majority of professing Christendom has a name to live, but is dead. It is the worst famine God can send upon a people – silence from heaven. But then what can you expect when countless men who preach today are unspent, and therefore only preach – at best – the killing letter? Therefore almost to a man they preach only what they have learned from 'flesh and blood' and not that which they have received by revelation from the Father in heaven. So it is no wonder that true hearing has all but vanished, cp. Rom. 10:13-17.

And what of pestilences. This is a word which can be used to apply to many things. Pestilences can be plagues which God sends, or diseases which arise from man's sinful activity – or as deliberately introduced into a population. And then what a pestilence false doctrine is! What spiritual destruction 'another gospel', 'another Jesus' and 'another spirit' brings. Nevertheless they must all come about before the end. But although there be earthquakes in divers places – again prevalent in our day – the end is not yet, for 'all these are [just] the beginning of sorrows', Matt. 24:8.

Next the Lord Jesus turns his attention away from signs which can, on one level, be seen in the world at large, to speak of the signs that will be seen specifically among his disciples. Verse nine reads, 'Then shall they deliver you up to be afflicted, and shall kill you: and ye shall be hated of all nations for my name's sake.' The former part of this verse has seen its fulfilment throughout the gospel age: 'you', God's people, have consistently been delivered up, afflicted and killed by the world, especially when overtly godless regimes have held sway – or when the Lord has been doing a mighty work in the earth. Just read Foxe's 'Book of Martyrs'. Consider the plight of the reformers and of their brethren and sisters in the reigns of Henry VIII and Mary Tudor – that is, around the time of

William Tyndale. How many of the Lord's people have been put to death under fundamentalist religious governments and secular dictatorships.

But the second part of the verse, 'and ye shall be hated of all nations for my name's sake', has not come to pass as yet. Why? Simply because there are still many countries in this world where God's people are not officially hated by the authorities, and are not as yet being delivered up and afflicted. The time *will* come when the true children of God will find safety nowhere on earth – among all nations – but the time is not yet. That will be a time when 'all nations' will be under some sort of world governing authority, it is forming as we speak, but is not yet fully realised. But more on that later.

It will be, of course, the true children of God that will be hated of all nations, not the false professors. When the time of great world-wide tribulation comes – when all nations will be officially anti-Christian – 'then shall many' who now profess Christ 'be offended, and shall betray one another' into the hands of the authorities, 'and shall hate one another', verse 10. After all, Jesus did say 'that whosoever killeth you will think that *he doeth God service*', John 16:1-3; so these are 'Christian' persecutors not secular: but 'twas ever thus; for Jesus' greatest enemies were 'the elders and chief priests and scribes', cp. Matt. 16:21.

But these worldly conforming 'Christians' will not have ceased their profession of Christ; no, they will have imbibed a very much watered down version of his teachings which will have removed all semblance of dogmatism, doctrinal absolutes, or any hint of 'fundamentalism' or 'bigotry'. Why? Because 'many false prophets shall rise' – many: a great hoard of them in the churches – 'and shall deceive many', verse 11. Many for the many. These false prophets will, by their teaching, adapt the Christian profession into something which can still be practised 'in the modern world' without any danger of persecution, affliction or hatred from 'all nations'. I wonder if the reader can see the seeds of this in the churches already – more than seeds though.

The result of all this – for be assured that the many will, and do, quite happily imbibe this new worldly form of Christianity – will be that 'the love of many shall wax cold', verse 12. The love of many regarding what shall wax cold? Regarding the love of the truth; the love of God's revealed

word; the love of the gospel of Christ; the love of the doctrine of the gospel; the love of the strait gate and the narrow way – the way of the cross; the love of the brethren. And what does the Lord Jesus call all this? ‘Iniquity’, verse 12. To hear false prophets, to embrace and believe error, to imbibe the spirit of worldliness in the churches, to save one’s skin under the threat of persecution, to shun the ‘suffering the loss of all things for Christ’, to turn the back on the truth of the gospel, to avoid the offence of the cross, to love and keep one’s life, is called by Christ ‘abounding iniquity’. And it is ‘because iniquity shall abound’ that ‘the love of many shall wax cold’, and by implication die altogether. Yes, many apostates are to be revealed in the last days.

But not all will turn away, for Jesus says that some will endure unto the end, verse 13: ‘But he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved.’ Notice here how the Saviour does not say ‘but *they* that shall endure’, but ‘*he*’ that shall endure. In comparison to the many who will fall away, only a small minority – mere individuals – will endure; that is, they will endure unto death – probably at the hands of their persecutors – or they will endure right the way through the great tribulation until the coming of the Lord – ‘those that are alive and remain’. Again, this is a common thread of teaching running throughout the whole of scripture: ‘few there be that find it.’

One final thing must be fulfilled before the end. Says Jesus, ‘And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come’, verse 14 – again, the end *shall* come. As long as there are elect souls being born into this world who are to be called by the grace of God under the sound of the gospel, the world will continue. But as soon as the gospel of the kingdom, as preached, has reached the last soul to be brought to a knowledge of salvation under its sound *then* the end will come. In fact, when all other signs have been fulfilled, and can be readily observed by the spiritual, this one last sign will still be working until that very last soul is called, leaving no other reason for the world and time to continue. Contrary to popular belief this world does only continue for the calling of the elect. Yes, as with the world, worldly Christians will have their eyes fixed on the future in time, and on all the things they are about to do, enjoy or achieve for themselves or ‘for the Lord’, until the day arrives wherein somewhere, in some quiet

corner, the Spirit of God applies the salvation of Christ to the very last soul for whom Christ died, and then the world will end.

Now, reader, can you see why *everything* outside a seeking the salvation of your soul is ultimately *vanity and lies* ?

Part 2 – One mind

Conspiracy

I want now to introduce a thought which will prepare us for the sign to be revealed in the next section, after which we will conclude with looking at what the world will be like immediately before, and even on the very day of Christ's coming.

How often do we hear of 'conspiracy theories'? Conspiracy theories abound regarding evil men in high places plotting to take over the government of a nation, or even of the world, and subjugate the general population under their rule. Of course the deniers of these always refer to them in such a way as to make us think they are far fetched: warranting only our disbelief or amusement.

But can these things be dismissed so lightly when not only history – 'Remember, remember the Fifth of November'? – but the scriptures themselves are so full of acts of conspiracy? I believe that if we look at the basic principles, and investigate the origins and ultimate purpose of conspiracy, then we will suddenly become very sober minded as we begin to see the world in which we live, and the events which shape it, in rather a different light. We introduce this thought in preparation for looking at Revelation 17; where we read that before the end of time all the world will come into 'one mind'; therefore there must be movers 'behind the scenes' working hard to bring this about – in other words, someone has to be conspiring.

To conspire is to plot and plan, and as it is usually done in a malign rather than a benign way, then the conspiracy is usually carried out *against* something or someone. To conspire is to work in secret, covertly: it carries with it the desire to undermine, defame, weaken, overcome or destroy a

person, authority, or longstanding system. Conspirators seek to deceive, confuse and divide so that they can conquer.

But from whence cometh conspiracy – ultimately? Well, the author of conspiracy is Satan himself: Jesus said, ‘I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven’, Luke 10:18. And why had Satan been cast out from heaven? Because he had conspired in his heart to be as God: ‘I will ascend... I will ascend... I will be like the most High’, Isa. 14:13-15. But he was cast out. And then what did he do? He conspired to destroy God’s newly formed creation and to cause the fall of those created in His image: ‘Yea, hath God said?... Ye shall not surely die... Ye shall be as gods’, Gen. 3:1-4. Conspiracy? Yes indeed: ‘the serpent was subtle.’

There you have the origin of all real conspiracy. And do you think it ended there? Consider the following words from the gospels: ‘And the Pharisees went forth, and straightway took counsel with the Herodians against [Jesus], how they might destroy him.’ ‘Then from that day forth they took counsel together for to put him to death.’ ‘Then entered Satan into Judas surnamed Iscariot, being of the number of the twelve. And he went his way, and communed with the chief priests and captains, how he might betray him unto them. And they were glad, and covenanted to give him money. And he promised, and sought opportunity to betray him unto them in the absence of the multitude’, Luke 22:3-6. That last passage especially is riddled with the language of conspiracy.

We are told of the evil one that he is called ‘the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that *now worketh in* the children of disobedience’, Eph. 2:2. If you are not a child of God then you are indwelt – possessed – of Satan who constantly works in you – conspires – to cause you to rebel against God, his commandments, his will, his Son, and his gospel. He beguiles you, seduces you, and tempts you away from the truth, the light and the right way with the sole purpose of destroying your soul. Just look again at Genesis chapter 3. He is doing nothing different in you than he was doing to Eve in the Garden. All he did was to point her to the fruit of the forbidden tree – a picture of this world. After she and her husband had fallen her own testimony to the LORD God was that ‘the serpent beguiled me’: lit. ‘caused me to forget’. The serpent conspired against the woman, and therefore against the man, and therefore against God. And this, in essence, remains all of his work. Indeed, ‘Woe to the inhabitants of the

earth and of the sea! For the devil is come down unto you, having great wrath, because he knoweth that he hath but a short time', Rev. 12; and he is deceiving the nations to this day, Rev. 20:8.

Some might protest here that Satan doesn't possess people today. Surely that is an idea from the dark ages of superstition (Jesus' day?); surely we live in more enlightened times now. And yet the opposite is true. We live in as dark a day as has ever been, and all man's 'enlightenment' is just so much benightedness. Why? Because the outworking of the conspiracy is in full flow now. Paul says that 'the god of this world [Satan] hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them', 2 Cor. 4:4. These are 'the lost', but if you ask them regarding their state they would deny that designation of themselves. Why? Because they are being conspired against; are having 'the wool pulled over their eyes' regarding the truth of their actual state. Jesus referred to such as 'fools and blind'. Duped.

As to my assertion that people are possessed today: this would be revealed just as much as it was in Jesus' and the apostles' day if there were men with something like the same calling and the same Spirit as they, preaching the true gospel with the same power; then you'd soon see who were truly 'the Lord's', and who were possessed with demons – and that would be just inside the churches, let alone without!

Now do you still smile 'knowingly' at the idea of conspiracy? With this in mind we can now consider one of the major fruits of Satan's conspiracy against man in the last days.

Revelation 17

In Revelation 17 there is a sign of the end of the world which is appearing even as we speak, and is, I believe, one of the key signs in these last days: that of the rise of 'one mind' upon the earth.

But first we must look at the immediate context. In this chapter we read of a woman: she is described as 'the great whore that sitteth on many waters: with whom the kings of the earth have committed fornication, and the inhabitants of the earth have been made drunk with the wine of her fornication.' And why not? For the word 'whore' – or harlot – just means

‘fornicator’; one to whom others ‘sell’ themselves – the word in the original being that from which we get the word ‘pornography.’ As to the ‘many waters’, they are the inhabitants of the earth: ‘peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues’, verse 15.

Therefore this great whore can be seen as the seducing spirit of the world, which extends its range over the whole earth, and exercises its intoxicating power upon all the peoples of the earth, both high and low, rich and poor. Whether they be kings or commoners, all sell themselves to her charms, and none of us can escape our natural desire to do so. And what is so seductive to the inhabitants of the world? Why, Lust. And Pride. The apostle John wrote elsewhere of ‘all that is in the world’; and what is that? ‘The lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life’, 1 John 2:15. This is what the great whore stirs up and encourages in the hearts of men and they are quite happy to make themselves drunk with the wine of this, her fornication.

What is it to be drunk? It is to lose control of the natural senses, of reason and soberness: it is to be intoxicated to such a degree that one cannot think properly, is not too alert, and so is in danger of being overcome or even arrested by one stronger than he, and in more control of their reasoning. Thus to be drunk – to be seduced – is to be in danger from the wiles of an enemy, or from an unexpected calamity. We have seen that in the Garden of Eden Eve was ‘beguiled’ by the serpent to forget the commandment of God. In Luke 21:34 Jesus warns his disciples to take heed to themselves, ‘lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting, and drunkenness, and the cares of this life’, so that the end of the world would not come upon them unawares.

Surfeiting and drunkenness here is descriptive of indulgence; or, to use a crude modern expression, of being absolutely stuffed. And what is the worldling but one who is filled to the brim with the love of this world? Consider how the average worldling spends most of his ‘spare time’. Who do you think is behind today’s mass entertainment and instant access technological gadgetry? It certainly is not the Spirit of God. The root of the word entertain is ‘to hold’, and certainly when one is being entertained, through whatever medium, one is definitely being held captive in the moment. Likewise amusement – which is a key element of entertainment – means to be diverted from serious consideration: to stare almost

mindlessly so as to be transfixed upon whatever the trifle might be. I think of this word as meaning 'without thinking' – a-muse: not musing. But whatever the true definition, the result of entertainment and amusement is that the person is not thinking of the things of God, of eternity, of the judgment to come, of the safety of his own soul. Therefore we can tell who the author of these seductions is.

Yes, this is the work of the great seductress: the great whore: to fill the soul with so much of this world that it has no time to consider or prepare for its latter end. Remember the words of the Lord Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount: 'Ye cannot serve God and mammon.' Mammon is everything that this woman will dangle before your lusts and desires to keep you from serving the true and living God, and from redeeming the time in these evil days: and you will serve mammon totally and absolutely, because its wine is addictive: captivating you completely. Thus a description of the world, the way of the world, and the things of the world.

But don't think that it is just the common people who fornicate with the great whore; no, it is 'the kings of the earth' as well. These are 'the powers that be'; not only what we would today call monarchs, but any rulers or leaders; anyone in a position of authority who has spared no cost to get where they are. In other words, the ambitious – sometimes fiendishly so, the career-minded, successful ladder-climbers who must attain to the top positions, for power's sake, for notoriety or for wealth. And how else can one attain to such heights in the world except one 'sells his soul to the devil', so to speak. These are the 'kings' of the earth. The here-and-now is everything to them and they will do 'whatever it takes' to get to the top.

[Now if the reader has the inclination, the time and the interest to investigate what is loosely called the 'New Age' movement, secret societies and the doctrines of Gnosticism, then you will soon realise how totally and pervasively 'the prince of the power of the air' – the spirit of the great whore – has been working in the children of disobedience at the very highest levels of our society; and that for many years now: in politics, business, education, the media, publishing, and even in the 'entertainment' industry. And it will not take you long to realise that 'all is not what it seems' in the world.]

Which brings us back to the woman. Next she is seen as one that sits 'upon a scarlet coloured beast'; which beast is 'full of names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns. And the woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet colour, and decked with gold and precious stones and pearls, having a golden cup in her hand full of abominations and filthiness of her fornication: and upon her forehead was a name written, MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH.'

We are then told that she is 'drunken with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus.' Therefore as well as being the seducing spirit of the world and the lover of kings and nations, she is portrayed as delighting specifically in the bloodletting of the saints. And no wonder, for only they resist her charms and denounce her way of life.

Of the beast, upon which the woman sits, we are told that he 'was, and is not [at the time of the vision], and yet is [to come].' Thus he has had power, had no power at that moment, but was due to have power again. We read that he 'shall ascend out of the bottomless pit'. In chapter 20 we discover Satan bound for a thousand years as a result of Christ's work upon the cross and the bringing in of the gospel – 'and is not' – being at the end of that period 'loosed out of his prison.' After that he has power – 'and yet is' – to 'go out to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth... to gather them together to battle... and compass the camp of the saints.' Back in chapter 17 we see that the beast is given his power by 'ten kings, which have received no kingdom as yet; but receive power as kings one hour with the beast.' And then we read that 'these have one mind, and shall give their power and strength unto the beast.' Then these, just as Satan in chapter 20, 'shall make war with the Lamb.'

Among other details in this chapter we see that the great whore will finally be opposed and made desolate, and naked, and be destroyed by the ten kings – the ten horns – before they in turn finally give their kingdom unto the beast, with whom they will reign for 'one hour'; i.e. for a relatively short period of time, Rev. 17:11-13.

Now what is the meaning and conclusion of these things? It is this. Towards the end of the world there will be what these people will like to

call a 'new world order' appearing on the earth, encapsulating a spirit which reigns over and in all the 'kings' of the earth, generating 'one mind' among them, and consequently among all those over whom they reign: all except those whose names were written in the book of life from the foundation of the world. This new order will have replaced the old one – although godless in itself, pictured here as the great whore – being even more evil in its nature; for it will be the time when 'that Wicked is revealed... whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs [yes, he has signs, too] and lying wonders, and with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish', cp. 2 Thes. 2:7-12. And, of course, this will be the time of 'great tribulation' for the people of God – yea, 'such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be', Matt. 24:21 – for the whole earth will be ruled by this Wicked.

This again answers to the loosening of Satan in Revelation 20 to 'go out to deceive' all the nations on the face of the earth and 'to gather them together to battle' against the saints and their beloved city – Jerusalem which is above: the church; for you must remember that this is spiritual warfare not carnal. For all this to happen the hand of the Lord will have been apparently 'taken out of the way', as if loosening his restraint on wickedness, to carry out his ultimate purpose of 'destroying the Wicked with the brightness of his coming, consuming him with the spirit of his mouth, and devouring him and them with fire from God out of heaven.'

Thus the testimony of scripture is that 'in one day' Babylon will fall, Rev. 18:8, and in one hour of that 'day' will that Wicked reign in and with 'the kings of the earth', before all will be brought to a quick and sudden destruction by the coming of the Saviour at the end of the world. I would encourage the reader to look up the references and seek a knowledge of these truths for yourself. I don't pretend to have full light on all these apocalyptic writings, I am just trying to extricate the principles from them in order that we might be sober and ready for when these things begin to come about: well, they are happening already, if only we would see it. 2 Thessalonians 2, Revelation 17-21.

One Mind

But we must investigate this 'one mind' spoken of in Revelation 17:13, for this we can easily observe forming in the world today. Obviously this

'mind' is a totally godless mind, one that is opposed completely to the true and living God and his truth, opposed to his Christ and to his people, opposed to the very principle of righteousness, and to the glorious gospel of the blessed God. That is the fundamental nature of this 'one mind'.

Of course this mind has always been abroad in this world, but just before the end it will be total, and rampant, and settled among the inhabitants of the earth, and therefore there will be nowhere on earth where it is not openly manifest. Furthermore, this mind will be 'official' policy: it will be written into 'the constitution of the world'. At the head of this new world mentality will be one who has risen up to oversee, administer, and indeed, have the overarching power and authority to execute the dictates and consequences of this 'one mind'; well, the people of the earth and their 'kings' will demand it, for it is the way they already think, and so he will have the world-wide liberty to do it. In the light of this, of course, we can see how there will be no safe haven on earth for those who possess 'the mind of Christ'. Here will have come to pass Jesus' words, '...ye shall be hated of *all nations* for my name's sake.'

But how can such a mind be brought about over the inhabitants of all the earth? Surely with all our different cultures and languages it would be impossible to cause everyone to think in the same way! Well, let's think about it. Consider the heart of man. Regardless of culture or language the universal verity is that 'the heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked', there being 'none' by nature 'righteous, no, not one'. Furthermore, the prince of the power of the air is said to work *in* the children of disobedience: they being all those outside of Christ; therefore it is not difficult to see how the whole of humanity alive on earth at the end of the world could be manipulated into having 'one mind' regarding wickedness. Anyone today with the eyes to see, and with the spirit of discernment, will be able to conclude with me that this time is indeed upon us, and that, therefore, at long last, the end of all things is at hand.

So how is a 'one world-wide mind' being brought about? Well, first of all we must remember that it is primarily the 'ten kings of the earth' which possess this one mind. In other words the unity of wicked thought is first and foremost to be manifest among the rulers of the earth. But these rulers are not primarily our elected politicians, but are the real powerbrokers behind the scenes who finance and support, organise and

control those who rise to power in the nations. This is why I have written elsewhere against 'democracy' as a valid and 'free' system by which nations should be governed – because the people you vote for are not the real 'powers that be', they only give the impression of ruling.

So to rise to any great position in 'the world', any candidate must conform to 'the way of the world' and its mentality, and therefore to the dictates and agenda of those powers. In the very last days you will have to imbibe this 'one mind' of absolute antichrist which will infuse all the kings' way of thinking, and there have been systems and organisations set up from centuries past which, under Satan, have been working to this end.

In the last two hundred years or so there have been many singular events and changes in societies which have left them irreversibly different from what they were before. Consider the various Revolutions which occurred in America, France, and Russia; think of all the monarchies which fell, and were replaced with 'democracies'. And consider how the world was irreparably changed during the Twentieth Century by two World Wars. Consider things like the advent of the theory of Evolution as an explanation of how mankind came into being; and how that the Scriptures were grievously undermined in the 1880s with the appearance of the Revised Version based upon a corrupted Greek text of the New Testament.

If these two latter events in themselves do not declare, 'Yea, hath God said?' then I don't know what does. What an undermining of the word of God they have been. But these have all just been the fruits of the wicked plans of men behind the scenes. For it is a fact that since the Eighteenth Century there has been a concerted effort to bring back to the fore the Ancient Mystery Religion of Babylon – where all the earth was of one tongue. And what was that religion? Man becoming God! 'Let us build us a city and a tower, whose top may reach unto heaven; and let us make us a name...', Gen. 11:1-9.

The underlying doctrine of this religion was, and still is, Gnosticism: the gaining of secret 'knowledge': that knowledge which, for the few who receive it, promises to bring Wisdom and Power. But it is all based on an inversion of the truth as it was from the beginning of the creation; for it teaches that the serpent actually set man free in the Garden of Eden, in his saying that he could eat the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and

evil: after all, they say, weren't their eyes opened? But set free from what? They teach that Jehovah had *bound* man in ignorance with His prohibition, but that Lucifer, the bringer of light – hence 'the enlightened or illumined ones', as they like to call themselves – liberated man from the 'evil' clutches of Jehovah, enabling him to walk in the light of understanding of good and evil. And from this early liberation man began his 'evolution' upwards to eventual godhood – 'Ye shall be as gods.' Therefore according to Gnostic doctrine it is Lucifer who is to be worshipped as the great liberator of mankind, not Jehovah. And as for the Lord Jesus in their doctrine; well, as man was now illuminated, and well on his way to achieving godhood because of his breaking the shackles of Jehovah's commandment, then Jesus' coming to 'save' was pointless, for ultimately 'man shall not surely die'!

Hence the new age belief in things like reincarnation, karma, and nirvana; embracing pantheism, evolution and humanism. All these beliefs disregard the true and living God, raise man up as being his own god, and introduce the ancient hope that man will eventually ascend to immortality – without the need of Christ's salvation. Well, if man is becoming God then the whole idea of him being a sinner and in sin is completely rejected.

As I said before, this mentality can clearly be seen to have permeated every strand of society today: so from banking to government; business and the media; from the education system to the whole spectrum of the entertainment industry; the occultic doctrines of Gnosticism have infused the way of thinking.

Now if there are some readers who think this is all a bit far fetched, and hard to believe, then let us just ponder again the scriptural teaching regarding the binding and loosening of Satan as recorded in Revelation 20. We have seen that Satan was 'bound' at the cross: 'how can one enter into a strong man's house, and spoil his goods, except he first bind the strong man? and then he will spoil his goods', Matt. 12:29. He was bound for 'a thousand years' in the bottomless pit, shut up, and with a seal set upon him: 'now is the prince of this world cast out', John 12:31. The result of this was that 'he should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years should be fulfilled'; after which he would be loosed a little season.

Now the reason for his binding is significant. When bound he could not deceive the nations – the world. Christ’s death upon the cross, with his subsequent resurrection, ascension, seating on the right hand of God, and sending of the Spirit on the day of Pentecost, was a great binding of Satan so that the gospel of salvation by Jesus Christ alone – and by faith in his blood – could be preached ‘in all the world’ – among all nations. Before the coming of Christ, God had only had dealings with Israel: they were his Old Covenant people, but now in the gospel New Covenant dispensation the Gentiles too were to be brought in. But before then the nations of the world were in darkness, shut up to any knowledge of the true and living God: indeed, without hope and without God in the world. And why was that? Well, Satan obviously ruled in and deceived those nations; but now in the gospel day he has been bound so that he should deceive these nations no more till the thousand years be fulfilled. So his binding by Christ at the cross was to enable the gospel to have free course in the world. And it has come to pass. Gentiles have been called by the grace of God: salvation has come into all the world – among every tribe, nation and tongue.

But look again at that word ‘fulfilled’: the thousand years must be fulfilled. This indicates the completion of a purpose rather than a literal one thousand year period coming to an end on a certain date. This is the book of Revelation after all. The number one thousand is a number of completeness, of fulfilment; so when it is God’s time to release Satan from the bottomless pit after a certain plan has been fulfilled, he will. Then will come to pass the fruits of Satan’s release, the deceiving of the nations again and a gathering of them together against the Lord and against his anointed: Christ and his people. And if you cannot see this happening in our world today, like never before, then you are failing to exercise any spiritual discernment regarding ‘the signs of the times’ in which you live.

The thousand years of Revelation 20 have been and gone. Satan is let loose already and is raging against Christ and his people by bringing about this one-world mentality of godlessness and antichrist. Just look at the media, the education system, scientific doctrine, the modern mentality in our liberal, pluralistic, socialist, ‘tolerant’ age, and see if it is not antichristian in its very nature.

This assertion is easily proved when we consider some of the particulars of this 'one mind' which have become plain for all to see – if we *will* see. Just see how the world has changed even in the last twenty years, as well as in the last two hundred. We have already hinted at the devastation of the 'old' ways of thinking which Darwin's theory of evolution has wrought; and the undermining of the Scriptures which the Revised Version – and all subsequent versions – brought in. I believe these were some of the first fruits of the loosening of Satan out of the bottomless pit. Let us be clear: there is no new thing under the sun. When Satan was cast out of heaven in the first place and was found 'loose' upon the earth, what was the first thing he did? He went to man and said, 'Yea, hath God said?' and there is no reason to believe that he didn't do exactly the same thing immediately he was loosed out of the pit: he again attacked the authority of the word of God. What confusion all these modern versions of the scriptures have brought. What an undermining of the truth of man's origins – and all that pertains to it – evolution has caused. Both are sure signs that Satan was loosed sometime in the middle of what we call 'the nineteenth century'.

But this was only the beginning. Think of all the cults that arose around the same period: just about all the established cults in our world today, such as the Jehovah's Witnesses, the Mormons, Christadelphians, Spiritism, Christian Science, Theosophy, etc., can trace their origins to that century. And there are a multitude of others which have come in since: not least the 'new age' movement. But if you care to look into these things you will find that there are three fundamental beliefs which underpin them all – although they may be manifest in different ways in each: and they are these: 'Yea, hath God said?' 'Ye shall not surely die.' 'Ye shall be as gods.' And these three ancient lies have not failed to seep into the professing Christian church either, as it has progressively abandoned the purity of the doctrine of the gospel of Christ in favour of any number of 'other' gospels which, of course, are no gospels at all.

But look at the world today and see how this 'one mind' is developing. How to bring it about? One way to produce a unification of thought among the inhabitants of the earth – which will cross boundaries, languages and cultures – is to create a common 'enemy' – a global enemy – and *fear* of that enemy, which has no hope of being defeated unless the world comes together to fight it. Enter 'man-made global warming' and the supposed danger to the environment by climate change: 'If we don't

do something drastic we will destroy the planet!’ What a great excuse, by the way, for the governing authorities to burden their people further by introducing all manner of ‘carbon taxes’!

Enter also the ‘War on Terror’; such a vague phrase which can be used – and will increasingly be used – to justify any authority’s suppression of just about any ‘uprising’, regardless of its validity. Think of the world-wide monetary crisis, and the problems associated with global debt and the tax evasion tricks of an increasing number of multinational companies. Unless we all ‘come together’ we will never overcome these problems which threaten us all.

And what about the created fear surrounding things like disease, super-bugs, and drug resistant strains of viruses. All these things are subtly designed to cause people to think and then to act globally rather than in their own locality; which will in some way or another mean that they have to give up something of their liberties, and nations their sovereignty, ‘for the greater cause of world peace, safety’ or whatever else. How many times have we heard the phrase ‘Global problems need global solutions’ punctuate these things. But they are all ultimately designed to bring about ‘one mind’.

And then there are other things that encourage a global mentality. Just look at the ‘International Network’ – internet – the ‘World Wide Web’ – www. – a ‘web’ and a ‘net’ which covers the whole world. Why do you think the powers that be are so alarmed to hear that there are still about thirty percent of households in this country which are still not ‘on-line’? And why are they doing all they can to maximise the opportunities for all to be connected, by bringing in total coverage of super-fast broadband, etc.? Because when all are on-line then all will be in the system, all will be able to be contacted, ‘informed’ and monitored: what a great tool for any future totalitarian regime! What? That sounds a bit Orwellian, you say. Of course! Wake up! ‘They shall all have one mind.’ Globalism and universality are the order of the day.

Which leads on to the political state of things. Well of course all the leading politicians are involved in bringing this about. See if you can find one major democratic country on the earth whose political leaders are not fully attuned to and compliant with the promotion of the above things.

Why, it just wouldn't be 'politically correct' to argue otherwise! Have you ever wondered why some of our politicians, before they get into power, seem so genuine and full of good intentions, and why they say they want to do the right thing by the people; but when they do get into office they suddenly change their tune, go back on their promises and become more globally-minded? Now you know why. There are 'powers that be' behind the scenes: long established systems in place, and there are carefully planned agendas to be carried out, to which each passing generation of elected leaders must conform. Yes, there is a great spirit abroad upon the earth to bring the minds of men and nations together on these issues, and woe betide any ambitious politician who seeks to swim against the tide.

Do you find this hard to accept? Let me give the illustration of the way of the world and of our political system as being a huge ocean-going liner sailing into the sunset: the course is set by the 'captain', and there is to be no deviation. But on board ship there is a hive of activity. The people of the world have formed themselves into many different groups and parties; have formed various systems and processes by which to govern themselves, many of which are markedly different from others on the ship. Nevertheless there seems to be a great liberty among the differing sections of the population to do things their own way.

Here and there – on the left side or the right side of the ship – you will occasionally find more radical views expressed, and in differing parts of the vessel you might come across different ways in which the voyage is viewed, with varying levels of desire to see 'change'. Some groups seem to be more vocal than others, and for a time they seem to get the ear of the captain to reconsider his course – at least inasmuch as it pertains to certain elements of the population. And yes, things might actually change for some groups on board: some might achieve more independence and sovereignty for their distinctive traditions; while other groups might form societies and pacts which enable them to form 'ever closer union' with one another.

So when you look at the whole you will see quite a diversity in the government of different parts of the ship; in some places where autonomy is greater there might be more prosperity and liberty seen, and therefore others from less progressive areas might migrate to those better parts with the hope of gaining greater wealth or position. But no matter how

much people and societies and nations prosper and glory in their democratic achievements; and no matter how powerful, influential and important some of their leaders seem to be in the influencing and running of the ship; *the ship still continues on the same course*. Why? Because most, if not all, of the very successful leaders on board are secretly in cahoots with, and are taking their orders from, the captain!

What is politics? In each nation it is different parties arguing about how best to run the economy: of what they would do if they got into power: how they would legislate regarding health, and education, and jobs, and housing, and welfare, etc. And we are stirred up to be engaged in this political process, and are duped in our consecutive generations into thinking that our votes 'can make a real difference'. But meanwhile, away from the local issues of each nation, step by step, year by year, unremittingly, the world comes ever closer to exercising 'one mind'.

And so to some more of its characteristics. Wherever you turn today you find governments with 'a green agenda'; despite the fact that man-made global warming is scientifically unproven, still, they press ahead regardless. Why is this an issue, you ask? It is an issue because ultimately it makes *man* the greatest enemy of the planet. Again if you research these things you will discover a rather shocking plan to 'depopulate' the world – *drastically* depopulate – in order to lessen carbon emissions and therefore 'save Mother Earth'. They reckon that as much as ninety percent of the world's population has to be wiped out for the earth to 'survive' for generations to come.

Also this great depopulation must take place because it is a simple fact that the vast majority of the world's inhabitants just don't have that 'enlightenment' needed to take man into their golden age of Gnostic self-worship. I heard one leading proponent of this hope say that until there are enough 'perfected men' in the world – people who think themselves god, and who possess the esoteric 'secret wisdom' – there cannot exist a true democracy. In other words, there are just too many ignorant, base-minded, people in the world – aka, you and me – to hinder the ultimate fulfilment of their plans, for in their fully enlightened democracy all members of society will be initiated into what they call 'the pure Luciferian doctrine' of man being God; therefore the 'dead flesh' of the old humanity has to be, as it were, cut out.

Sound unbelievable? The teaching of the Lord Jesus does seem to indicate a time of mass destruction on the earth just before he comes: cp. Matthew 24:21,22; see also Revelation 9:13-18. Look at these verses in their contexts and see what they suggest to you.

In the light of all this it is perhaps not so surprising to learn that the British government has no more plans to carry out a national census – the 2011 census was the last. I believe that the next decade is going to see major events in this country, as well as in the world at large, which will bring about major loss of life, which a census in 2021 would expose by hard data to the horror of the remaining general population. So the absence of that census would conveniently help to hide these things. Just something to watch.

Then in close connection to these things, enter the next aspect of ‘one mind’. Euthanasia. Again if you have eyes to see you will have realised that in the last few decades there has been a marked shift in attitudes towards the elderly – regarding their importance, the respect they should be shown, and even in the validity of using all means possible to care for them or extend their lives. Remember we are speaking here of a mentality, an attitude of thought, a way of thinking. Even in the period of my relatively short life I have seen a marked deterioration in society’s attitude towards the older generations. There is now a spirit in the air which is beginning to question whether it is actually beneficial for society to sustain respect and honour for our elders.

And this frame of mind is not only limited to ‘the young’. Older people too are beginning to think that when they get to a point when they think they ‘will be a burden’, that perhaps they would want to become beneficiaries of ‘assisted dying’ for the benefit of all. Add to the mix all the horror stories you hear about care homes, hospital treatment of the elderly and vulnerable; not to mention the vast cost to the nations’ finances in caring and health costs, as well as the massive pensions bill which is only set to increase ‘with an ageing population’, then it is no wonder that an increasing number of people are beginning to think that they ought to plan to ‘take control’ of their latter end.

Added to this you have an increasing number of people – especially the severely disabled – who are becoming very vocal in demanding their ‘rights’ to have their lives ended. But this is the classic ‘thin end of the wedge’ to eventual all-out mass murder of the vulnerable. Yes, it is gradually becoming more acceptable – or less shocking – to consider ‘going off to Switzerland’ instead of being a burden to family or society.

Again, how many times have we heard phrases like ‘you wouldn’t let a dog suffer like this’ when commenting on the painful or apparently hopeless state of an old or disabled person. Of course, it is evolutionary thinking which causes people to equate a human with a dog, but there is no equality between the two at all. Man has a soul, a dog hasn’t. When you put a dog down it ceases to have any conscious existence; but that is not true of a human being. People who are ‘helped to die with dignity’ don’t cease to exist when their heart stops beating: for it is appointed unto man once to die – however that death comes about – and *after this* the judgment, Heb. 9:27.

Nevertheless a new mentality is forming that, in the context of huge global problems with the environment, debt, and the cost of servicing an ageing population, in the not to distant future euthanasia will become more of a reasonable ‘choice’ – necessity – in man’s struggle to survive. Well, they’ve been ‘euthanasing’ unborn babies – in law – for nearly fifty years now, and if they’ve practised systematic murder of one vulnerable section of the population what makes us think that they won’t bring it in for another – all dressed up in ‘rational’ and ‘logical’ arguments.

Now most people you talk to actually abhor the thought of these things; they don’t like the thought of taking life, except in accordance with justice: i.e. capital punishment; they don’t, on the whole, accept man-made global warming, and believe that each country should look after its own interests and not be bothered with what is happening in other parts of the world. War on Terror? How many people really believe that it is ‘in our national interest’ to invade foreign lands and help put down ‘evil regimes’ to keep our streets safe from terrorism? Left to ourselves I believe the answer would be ‘not many’. But remember, ‘one mind’ has to emerge among the nations of the earth, so the people of the world have to be ‘trained’ to this end. Enter, next, the media.

Twenty-four hour news; online media accessible from anywhere on earth and by everyone. If ever there is to be 'one mind' upon the earth then the media will have to be fully involved. And of course it is. Someone said to me a while ago that he didn't believe my 'conspiracy' theories. But let me ask you this: Do you trust the media then? And by that I don't mean do you trust them when they give facts like, 'There was a crash on the motorway this morning and ten people were killed.' Those are reported facts. But what I mean is, do you trust the *slant* of the media? Do you believe the 'world-view' which it propagates? Are you in agreement with the 'general consensus' views that it portrays as being the most 'reasonable'? You might say, but hold on, we live in the 'free' West; we are constantly being told that our press is free and independent; we're not like other countries whose media are just the mouthpiece of the state, spewing out propaganda all day!

All right, if you think that, and believe that our media is as you say; and if you are a professed Christian, then let me ask you this. Do you believe in evolution and millions of years? Because the media infuses that 'theory' into its reporting and slant at every given opportunity: witness especially the science reporting and analysis. And what about the media's generally liberal perspective on things; does it not trouble you that the main thrust of opinion tends towards the promotion of secular humanism rather than biblically-based godliness? When was the last time you heard a decent, unbiased, in-depth interview on primetime programming with someone who was evidently God-fearing and socially conservative; who was given ample time – without constant interruption – to propound a belief in Creation, the authority of the Lord Jesus Christ and his word, and of the blessedness of any nation which upholds the law of God? You never have heard such a thing.

Ah but, you say, we do have a free press; you can write in with 'your say', we can phone in with our opinion; we can vote in or vote out our politicians using our 'democratic right'; we are free to say as we think – within reasonable bounds. Ah, there you are. And who sets the bounds? You just try standing up in your local high street and expounding what the scriptures say regarding the socially – politically – accepted norms of the day and see where it leads you. No. With the general slant of the media being left-leaning – witness how often the likes of 'the *Daily Mail* reader' are maligned – pro-evolution, and the ready promoters of the 'globalists'

agenda, it is not true to say that our media is free from producing propaganda. The way of the world is promoted by papers, television and radio; and the current way of the world is to bring everybody into 'one mind'.

Again, you say, you don't believe it? Read your Bibles! 'The whole world lieth in wickedness'. The god of this world continually blinds the minds – the mentality – of them which believe not the truth of the gospel – the only depository of truth in the world. The whole world is full of vanity and lies. There is no 'truth' in the world, for Christ himself is 'the truth', and the world is outside of Christ, knows him not, and cares nothing for his gospel. How then can the world or anything which emanates from the world – like the media – be anything other than corrupt and a propagator of lies and deceit. Nevertheless, you still believe the media?!

Now consider the education system. Is it really any different? What better tool is there for the powers that be to fashion the thinking of the young into a universal mentality. Again, is the state system the place to send your children to receive instruction on the holiness of God and the glory of his Son? to discover the wonders of creation and the liberating truths of the gospel of Christ? Are all their studies based on the belief that there is only one God, that he upholds all things by the word of his power, and that we are accountable to him and that, however much we may achieve in our lives, all will ultimately be vanity without a saving knowledge of Christ? Are our sixteen and eighteen year olds coming out of the state system having learned the fear of the Lord, with humble minds and a desire to serve? Or does it send its students out into the world more or less with the belief that 'God hath not said anything', that 'ye shall not surely die – at least not for a very long time yet', and to all intents and purposes, when they prosper, achieve, and realise all their ambitions in life 'they shall be as gods'? The latter of course.

The mentality that the young are being indoctrinated into today is vastly different to the one that perhaps their parents and definitely their grandparents learned. A great shift has occurred in the thinking of the current generations as compared to the one or two before them. In fact there is a great gulf fixed between today's childhood and youth and their elders. Not least, of course, because of the electronic advancements of the last two decades – internet, mobile phones, etc. – but in the way they view

the world. Today children are being made citizens of a global village; socially they are much more diverse and pluralistic than their more 'traditional' elders. It could almost be said that the upcoming generation lives on a different planet to the one mine grew up on.

But this is all well and good for the powers that be: for the new 'one mind' makers. Yes, ultimately the young are the key to bringing in a new mentality upon the earth: a new order of things – for a different, brighter, more illumed future – where man takes his last evolutionary step towards something like deity on earth. If we can get – 'educate' – the young to think universally instead of parochially then we will be greatly advanced in reaching our goal; after all it is today's young who will be the main players in the final stages. So, separate them from their parents early in life – our local nursery takes them from *three months old* – by getting them soon entered into – and then keeping them longer in – 'the education system', and teach them differently from the old ways of thinking, especially in an understanding of the past.

National identity has to be eroded to cause upcoming generations to think beyond their borders; so undermine loyalty to nation states, reinterpret its history – especially its 'proud' history. Portray all those oldies who go on about 'the war', and 'how things used to be when I was young', as out of date, out of touch with the modern world, and even a hindrance to the advancement of man. Teach the young attitudes which are diametrically opposed to those of their forefathers. Make them think that really the world will never have been so fully functional as it will be when they grow up and take on the governance of the world.

Educate them into thinking that past generations were in darkness with their beliefs in absolutes, in right and wrong, in man's sinnership and God's authority. So old fashioned attitudes towards morality must be destroyed by 'liberal' attitudes, after all, the new morality will be fundamentally anti-Christian. Teach them distorted and unnatural views of what 'the family' is by introducing them to the validity of diversity in relationships. Emphasise 'the rights of the individual' instead of the virtuous characteristics of humility, loyalty, service and responsibility. And again, cause them to think globally – which is the future – and not in a narrow-minded, insular, local way.

And if the education system can achieve these ends, and if the children emerge from its clutches with a mind which is at variance with its parents', then it will have achieved its goal of preparing the upcoming generation to embrace fully the 'one mind'. These things must come to pass according to scripture, and they are coming to pass in our day as a plain matter of fact.

Rebuilding the Tower of Babel

All this adds up to one thing: the rebuilding of the Tower of Babel. If you think about it, in principle, the bringing about of 'one mind' upon the earth will issue in something akin to 'one tongue' upon the earth. And this is where the real power behind these events is exposed. From the Garden of Eden Satan has been whispering to man that he can become God, and one of the ancient fruits of this temptation was the building of the city of Babel – Babylon – which had a tower that was designed to 'reach unto heaven', Gen. 11.

But God said 'No' to their wickedness, came down and confused and confounded their language and speech – Babel means 'confusion'. Thereafter it was the will of God that men should live in separate nations with their own tongues, so that there could be no intermingling or communication between them. But nowadays this is all being reversed. We not only teach our children 'foreign languages' in school, but we travel easily between countries and continents; we can communicate across borders by a variety of means, and are kept informed in 'the news' about events that are happening in other countries – as though we are supposed to be interested.

Also today we have a world wide mechanism in place to facilitate the building of this modern day 'tower'. The Internet. If ever there was a means of communication designed to enable the whole world to be of 'one tongue' again it is this. Being 'world wide' it can only really draw the peoples of the world ever closer in tongue and mentality. It is now just about all pervasive, is irreversible, and is increasingly being used by the authorities to include every aspect and function of society. It won't be too long before the citizens of the world just won't be able to 'live' without it.

All this is part of rebuilding the tower of Babel. Politically speaking, again, this can only be brought about by unifying bordering states into

supranational blocks, like the EU. Gradually these blocks grow bigger; monetary and ever closer political union is introduced as 'natural progressions', until eventually the systems and the mentality of the peoples are set up and prepared for the acceptance and embracing of some sort of World Union of States. All these things are happening in our day and cannot be reversed.

Nevertheless they are all a sign of the working of wickedness in high places, for it is all part of the outworking of man raising himself up – or being raised up – to take the ultimate control of his own life and destiny on earth – to be as God. Thus it can all be seen as rank rebellion against God, just as the original builders in the land of Shinar were rebelling against the one true and living God. No, there is no new thing under the sun.

But just when man thinks he has attained to this highest of ambitions God will again step in and say 'No'; for in reality man will not have been worshipping himself as God but Satan incarnate as God: the 'kings' of the earth and all the peoples of the earth will have been bowing down and worshipping 'the beast' as God, albeit for only 'one hour'.

But at the end of that 'hour' the Lord will appear in the heavens and will consume that Wicked one, and all who follow and worship him, with the spirit of his mouth, and will destroy them all with the brightness of his coming. This will be the final day, the day of judgment, when the Lord Jesus will be revealed from heaven with his holy angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power, see 2 Thessalonians.

And as these things will surely come to pass, so there is another thing you can be certain about: none of them will appear on the news or in the next day's papers, for there will be no more news broadcasts, no more discussion programmes, no more analysis from 'our political editor', and no more newspapers to be printed; for this will be the end of all things: *the end of the world!*

And what is the Lord's command to his people when they see all these things begin to build? Speak out against them? Petition parliament? Vote UKIP to halt it all? No. None of these things. 'Watch ye therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man', Luke 21:25-36; for you must realise that this last period of the history of the world will be a time of great tribulation for the people of God.

The Mark of the Beast

Which leads us to the mysterious subject of the mark of the beast; a subject of great debate and puzzlement, and the reason for much exercise of febrile imaginations. We find this mark mentioned in Revelation 13, a chapter dealing with the last days wherein the beast is worshipped by the vast majority of the inhabitants of the earth. Indeed, 'he causeth all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, to receive a mark in their right hand, or in their foreheads: and that no man might buy or sell, save he that had the mark, or the name of the beast, or the number of his name', verses 16,17.

Then we get something of an explanation of these words. 'Here is wisdom. Let him that hath understanding count the number of the beast: for it is the number of a man; and his number is Six hundred threescore and six': six six six, verse 18.

Immediately we are assured that these things can be understood by those who have spiritual understanding. These are the Lord's own people whose 'understanding he opens that they might understand the scriptures', cp. Luke 24:45. And there are, I believe, three things in these verses which, if we interpret correctly in principle, will yield a good understanding of their meaning; and will then enable us to be aware of their fulfilment, and cause us to pray in the midst of it to be kept until the end.

First of all we consider the mark itself. What is a mark? It is an imprint. This mark of the beast is something which is 'imprinted' on either the 'right hand' or the 'forehead' of all those who receive it. Next the mark is something which belongs to the beast – is reflects his character. If you have the mark of the beast it shows that you belong to him and that you reflect in some way his character: at least it means that you are happy to be identified with him whose mark it is.

This mark is furthermore a guarantee of present and future security on earth – having it enables you to continue to ‘buy and sell’: activities vital for life. Then this mark is an all encompassing mark: that is, just about all will have it readily and immediately it is introduced, for it will be the one key to active and necessary citizenship in the new order of things. Who in their right mind would be without it? Yes, we know it comes with strings attached: that we have had to sign up to this new ‘religion of the world’, worshipping this great world saviour that has appeared, but, well, it’s a small price to pay to be able still to purchase our necessities for life; after all, I’ve a family to provide for.

Secondly, where this mark is found. We are told that it is placed specifically on the right hand or on the forehead, in other words in the places of doing and thinking. This speaks then of the mark of the beast influencing the way we live, how we act, and how we think – our mentality: again, a unified world-wide mentality is suggested. Broadly applied the mark of the beast is simply ‘the way of the world’. In one sense all those outside of Christ, not born again of the Spirit of God, not saved by the grace of God, have the mark of the beast because they live and think as the world does. But specifically at the end of the world, in this very last stage, it does seem that there will be a mark given to people without which they will not be able to continue being an active member of society.

Thirdly, this mark is ‘the number of a man’. This simply means that it is a number which pertains to the understanding of men – it is one of their numbers: 666. Six, of course, is the number of man, while six repeated shows a straining towards but continual falling short of that perfect number seven; as we read, ‘For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God’, Rom. 3:23. So six six six represents man in his fallen state; and what situation could arise which reveals more fully man’s utter corruption in sin than his desire – in that state – to be as God? Remember, it is this beast which possesses and gives this number to man, and he can be traced back to the Garden of Eden. So this is the number of man in rebellion against God. And what is that if not the spirit of the world?

But what of this mark if it is to be taken literally. Some will readily point to bar-codes: each one has 666 on it – the number six being represented by two thin lines: there is one set at the beginning, one in the middle, and one at the end of each bar-code: they are easily seen because they extend further than all the other lines which represent the other numbers of the code. These bar-codes are everywhere, on just about every product sold. In the light of this many will point out that with the advances of modern technology it is not impossible to imagine some sort of tagging system of humanity where they are identified by running their hands over some sort of scanner – very useful in a future cashless society for when you are undertaking some sort of transaction, especially when ‘buying or selling’.

And this is a reasonable assertion. After all, animals – pets – have been tagged for years; it is all very convenient, for if a straying dog is found then all the authorities have to do is scan the pooch and all its details will come up – name, address, etc. and it can be quickly and easily returned to its owner. Advance the thought and it’s not far down the road to tagging all humans with chips, upon which will be recorded all their individual details: name, date of birth, national insurance number, bank details, health records, doctor’s names, insurance details, etc. etc.: in fact all the identification information needed in one simple device to enable people to live securely and deal readily in the brave new world.

The only snag is that there will be conditions to its being kept in tact. For you see by then *everything* – every transaction of whatever kind – will be done by means of this chip: there will, of course, be scanners for these tags everywhere, most likely on some future generation ‘smart phone’. And what will these conditions be? We have already hinted at these: signing up to the way of the world: thinking and acting in accordance with the way the new society works and functions. A condition will be ‘worship’ of ‘the beast’, however he is to be manifested at that time; and therefore, to use a blunt phrase, you’ll have to have ‘sold your soul to the devil’ to retain it.

Make no mistake. This is going to be the time of great tribulation for the saints of God. Continued peaceable living, going about our daily routines of working, buying, and contributing to society will no longer be possible. If you don’t have the chip you will be classed as a non-person: you will not officially exist because there will be no record of you in ‘the system’. And if

you at one time have had the chip but then come to a point when you can no longer subscribe to the way of the world, perhaps for conscience sake, or because of conversion to Christ, then your chip will simply be switched off and all you had in bank accounts, etc., will simply be deleted. The next time you go to make a purchase or undergo a transaction of any kind the machine will just beep and declare that no record of your existence can be found.

And then what will happen? There will be no record of you owning the house you live in, so you will be evicted. You won't be registered at the local doctor's surgery. Your state pension or benefit payments will stop because you 'don't exist'. All information on your chip pertaining to driving licences, passports, credit and debit facilities, and any membership of societies, associations, parties or clubs will all have been erased. Cash will have become obsolete so the best you will be able to hope for to purchase your daily needs will be either by bartering, which will only last for a while until all your possessions run out; by working for friends or family who, although possessing the mark themselves, still might retain some compassion for you and will provide you with food or even shelter in return; or by begging. But it will not be long before the authorities will discover that here is someone who is going against the accepted way, even though you might not actually be speaking out against it, and who is not worshipping the Great Leader who has brought peace and safety, not to mention truth and enlightenment to mankind. So you will be arrested, will 'disappear', and will be at the 'mercy' of the godless mentality which reigns over the whole earth.

You don't believe all this could happen? Well, just read Revelation 13 again. None of this is fanciful imagination.

But how could it all be brought about in the first place? How could the inhabitants of the earth fall for a system so controlling of their 'liberties'? The only way it could happen is if the masses themselves called for it. And in what possible situation would they ever do that? If they thought the world was in imminent danger of being destroyed; if civilisation was 'on the brink' of some horrific catastrophe, or if some catastrophic event, like a Third World War, was already under way, and unless we all came together under the rule of a suddenly arisen peacemaker – and gave our utter allegiance to him for the good of mankind, indeed, for his very

survival upon earth – then all would be lost. Don't you believe that, under Satan, men are not conspiring at this very moment to bring this about? Remember that the ultimate goal of antichrist is Power – complete and absolute power – over all the inhabitants of the earth, and power over all their affairs; and they will do *anything* to bring that about. Of course they will do anything to 'be as God'.

Please remember that this Wicked will have at his disposal 'miracles, and signs, and lying wonders'. The whole world will 'wonder after the beast, saying, Who is like unto the beast? Who is able to make war with the beast?' There must come a time of great upheaval on the earth – even near destruction of the planet and of mankind – out of which will arise this great peacemaker – the saviour of the world – who will then cause the inhabitants of the earth to cry, 'Peace and safety' at last!

Think about all these things, reader. Ponder them. Ponder the possibility of them actually happening in your lifetime, and don't be among the mass of the deceived, Rev. 13:14; view them forming before your eyes as daily reported by the media. Pray to God to give you the eyes to see it happening, and pray ultimately that you will be saved from the wrath surely to come upon this present evil world at the coming again of the Lord Jesus Christ at the end of the world, 1 Thes. 4:16-5:4.

The Christ

At this point it does become necessary to mention the view of many regarding an upcoming thousand year reign of Christ on earth. If we look at it in the context of what has been written already we will begin to see the deviousness of it. Why? Because this Wicked that is to arise, to whom the kings of the earth will give their power, and to whom the inhabitants of the earth will give their unwavering allegiance and worship, is none other than 'the Christ' which the New Age movement expects to arise, and which the major religions are looking for to be the fulfilment of all their prophecies and expectations. Again if you feel inclined to investigate these things for yourself you will find that the likes of the Buddhists, the Muslims, the New Agers and, yes, apostate Christianity, are all expecting a Christ figure to appear to reign on this present earth, to bring peace, and to set up a kingdom which will last for...? ...a thousand years!

This is why what is called in the church the Premillennial view of the last times is so deceitful – as well as being a dreadfully carnal interpretation of the ‘reign’ of Christ. This teaching that Christ is going to come and reign on earth for a thousand years plays directly into the hands of the deceiver who, when he arises will readily tell fallen Christendom that, yes, he is Jesus Christ, while turning to the New Agers and telling them that he is ‘the Christ’, while again turning to the others and declaring himself to be their long awaited ‘great teacher’, prophet, man of wisdom, or whatever else they are expecting him to be. *And they will all believe him! And will worship him as such!* But you can be sure that he won’t be the true Jesus Christ despite the fact that so many in the church will also have gone after him.

Now there are one or two phrases which are commonly used amongst those – of whatever religion or belief system – who are looking for this saviour of mankind. One is ‘the Christ’. If you look into the writings of Theosophy and of the New Age movement you will find blatant and open references to the coming of ‘the Christ’. In line with the warnings of the Lord Jesus in Matthew 24 they are looking for ‘The Reappearance of the Christ’: the anointed one who is to arise to lead humanity to its final goal of becoming gods on earth.

This Christ is also referred to as ‘The Coming One’: the one expected who will usher in the New Age; and, yes, he is to appear *to* bring in this new age when the old age – the old order of things – has finally run its course. When I was a teenager in the late ‘Seventies I remember a pop song which talked about ‘the age of Aquarius’: ‘This is the dawning of the age of Aquarius...’ Of course I didn’t understand the message of the song then; I, like many others, just liked the music. But the message is quite clear: and is the core of the New Age message – truly ‘another gospel’. The so-called age of Pisces is coming to an end and the age of Aquarius is beginning. Pisces is representative of a fish – and one of Christianity’s supposed symbols is a fish; whereas Aquarius, they say, is symbolic of man, or of the perfected man. In other words, the age of Christianity is waning while the age of the glorified man is waxing. Sound familiar?

Aren’t we constantly being told that we are in a post-Christian era? That we are entering a new era wherein man, having gained so much knowledge and enlightenment, especially in the realm of science, has the

increasing power to control his world, his destiny, and his very existence on earth? We are. And it is this idea that a 'new age' is dawning which apostate Christianity is being prepared for by Premillennialism. As I said, when 'he' comes, he will tell them that he is Jesus Christ come to set up his thousand year reign on earth, but he will be false. Yes, he may have appeared as it were from heaven, as witnessed by the whole world and broadcast repeatedly on 'the news'; but it will have been a false, deceptive, appearing – 'miracles and signs and lying wonders' will have been in his power to use to deceive the nations. It is not beyond the wit of man now to use holographic images of a Christ descending from heaven accompanied by a (previously?) raptured church, or angels, or mighty ones. But however he appears *the whole world will see it and believe it*.

But surely Christians with open Bibles won't be fooled by all this! Won't they? Apart from the prevalence of Premillennial teaching today – and in some places it almost seems to be the number one doctrine you have to assent to if you want to be a member of the church – the language of many of the Bibles currently open in front of Christians actually concurs with the teaching of the New Agers. Consider Matthew 11:3 in the new age, New King James Version: it has John the Baptist asking of Jesus – with capital letters – 'Are You the Coming One, or do we look for another?' The Coming One? Can you see it?

This Version also, along with many others, now has the words of the Lord Jesus at the end of Matthew's gospel rendered, '...behold, I am with you always, even to the end of the age'; the age, not 'the world'; cp. also Matt. 24:3. Which brings us to another Version which I've briefly had exposure to recently: J.N.Darby's of the Exclusive Brethren. He too has 'the coming one' in Matthew 11:3 and 'age' for 'world' in the references already given. Yet he sits even more comfortably with the new age doctrine – whether intentionally or not – by constantly referring to Christ as 'the Christ', especially in the Epistles, that is, in the apostles' doctrinal statements: those statements which together constitute the gospel.

Consider the following randomly picked verses from Darby: 'For as in the Adam all die, thus also in the Christ all shall be made alive', 1 Cor. 15:22; '...in whom the god of this world has blinded the thoughts of the unbelieving, so that the radiancy of the glad tidings of the glory of the Christ, who is the image of God, should not shine forth for them', 2 Cor.

4:4; 'But I fear lest by any means, as the serpent deceived Eve by his craft, so your thoughts should be corrupted from simplicity as to the Christ', 2 Cor. 11:3; '...for the administration of the fulness of times; to head up all things in the Christ, the things in the heavens and the things upon the earth, in him', Eph. 1:10; 'Let the word of the Christ dwell in you richly...', Col. 3:16; 'Whosoever goes forward and abides not in the doctrine of the Christ has not God. He that abides in the doctrine, he has both the Father and the Son', 2 John 9; '...and they lived and reigned with the Christ a thousand years', Rev. 20:4.

The Christ, the Christ, the Christ. 'The doctrine of the Christ', 2 John 9, is a fundamental doctrine of the New Age movement, and Darby finds a perfect home for it. Therefore anyone looking for the coming of 'the Christ' to usher in a new 'age' on earth will not be uncomfortable with these translations.

But who is the Christ? Well there has only ever been one true Christ: one person who has been anointed of God: and that is the Lord Jesus Christ, cp. Luke 4:18. And Jesus made reference to this fact in Matthew 16:20: the only place where the Saviour refers to himself by name: 'Jesus', and by anointing: 'the Christ': 'Then charged he his disciples that they should tell no man that he was Jesus the Christ', AV. But Darby doesn't have him declaring this, for he deletes the name Jesus, as do just about all the modern versions. You see, if Jesus was 'the Christ' only, and not specifically 'Jesus the Christ'; then the New Ager can just come along and say, 'There you are! Jesus of Nazareth had the Christ spirit in him for his age, but now we look for 'the coming one' who will possess the Christ spirit for the new age.' But if the Lord was 'Jesus the Christ' then he alone can only ever be said to be 'the Christ'; which is what Matthew 16:20 and the Authorised Version tell us; while Darby and a whole host of the modern corrupt versions effectively deny it – or at least undermine this truth.

Thus we conclude here that the modern Christian with his modern Bible can find little argument against the New Ager who is looking for 'the coming one', whom he calls 'the Christ', to appear at the end of 'the age'. And if the reader believes in a coming thousand year reign of a Christ then you might be surprised to find that you aren't in disagreement with people who you would otherwise think have wayward ideas of spirituality in the

New Age movement, *because you'll be worshipping 'the Christ' alongside them*, unless the Lord opens your eyes now to your dreadful error.

I leave these things for the thoughtful reader to ponder over.

Part 3 – '...until the day...'

And so we come to consider the final days of time. Again, it is a sobering and indeed a fearful thing to realise that 'the day of the Lord will come', that there is literally going to be a last day: a last evening, a last night, a last morning. The sun will have set for the last time, and it will have risen upon the last day. The reason that it is so fearful to us is that we are just so taken up with the things of time – our natural state. Time was before us, we were born into, and have grown up in time, so all our natural expectations have only ever related to the time state. But now we are told by the Son of God that it is all going to end. Everything we have known that relates to time and the senses is going to be destroyed by fire from heaven when the day of judgment comes.

And the Lord Jesus does confirm all these things when he said, 'But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only', Matt. 24:36. Here we see that there is literally going to be a last day, and a last hour in that day; and that the Father alone knows the date. We all live by dates, by days and months, and we plan our days by the hour – just look at your diary or appointments calendar. And Jesus here says that on one of those dates, on a specific day, and in a certain hour of that day, the end of the world will come and time will finish. And although only God knows the exact date, yet those born of the Spirit look and long for it and are given to discern the signs which point to that day being 'even at the doors', Matt. 24:33.

'As it was in the days of Noah'

What then will the world be like when the Lord Jesus returns to end time and bring in the day of judgment? Well, the Saviour himself said that 'in the day when the Son of man is revealed' the world will be the same in character 'as it was in the days of Noah... and of Lot', Luke 17:20-37. Now although this reference to Noah applies primarily to Noah's day before the flood came, in the context of all the things we have been considering I

believe it has some relevance to the 'one mind' which is appearing now. How? Because as Noah lived a further 350 years after the flood, then it is evident that he lived to experience the confusing of the tongues because of the rebellion of his descendants at the Tower of Babel, before which the whole earth had been of one language and therefore of one mind. So even there we have a connection with 'the days of Noah'.

But if we look at what the Lord Jesus was teaching when he said, 'As it was in the days of Noah, so shall it be also in the days of the Son of man', Luke 17:26, Matt. 24:37, then we will get a stark realisation of the imminence of the end as we see man in the present day living more or less identically to how men were living on the morning the flood came and took them all away. Imminent? The end that close? Yes indeed. When will we wake up to these things.

Genesis Chapter 6 tells us what the earth was like at the time of Noah's building his ark. In fact this was the state of things *before* the LORD commanded Noah to build the ark and was indeed the reason for it. So when Jesus said 'as it was in the days of Noah', the 'it' was referring to the moral state of man at the time with its consequences for 'the earth': for 'the world that then was', 2 Peter 3:5-7.

In Genesis 6:5 we read, 'And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.' It is striking to observe again the absolutes in that verse: '*every* imagination' without exception; '*only* evil' without deviation. And is this not a fair description of the world today? The fruit of this is something else clearly visible today: the earth is 'corrupt before God', and is consequently 'filled with violence', Gen. 6:11: 'filled' being another absolute. Corruption here means 'ruin': the earth had been totally ruined and destroyed morally because of man's sin. Verse twelve sadly states: 'And God looked upon the earth, and, behold, it was corrupt; for all flesh had corrupted his way upon the earth', '*all* flesh'; and as far as God was concerned this necessitated 'the end', verse 13.

But what are men's 'imagination' which were only evil continually – lit. 'day by day'? The word in the original speaks of a 'determination', a 'resolution', a purpose in man to form his mind into thinking, reasoning and therefore acting in a certain way: and that way, saith God, was 'only

evil continually'. Man in sin is bent – hell-bent – on rebelling against God. As he is determined to believe the lie that he can be as God then all his thoughts, lusts and ambitions are naturally exercised towards that end. Therefore what other fruit can the 'imagination of the thoughts of men's hearts' bring forth but 'wickedness' and 'evil'? This is the same truth that was revealed by the Lord Jesus in his doctrine. Because in its natural first-born state 'the heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked', then, said the Saviour, 'Out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies: these are the things which defile a man...', and which manifest the greatness of his wickedness upon the earth, Matt. 15:16-20. All these things are commonplace, and even celebrated, today, cp. Rom. 1:28-32.

Let us never be in any doubt. Judgment came in Noah's day because of man's sin and rebellion towards God his creator. The flood was worldwide, the whole earth was 'overflowed with water', 2 Peter 3:6, so that even the highest mountains were covered, Gen. 7:20. Likewise when the Lord Jesus appears at the end of the world 'in flaming fire', that fire will cover and indeed consume the whole earth: 'the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up', 2 Peter 3:10. Why? Because of man's sin and rebellion towards God his creator. The sin of man is the sole offence towards God and he will put an end to the world because of it: he's done it once and he'll do it again. Every time you dig up a fossil you see evidence of the judgment of God because of man's sin, and yet next time there will be no fossils left behind, because then, even the elements will melt 'with fervent heat' – lit. 'having been set on fire.'

But let us investigate this in more detail as we look at the words of the Lord Jesus in Luke 17:26-30:

'And as it was in the days of Noah, so shall it be also in the days of the Son of man. They did eat, they drank, they married wives, they were given in marriage, until the day that Noah entered into the ark, and the flood came, and destroyed them all.

'Likewise also as it was in the days of Lot; they did eat, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they builded; but the same day that Lot went out of Sodom it rained fire and brimstone from heaven, and

destroyed them all. Even thus shall it be in the day when the Son of man is revealed.’ ‘...until the day... but the same day...’

If one word describes what daily life is going to be like on the day of Jesus’ coming it is surely ‘normal’. How routine everything will be: ‘Eating and drinking; buying and selling; planting and building; marrying and being given in marriage’ – so marriage will continue till the end despite all the attacks upon it. And there is one unifying characteristic of these things: they all say, ‘there is going to be a future’. We eat and drink to sustain our bodies until the next meal, or through the night until tomorrow. We eat and drink to fuel our bodies for the work of the day. But in these verses – and notice how this is the only sign mentioned in both Noah’s and Lot’s day – it is more the indulgent nature of eating and drinking which is being addressed rather than the partaking of our necessary ‘daily bread’. We have already seen that the Lord Jesus warns against ‘surfeiting and drunkenness’ in the last days, lest ‘that day come upon you unawares’, Luke 21:34. Isn’t it a characteristic of the decadent West to ‘eat, drink, and be merry, for tomorrow... who cares!’ Don’t people ‘sit down to eat and drink, and then rise up to play’? None of these attitudes betray a sober expectation of the end of the world.

Yes, of course there is going to be a future! Why else would people buy or sell anything? Why do we buy things? To use them! To use them today, tomorrow, or sometime in the future. Surely we buy for the future. And we sell for the same reason. We sell usually for money: to get gain; which money is then used to buy things – for our present or future needs, or to invest – for that future, or to save ‘for a rainy day’ – although having secured a good interest rate will be of no use when the ‘rain’ is fire and brimstone.

And it is the same with planting and building. These things speak only of an expectation of the continuance of time; without a future these two occupations become nonsensical. But on the day that the Son of man is revealed trees will have been planted, new houses finished, new centres opened, ribbons cut, and the photographs taken for inclusion in tomorrow’s local paper.

And what have you planted or builded today? Perhaps nothing material, but what about ideas? What about plans? What about ambitions? What

about dreams? Have you not been formulating something in your mind today which you hope to develop over the coming days? Please do stop and think. Yes, we must live, and do, and provide responsibly for ourselves and our families, but what is your mind continually on? What are your expectations for ‘tomorrow’? How shocked and offended will you be if the Lord steps in soon to spoil your prospects with the revelation of the Great White Throne?

And then there is that definite prospect of the future – ‘happy ever after’ – in marrying and being given in marriage. Who would spend all those months planning for ‘the big day’ if they thought the reception was going to be interrupted by ‘the trump of God’? I remember hearing once of a wedding ceremony where some people were highly offended when the minister reminded the congregation that that is exactly what will be happening when the end of the world comes. I don’t know if he went on to ask ‘the happy couple’ if they’d considered that their special day could be the last. Well, who does? But the very moment the trumpet sounds multitudes will be occupied in ‘marrying and being given in marriage’: young couples will be in jewellers buying rings, brides-to-be will be trying on their wedding dresses for the first time, invitations will be being posted into letter boxes, and ‘just married’ signs will be driving off into the sunset. New suits and outfits will be being bought, gifts wrapped, hotels booked, and journeys planned. ‘The question’ will just have been ‘popped’, ‘I will’, just vowed, confetti will be floating to the ground, and bubbles still rising to the tops of glasses when the Son of man is suddenly revealed.

‘Until the day’: until the very day, and upon a certain hour of that day. ‘But of that day and hour knoweth no man’: ‘...until the day that Noah entered into the ark, and knew not until the flood came, and took them all away...’, Matt. 24:38,39. ‘But the same day that Lot went out of Sodom it rained fire and brimstone from heaven, and destroyed them all’, Luke 17:29. So shall it be, and so shall it fall upon this present wicked generation at the end of the world.

The Sin of Sodom

At this point I want to turn aside and consider briefly the sin of Sodom – ‘as it was in the days of Lot’ – because the scriptural testimony is rather surprising. It is usual for us to associate Sodom only with the sin of ‘men with men’, but this is only made apparent in two places: Genesis 19:1-11

based on the phrase in verse 5, ‘...that we may know them’; and Jude 7, in the phrase ‘...going after strange flesh’; and yet none of the other references to this city in scripture make mention of this aspect of their iniquity at all.

The reason I am mentioning this here is that as I have been writing the previous section today it has struck me how that the Lord Jesus in Luke 17 – when referring to ‘the days of Lot’, which relate specifically to him being in Sodom – doesn’t mention this perversion at all; all he says about the world at the time of his coming in the context of Lot is, as we have seen, that people will be eating and drinking, buying and selling, and planting and building; the Saviour draws no attention to any type of deviancy at all. And yet today there are certain elements within the professing church who think it their sworn duty to be crying out against this one particular sin as though it was the worst in God’s eyes. But the Lord Jesus never once mentioned it, and neither did Paul in any of his preaching; he only wrote of it in its particular context within the whole of the doctrine of the gospel. Yes, this sin is vile, which is perhaps why both Paul and the Lord thought it ‘a shame even to speak of it, cp. Eph 5:12; but they did ‘protest’ regularly against the much more heinous sins of unbelief, hypocrisy, Pharisaism, pride, idolatry, and disobedience of the gospel. So let the present day campaigners take note.

But let us have a look at the testimony of scripture regarding Sodom. There is no doubt that ‘the men of Sodom were wicked and sinners before the LORD exceedingly’, Gen. 13:13: that their sin was ‘very grievous’, 18:20. But then Ezekiel 16:49 tells us exactly what ‘the iniquity of Sodom’ was: it was actually ‘pride, fulness of bread, and abundance of idleness’, as well as the fact that they didn’t ‘strengthen the hand of the poor and needy.’ Again, ‘they were haughty, and committed abomination before me’, saith the Lord GOD.

Yet none of these sins were unique to the men of that city. Was not Israel also guilty of all these things? We know that pride is the prime sin, as far as the LORD is concerned – although not as far as the religious hypocrite is concerned, Prov. 6:16,17, Luke 18:11,12. The men of Jerusalem, ‘the people of the land’, had also ‘vexed the poor and needy’, Ezek. 22:29, indeed, the children of Israel were often rebuked for not meeting the needs of ‘the fatherless and the widow’, Ezek. 22:7, Jer. 5:28,29, Psalm 82,

Isa. 1:23, Isa. 10:1,2, etc. 'Pure religion', says James, is not to cry out against perversion, but 'to visit – care for – the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world', Jas. 1:27.

And what about Israel's haughtiness – its arrogance before the LORD? 'Were they ashamed when they had committed abomination? Nay, they were not at all ashamed, neither could they blush: therefore they shall fall among them that fall: at the time that I visit them they shall be cast down, saith the LORD. Thus saith the LORD, Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls. But they said, We will not walk therein. I also set watchmen over you, saying, Hearken to the sound of the trumpet. But they said, We will not hearken', Jer. 6:15-17. Haughtiness.

It is a plain fact that on many occasions throughout their history the only difference between 'Judah and Jerusalem' and Sodom was that in the former 'a very small remnant had been left in the land', otherwise it too would have been destroyed, Isa. 1:9. There had been no remnant in Sodom, hence its destruction: but not before the one righteous man, Lot, had been hastened out: there had not even been found ten righteous in the city, cp. Gen. 18:23-26,32. But Jerusalem and Judah, remnant aside, were actually no different to Sodom: they were unashamedly open in 'declaring their sin as Sodom', Isa. 3:9; cp. 1 Kings 14:22-24; therefore in Lamentations 4:6 Jeremiah cries, 'the punishment of the iniquity of the daughter of my people is greater than the punishment of the sin of Sodom'.

This again was alluded to by the Lord Jesus in his doctrine when he said that it will be 'more tolerable for the land of Sodom in the day of judgment', than it will be for that city which rejects the word of the Lord, the gospel, by the mouths of those whom he sent to preach it: and this was addressed to the professing people of God, not to the Gentiles. Indeed, if the mighty works which had been done in Capernaum had been done in Sodom, it, Sodom, would have remained until this day – presumably because it would have repented like Tyre and Sidon, Matt. 11:20-24.

Think of that, all you who will not hear and fall under the truth of the doctrine of the gospel of Christ, but who nonetheless go on calling yourselves Christians: it will be more tolerable in the day of judgment for

the men of Sodom – men you look down upon in disgust in your self-righteous pride – than it will be for you, except you repent. Now, do you still think the sin of Sodom is the lowest of the low? Do you still pride yourselves in writing to your MPs to get the laws changed regarding this one sin? Why don't you write complaining about the levels of pride, selfishness, over-indulgence, and haughtiness – not to mention worldly ambition – in society, all of which undermines the stability of that society?

Why don't you write to the legislators about other evils: for instance, by pointing out that the state has no God-given right to legalise the removal of your children from the home at a very young age to 'educate' them, and that it should instead do all in its power to make sure that the parents have every opportunity to do it themselves. After all, it was early revealed that children should remain at home under the influence of their parents *until they got married*, not until they went to university, Gen. 2:24, Matt. 19:4-6 – how about that for a radical way of thinking? But it is God's way. Therefore why not cry out against every agency which promotes and sustains the cult of 'youth', and lobby for the abolition of 'teen-age' culture – this period of life being revealed in scripture as 'vanity', Eccl. 11:9,10 – and protest that the young should be out and working: contributing to the income of the family home by the age of thirteen. Just think of all the benefits to society there would be if these things were followed.

But, of course, those who think that the only 'sins' they should speak out against are the ones they don't commit themselves, are not going to call for legislation against those things which they spend their time pursuing. But don't you know that the sin which underpins worldly ambition in all its guises, covetousness, is an oft-mentioned sin that those professing Christ should flee from rather than embrace for prospects' sake? What is ambition to succeed in this world, to get gain, to please yourselves, and to feather your own nest in this time state, but 'covetousness, which is idolatry'? And yet it is because of these things that the wrath of God is said to be coming upon the children of disobedience, see Eph. 5:3-7. But it seems to me that there are many 'Christians' who are quite happy to be exercised with them. But, then, I suppose we do read that in the day wherein the Son of man is revealed they will be occupied with 'planting and building', etc.

Just look at those verses in Ephesians 5. Paul there speaks about this wrath of God which is coming and, although it is because of fornication, filthiness, and all uncleanness, it is also because of foolish talking – idle words – and jesting; it is again for being a whoremonger and an unclean person; but it is also for being covetousness, which Paul then repeats: covetousness, which is idolatry: ‘Be not ye partakers with them’ that do these things. And this he repeats to the saints at Colossae: the wrath of God is coming upon those children of disobedience who not only practice like perversions, but who are driven by ‘covetousness, which is idolatry’, Col. 3:5,6.

Covetousness. But whatever happened to ‘be content with such things as ye have’ among the professed people of God? How can ‘take no thought for the morrow’ be taken other than literally. Is the Lord’s faithfulness not good enough for us in this ‘got-to-have-it-all’ society? Heb. 13:5,6. And idolatry. In Israel of old they used to fall into the same idolatry as the heathen round about them. And one of the abominations they committed was to sacrifice their children to false gods – causing their children to pass through the fire. But this is replicated today as young people are ‘sacrificed’ to the way of the world: as they are pushed to succeed, advance, lust and desire after top marks, top positions, honour, respect and security ‘in this world’: i.e. ‘planting, building’, etc., instead of being encouraged to seek *supremely* the kingdom of God and his righteousness: the salvation of their souls at all costs, *in the light of the fact that the end of the world is nigh*. And it’s no good saying that ‘Well, my children are being brought up to go to chapel’, because they won’t be warned against worldly ambition there: they’ll more likely be trained up as good little Pharisees – carnally minded within a religious profession – and what good will that do them in the end?

So, as we have now looked at the various sins of Sodom – way beyond the narrowly perceived sin – and as we now see that modern society and today’s professing church is just as riddled with the same – the reader’s conscience having to give the amen to it – then we can now understand how the same fire which consumed Sodom ‘in a moment’, will burn the whole world up in an instant at the Lord’s coming.

In the light of all this, where will we be on that day? What will we be doing? Where will our heart’s affections be set? What will we be looking

‘ahead’ to? To time, like the world? Or will we be observing the signs of the times – perhaps suffering great tribulation because of the times – and looking for the appearing of the Lord? Only those who have found grace in the eyes of the Lord will be so doing, while the rest – whether religious or not – will be completely taken up in the things of the world and an expectation of the future, ‘until the fire comes and takes them all away’.

‘But Noah found grace’

So we come to consider the last aspect of the days of Noah which we can see in ours also: that there are so few who seem to have ‘found grace in the eyes of the LORD’, Gen. 6:8. We read that ‘Noah was a just man and perfect in his generations, and Noah walked with God’, verse nine. But his walk was in stark contrast to those around him, because when we read that ‘God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually’, it is instantly said, ‘*but* Noah found grace in the eyes of the LORD’: the whole world had fallen to walking in that way, but Noah was walking in this way.

As so often, we are reminded of the words of the Lord Jesus: ‘few there be that find it’, Matt. 7:14. Out of the whole of humanity in the days of Noah only a ‘few, that is, eight souls were saved’, 1 Peter 3:20, and seven of those were only saved because the head of the house was righteous. This of course reminds us of ‘Jesus Christ the righteous’, the Head, Surety, and Saviour of all his people. He only was the righteous one, but all those in him by covenant relationship will be saved from the wrath to come because only he ‘was a just man and perfect in his generations... and walked with God.’ Noah therefore is a type of Christ, and his wife, three sons, and their wives, a type of the church, his body, who pass through the waters of judgment ‘in him’ and land safely in the new world, which next time will be ‘new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness’, and that is a promise! 2 Peter 3:13.

What then does it mean that Noah ‘found grace in the eyes of the LORD’? The grace of God is that gift which he bestows upon all whom he is determined to save. This is God’s electing grace which has been towards his people chosen in Christ from all eternity. But here we read that Noah ‘found grace’: then, he must have been seeking it. Although the number and the persons of the elect are determined and known of God from all

eternity, yet in time, as each are born into the world, they are brought to seek the salvation of their souls: that is, to seek mercy and grace from the Lord. Noah was not reckoned to be a just man *because* he sought grace, but having found grace. He found grace in the eyes of the Lord because the Lord had convicted him of his sin and had stirred him up to seek that grace of God which bringeth salvation. The grace of God is bestowed upon all who truly seek it. Nowhere in scripture will you read that only those who can trace their election of God can then seek the grace of God: a pre-knowledge of election doesn't come into it. Neither the Lord Jesus, nor any of his apostles, ever once cried, 'Come unto me, all ye elect of my Father, and I will give you rest', or, 'Let all the elect believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and they shall be saved.' The objective doctrine of the gospel declares that, indeed, only the elect can and will be saved, but when a person is under conviction of sin and is brought to see that only the Lord Jesus can save him, then that person should be encouraged earnestly to 'call upon the name of the Lord, and he shall be saved': he will find grace in the eyes of the Lord. The work is the Lord's, but the experience of the work is the sinner's.

It may seem strange to some to find that there are some people who do think in the way described above. These are they who would not presume to seek, or to call upon the Lord, because they just don't know – have never received a testimony – that they are one of the elect. At a glance this attitude might seem to be very submissive to the doctrine of election and to the sovereignty of God in salvation; but in reality it is nothing but careless, rebellious fatalism: the people who reason this way just have no need of salvation – to find the grace of God – in their experience, and therefore never will.

But Noah sought grace, and found it. And here is another fruit of having found the grace of God: he heard the voice of the LORD warning him 'of things not seen as yet': in other words, of the coming judgment, and so, 'by faith' in that word of warning, and therefore 'moved with fear, Noah prepared an ark to the saving of his house', Heb. 11:7. And this is what the grace of God will bring: knowledge of the judgement to come upon this evil generation, and a preparation to escape the same. And if you walk with God in the light of this tremendous truth – of the end of the world – and if by faith you hear the word and obey it, like Noah did, then by that very obedience you will 'condemn the world and become an heir of the

righteousness which is by faith.' Yes, while the whole of the world, and the whole of the false profession of the LORD in these last days has its affection set on eating and drinking, buying and selling, planting and building – for tomorrow! – and marrying and being given in marriage, only – but – those who have found grace in the eyes of the LORD will find safety – salvation – in the coming judgment of fire, when everything will be burnt up.

Nevertheless, you'll be hated for your way, and for the message you sound; and maybe some with a Christian profession will seek to 'kill' you, for Jesus did say that those who would seek to kill the disciples – as well as 'putting you out of the synagogue' – separating you from their company – will do it 'thinking that they are doing *God* a service', John 16:2; so these are 'Christian' murderers.

But still it is said – and it happened, too – that Noah did find grace in the eyes of the LORD, he did build the ark to the saving of his house, and therefore he did escape – pass through – the judgment which he, by faith and revelation, did see coming. And as it was in the days of Noah, in all these aspects, so it shall be in the day that the Son of man is revealed.

So after reading all this, does the reader now feel persuaded, having been warned, and has it now become a necessity with you to flee from the wrath to come? If you have any love for your soul then forsake the way of the world: both its mentality and 'life style'; flee also the corrupt and apostate modern profession of Christianity in all its denominated forms, and turn to God seeking to find grace in his eyes – the salvation of your soul: for the time is short, see 1 Corinthians 7:29-31, and its context.

And if you have already found grace in the eyes of the LORD, then 'walk with God'. The Lord Jesus said, 'Follow me'. The Lord is walking, he is going in a certain direction, and taking a certain course, and he commands his disciples to follow him in the way that he leads. Listen for the voice of the Lord and obey it; pray for grace to discern the will of God, and then do it. Keep yourselves from idols, and from idolatry; keep yourselves in the love of God; cleanse yourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit. If you are one of the sons of God and look for his appearing, and know that when he does appear you shall be like him, then, if you have this hope – which is a certain hope – purify yourselves,

even as he is pure. Redeem the time for the days are evil, walk worthy of the Lord, and increase in the knowledge of God. Grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, and may the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, give us each the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him, that we might abide in Christ and therefore endure until the end, so that when he shall appear, we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before him at his coming.