

'Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves.'

Matthew 7:15.

You are warmly invited to meetings arranged by the Sovereign Grace Advent Testimony, to be held, God willing, at
NEW LIFE BIBLE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH,
44 SALUSBURY ROAD, LONDON, NW6 6NN
(near Queens Park Underground Station – Bakerloo Line)

Theme for 2018 – The Teaching of the Lord Jesus Christ

January 26th, 7pm

Subject: Christ the Son of David

Speaker: Martin Humphrey

February 23rd, 7pm

Subject: The Parable of the Ten Virgins

Speaker: Stephen A Toms

March 23rd, 7pm

Subject: Christ the Good Shepherd of His Sheep

Speaker: Paul Toms

It is hoped that each message will be recorded and friends should be able to listen to and download messages from our website. Applications for cassettes and/or CDs should be made to the secretary. Full lists of S.G.A.T. recordings and of publications can be found on our website (WWW.SGAT.ORG) or may be obtained from the S.G.A.T. secretary.

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To our subscribers and friends: Please send subscriptions, gifts to Sustentation Fund, for Bible circulation and orders for publications to the S.G.A.T. secretary, Mr Stephen A Toms, 1 Donald Way, Chelmsford, Essex, CM2 9JB. Cheques, etc. should be made payable to 'Sovereign Grace Advent Testimony.' In order to save postage, receipts will be sent with the next issue of the magazine.

To those not residing in the United Kingdom: In view of the high charge for exchanging foreign currency, it would be appreciated if, where possible, friends send in sterling. Supporters in Australia, Canada, or New Zealand may send to their respective representatives. Payments can be made over the S.G.A.T. web-site.

S.G.A.T. Council: Stephen R Evans, Peter Fleming, Martin Humphrey, David McMillan, Richard Monteith, Andrew P Toms, Paul Toms, Stephen A Toms.

ISSN 1351-4768

Watching and Waiting

LIGHT FOR PERILOUS TIMES

SCRIPTURAL

Reformed, Protestant, Puritan, Prophetical, Expository, Doctrinal

Volume 29, No 6

January-March, 2018

Quarterly, £4 per annum

**This magazine is issued by the
SOVEREIGN GRACE ADVENT TESTIMONY**
(Registered Charity No. 261489)
Website: WWW.SGAT.ORG

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CENTENARY YEAR

The objects are:

1. To teach the nearing approach of our Lord's return. James 5:8
2. To hold forth the Truth and to expose and resist error. Jude 3
3. To note passing events in the light of 'the Scripture of Truth.' 2 Peter 1:19
4. To unfold the Word of God by comparing Scripture with Scripture. Acts 17:11
5. To encourage missionary endeavour, and all service for Truth. Acts 1:8
6. To comfort and strengthen those who seek to stand with the Lord, apart from abounding lawlessness. 2 Timothy 2:19
7. To call for separation from false ecumenism. 2 Corinthians 6:14-18

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IMPORTANT ANNOUNCEMENT:

There will, God willing, be a special Centenary Meeting held on Saturday, 24th November, 2018 at Westminster Baptist Church, 100 Horseferry Road, London, SW1P 2EE. The preacher engaged for this very unique occasion is Dr John Douglas, who has been associated with the Testimony for over 50 years. It is hoped that friends will take the opportunity to attend, and we should be glad if you would reserve the date and come.

Sovereign Grace Advent Testimony Centenary

The Sovereign Grace Advent Testimony was, under God, formed on the 1st November, 1918, which means that this year marks the centenary of the movement. During that time there have only been two secretaries. Mr George H Fromow was appointed at the inaugural meeting in 1918 and continued until his home-call in April, 1974. On his passing, Mr Stephen A Toms was appointed and, by God's grace and help, has continued till the present time.

About one hundred years ago, a series of prophetic studies had been held in Ealing, conducted by Mr Thomas Parkes, but these meetings were unavoidably discontinued. Several friends greatly regretted that they could not continue and desired to make a restart. (Mr Parkes was a London City Missionary attached to Park Chapel, Chelsea).

At the same time, there were those who had severed their connection with 'The Scripture Research Society' on a matter concerning the honour of our Lord, whereupon they desired to direct their efforts among their immediate Christian associates.

Also, the large inter-denominational movement, 'The Advent Testimony Preparation Union' had issued a statement on a broad basis, to which friends could not subscribe.

These coincidences, together with the desirability of seeking to rouse God's people to quickened interest in the hope of our Lord's return and prophetic truth connected therewith called people to prayer, and through prayer to action.

Accordingly, following prayer meetings held in Mr Frederick Parker's house at Ealing, a Conference took place in that same house on 1st November, 1918, and it was resolved 'that meetings be instituted for Addresses and Conference on Scriptural Teaching, especially in relation to our Lord's return, the first to be in Carmel Chapel, Pimlico, on Tuesday, November 26th.' When Mr Parker gave his testimony at a meeting in July, 1921 he spoke of the S.G.A.T. as being born of prayer, and the desire to carry the light of prophecy to fellow believers.

At the meeting on November 1st, conveners were appointed and those brethren involved were Pastor John Hunt Lynn (the highly esteemed and learned pastor at 'Hope' Chapel, Bethnal Green), Mr Frederick Parker, Pastor E Rose, Mr Thomas Dean,

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and Mr George Hazelton Fromow. Mr Lynn was appointed to be chairman, Mr Fromow to be secretary, and Mr Dean to be treasurer. Thus, the Sovereign Grace Advent Testimony was commenced. Others quickly joining them were Mr G L Silverwood-Brown, Pastor George Barnett, Pastor James Payne, Mr James H Pizey, Mr James E Rayner, Missionary William J Rowlands, Pastor William Wileman, and Mr Stanley G Taylor.

The friends at 'Carmel' responded warmly and other meetings were subsequently held there for a time. Sadly, the lease on the property at Pimlico expired after a short period.

The Lord's guidance was sought and members of the Testimony were thankful to the Lord for His directing to 'Bethesda' Chapel, Notting Hill Gate, where meetings were held regularly for some years.

It was soon discovered that there was a great dearth of suitable hymns on Advent and Prophetic Truth, so a hymn sheet was produced. This led to the publication of the first edition of the 'Grace and Glory Hymn Book.'

Prior to that time a magazine entitled 'Perilous Times' bearing testimony to the truth embraced by the founders of the S.G.A.T. had been circulated, and that had succeeded a similar magazine entitled, 'Old Truths.' In fact, the last issue of 'Perilous Times' was in March, 1919, it being decided to introduce a new magazine entitled 'Watching and Waiting.' So, the first copy of this later magazine was published in April, 1919. The last three issues of 'Perilous Times' announced the new paper.

It has oftentimes been said that Christians cannot be expected to agree on the subject of unfulfilled prophecy. That may be largely true, but should it be so, with an open Bible, and the willing, gracious teaching of the Holy Spirit? If non-agreement should be a fact, it is not reason for silence as to one's convictions.

From the outset, the S.G.A.T conveners were all men of strong convictions, and it did not take long for them to draw up an affirmation of faith, or manifesto. This affirmation stated clearly that the Testimony was based on the teaching of Free, Sovereign and Distinguishing Grace (often called, 'Calvinism'), in contrast with those prophetic schools associated with Arminianism and teaching which belittles the sovereign rights and finished work of our Redeemer.

Adhering to God's sovereignty, the manifesto declared that God would faithfully fulfil all His word. Thus, receiving doctrinal truth on the bare Word of God, the same principle was followed in all departments of Biblical research, being persuaded that 'God says what He means, and means what He says.' Consequently there has been a witness to Prophetic and Advent Truth known as 'Historic Premillennialism' and 'Simple Futurism,' that is, a personal coming of the Lord Jesus Christ which will be post-tribulational and pre-millennial.

This Testimony has always been, and continues to be, a hearty supporter of true missionary activity. However, we do not believe that foreign missions were designed of God to convert, or radically improve, the world, or bring in the Millennium. Neither do we believe that any political reform can work the desired change and bring in 'the Golden Age.'

The S.G.A.T. continues to bear its testimony, praying that, both in professing Christendom and in the world at large, many may, by sovereign grace, be brought to 'cease from man' and trust wholly in the promises and prophecies of the Word of God. Many people are disillusioned of worldly, political and international hopes, and are looking about them for some answers to the world's problems. We desire that God the Spirit will use the prophetic message to bring such to Christ and to the knowledge of the truth; and that they may be brought into the light through the study of prophecy.

The S.G.A.T. bears witness to the profound conviction that Christendom is fast advancing in apostasy from God and His Christ and Truth, towards the climax of antichristianism, and with the nations, to the judgment of the Day of the Lord; and at the same time testifying to the belief that the Lord is gathering out His elect, both from Christendom and Heathendom, by the preaching of the Gospel of His Grace, throughout the world. Our message warns of the fast collapse (1) of organised religion, (2) of democracy, and (3) of international good faith; it also points beyond things that are, and shall be shaken, to our receiving the Kingdom which cannot be shaken (Hebrews 12:28).

Should God's people study prophecy? Our reply is 'Yes' (1) Because God has given it to us in His Word, and we charge Him with foolishness if we neglect it; (2) Because the days in which we are living are days of crisis, and we need to seek unto the Lord for guidance; and (3) Because thereby we are warned against the very things which many are falling into, through ignorance of the Prophetic Word.

Over the years, many meetings have been held and much literature has been distributed, including the regular issue of the magazine, 'Watching and Waiting,' promoting the teaching of Holy Scripture, setting forth in order those things which are most surely believed among us.

In these days, we may be few and despised but the message that we seek to declare is the all-important one. The godly men who met one hundred years ago had a vision which, sadly, so many today are lacking.

Friends may be interested to know that at the twenty-fourth annual meeting held as long ago as 23rd January, 1943, Mr Fromow made the following statement,

'The prophet Daniel says that in the Time of the End, 'Many shall run to and fro and knowledge shall be increased' (12:4). Some think this indicates rapid locomotion, increased means of transport and great progress in scientific knowledge. We believe otherwise; that Daniel as God's messenger is telling us that in the 'Last Days' there will be intensive enquiry as to the meaning of prophecy and thus knowledge thereof will be increased. That enquiry will bring revival in grace and strength to the 'wise' or 'instructed' or 'understanding' ones; for service and suffering in the last days; of which days our Lord said, 'Whoso readeth let him understand' (Matthew 24). It is to promote

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that enquiry and call many to 'run to and fro,' in the reading of Daniel and other prophets, and so to increase accurate knowledge, understanding and wisdom, that the S.G.A.T. was instituted and continues its testimony. Our Bibles should be ... much thumbed at Daniel and the Revelation. With such high objectives the S.G.A.T. has humbly laboured ... and we feel sure that in not a few quarters 'knowledge has been increased.' We reaffirm our conviction that if revival in the Church is to come, it will be along the line of increased reception of the whole Word, including prophecy. But we have not yet reached 'the time of the end' or the 'last days,' though signs indicate that we are hastening thereto.

'Some folk are asking, 'Is this World War a sign that we are in the last days or the end of the age?' We may reply by adapting the Premier's words about the North African Campaign, 'This is not the end or the beginning of the end, but it may be the end of the beginning,' i.e. we may be approaching, and we think we are, the end of the age preparatory to 'the time of the end' or Daniel's seventieth week. We expect, following this war, a period of worldly peace and commercial prosperity, of increasing lawlessness Godwards, giving space for the final apostasy to develop, the ten kingdoms of prophecy to align themselves, Babylon to become the world's emporium and Satan's seat, and the Antichrist to arise; **but withal we expect opportunity for the true Church to carry the Gospel to the uttermost part of the earth.** We expect therefore that the united nations will survive the Axis powers, not only because of their vast resources; not only because of their defence of freedom; not only because they have befriended Israel, while Axis powers have diabolically downtrodden them, not only because of the Godly remnant in the world whose universal intercessions are acceptable before God. Not only will God permit this for the sake of the Church, Israel, and the progress of Evangelism; but we have all along expected this result because of the sure word of prophecy. It declares, according to the prophetic visions of Daniel, that God has been pleased to delegate supreme world power; and dominion over Israel, during the times of the Gentiles, to the four prophetic Empires, Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece and Rome; not to Germany, Russia, Japan, or for that matter, to U.S.A. Here a solemn warning is needed: Power and privilege, if abused, calls forth Divine judgment, and who dare deny that this power delegated from God is being abused? The power of Government delegated to these Gentiles since the fall of the Israel's Theocratic monarchy has been given to none besides, and waits the time of our Lord's return, when He Whose right it is will come forth invested with universal sovereignty. He as Messiah and Son of Man will reign in Jerusalem, and before His ancients gloriously. 'He shall not fail nor be discouraged till He have set judgment in the **earth**, and the isles shall wait for His Law' (Isaiah 42:5).'

Watching, Waiting, Working

(This article is taken from Watching and Waiting, Nos 2 and 3, 1919. The author's name has not been given).

On all hands we hear much about 'Watching for the Lord;' and there are also many periodicals of a religious character which continually insist upon the necessity there is for watching. But one seldom hears, or reads of, the way in which this is to be done, and the consequence is that for want of an intelligent apprehension of the truth about it, many true Christians are not 'watching,' in the Scriptural sense, at all. The object of this brief article is to show, if possible, from the Lord's own words, what He Himself intended when again and again He bid His disciples 'Watch.'

'Watching' (Mark 13:33,37), 'Waiting' (Luke 12:36), and 'Working' (Luke 19:13; 1 Corinthians 15:58) are correlated, and together comprise the right attitude of 'all' (Mark 13:37) believers towards the Lord, the Church, and the World in this dispensation, the whole being the subject of constant prayer (Mark 13:33), without which they will be vain.

As a starting point we may note that in Mark 13:37, the Master, speaking to the twelve, says, 'And what I say unto you I say unto all, Watch.' So it is clear that His teaching, as it relates to watching for His return, is meant not only for the Lord's disciples in the days of His flesh, but also for **all believers** during the interval between His departure and His coming again. This fact puts upon every child of God a definite responsibility which it would be wrong to ignore. Included in the 'all,' we ought to be among those who 'watch.'

Now watching is not a mere attitude of expectant waiting. Many believers make it so because of failure to appreciate the clear and definite teaching of Christ in all His prophetic utterances. Taking verse 35 of Mark 13 into consideration for a moment, we cannot but see how the 'therefore' of that verse throws us back upon the Lord's teaching in the whole of the chapter.

It will be noticed that for the encouragement of 'all' (verse 37) true watchers, the Lord tenderly and graciously says (verse 7) 'be ye not troubled.' Mr B W Newton says that 'the word translated *troubled* means not so much the trouble or anxiety or fear, as that tumult of disorder of mind which arises from wrong and excited expectation' (Notes on Matthew 24). But it also means that there need be no care-full anxiety, since all is under Divine control.

How can we better have a 'right expectation' than by receiving the very clear and definite testimony of our Lord Himself as to what constitutes real 'watching'? This is given in response to the natural enquiry of the disciples as to 'when shall these things be, and what shall be the sign of Thy coming?'

In His reply Christ makes it plain that His disciples had to be (1) Watching against deception (verses 5 and 6). Our Lord was making special reference in verses 5-8 to

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events which should occur soon after His departure, and which might lead them (and others who ‘should believe on Him through their word,’ John 17:20) to think that His return was imminent, so He clearly tells them that ‘the end shall not be yet’ (verse 7). In order that we too may be upon our guard, we have not only the Lord’s warning in verses 22 and 23, but that of the Apostle Paul as well: ‘Let no man deceive you by any means’ (2 Thessalonians 2:3). Our one defence against deception, either as to men or matters, is found in what ‘is written.’

In His reply to His disciples Christ makes it plain that (2) Watching involves Testimony for truth (verses 9-13) and that this would lead to suffering. That suffering was by no means confined to the apostles or to their days, and if there has been less of suffering in our time it is surely because God’s people have been lacking in faithfulness. It is well also to note in passing that Christ did not promise a triumphant progress for the Gospel in this dispensation, but says that it ‘must first be preached among all nations.’ It is clear, therefore, that from the day of His departure until He comes again those who watch will seek also to obey this call to evangelise the nations, and thus give proof of their watchful obedience. This world-wide testimony for Truth – Gospel Truth, doctrinal and prophetic truth (‘all things,’ Matthew 28:20) would, and will, take time. But ‘the longsuffering of our Lord is salvation’ (2 Peter 3:15), and for this reason among others we need to pray that we too may ‘suffer with long patience unto the coming of the Lord’ (James 5:7, margin).

Addressing Himself to all believers (Mark 13:37) the Lord Jesus says in verse 14 of the same chapter ‘when ye shall see.’ It is obvious that only those will ‘see’ in a literal sense who are on the spot. It is quite certain, however, that such an event as the Lord declares will fulfil Daniel’s prophecy (Daniel 9:27; 11:31) cannot take place without tidings of it reaching the whole world. This will be to waiting and watching believers one of the ‘signs’ which the Lord bids them to expect. Another is found in the ‘affliction’ (verse 19) referred to as ‘tribulation’ in verse 24 ... In verse 23 the Lord says, ‘I have foretold you all things.’ Why, if it is not that His people should be prepared and watching for their occurrence? Further, He foretells them in their order of happening and distinctly says that it will be ‘after that tribulation’ (verse 24) that the ‘Son of Man’ shall be seen ‘coming in the clouds with great power and glory’ (verse 26).

So far from leading His disciples, and those who should believe on Him through their word, to look for His return at any moment, the Lord speaks of Himself ‘as a man taking a far journey, who left his house, and gave authority to his servants, and to every man his work’ (verse 34). His people are to be careful in His absence to maintain a consistent testimony for Truth by word and deed, by life and lip, being engaged always in caring for ‘whatsoever He has commanded’ (Matthew 28:20). Thus will the interval of waiting be filled up with happy service for Him, and His people will know in that service His unfailing help and guidance since He has promised to be with them ‘all the days, even unto the end of the age.’ If, as some say, they will not then be here, we fail to understand what meaning can be given to such a promise, since it can only apply to believers.

Surely the words of verse 29, 'when ye shall see these things come to pass, know that He is nigh,' should have all due weight with every child of God who is seeking to walk in the light of Truth! No one can watch intelligently for the return of our Lord and yet neglect HIS OWN clear teaching as to the signs which are to precede it. Let us pray for grace and guidance that in this matter we may be faithful to Him Whose witnesses we are to be 'in these last days.'

The Signs of the Times

(Matthew 24 and 25)

By Benjamin Wills Newton

(The Sovereign Grace Advent Testimony has continued to recommend the works of Mr Newton, so we are pleased to include this article. It was included in the 'Time of the End' Series, published after the preacher's homecall but is based on an address given by him – in the 19th century. The subject is dealt with more fully in Mr Newton's book, 'The Prophecy of the Lord Jesus in Matthew 24 and 25,' obtainable from ourselves, price £2.50).

'O Jerusalem, Jerusalem! How oft would I have gathered thee ... and ye would not' were the words with which the Lord Jesus concluded His personal ministry there; and it was during the time that intervened between thus returning from the city and His crucifixion that the prophetic discourses recorded in these chapters and in John 14-17 were delivered, treating of the future history of His disciples after His ascension and after the Comforter had come.

All that was ecclesiastically and secularly great was left behind in Jerusalem. He stood not only separate from but rejected by all, and His disciples now, as then, have to share His reproach and to go 'without the gate.' None but they who followed Him to the Mount of Olives were privileged to hear the instruction of these chapters. Nicodemus heard it not. He preferred to remain in the Sanhedrim! So it is now. The separate and rejected place is that in which alone the words of prophecy are heard and valued. We are not to linger amid scenes that Jesus abandons. We are not to be fascinated by the attractiveness of the works and ways of men or voluntarily to tarry in the circle of the world's glory, which is fast ripening for its doom. If we countenance the world's religiousness or carelessly lie down under the shadow of trees about to be cut down by God's hand in wrath; and, though believing in Jesus, refuse to stand by His side as it were, in the midst of men, we shall be utterly unprepared to receive His prophetic words. But if we ask, as the disciples did, 'when shall these things be and what shall

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be the sign of the Lord's coming and of the end of the age?' let us read this prophecy, and we shall receive His own reply.

Verses 4-14 contain the answer to the **first** of these questions, presenting an outline of the whole period during which the Lord Jesus is absent; carrying us on to the close of the age, and giving a brief description both of the state of the world and of the professing church. Of the existence and character of this interval, which has already lasted over 1800 years, the disciples were totally ignorant, and this ignorance the Lord intended to remove. It was concerning this present dispensation that would give birth to Christendom and He was then introducing, that the disciples needed instruction, and also about the new witness in the earth He should call out through their ministry. And after pointing out things that were not signs of the end (verse 4-6), He speaks of the relation of the nations one to another throughout the whole earth (verses 7-8). Next, of the governmental relation of God to the world (verse 7). Then, the relation of nations to the Church (verse 9); and lastly, the declension and evil that would be found even within the Church itself (verses 10-13). Nevertheless, the Gospel should continue to be preached as a sufficient witness, and then the end should come.

Verses 4-6, which speak of the wars resulting in the capture of Jerusalem, are now past. They were not signs of the end and must be carefully distinguished from verses 21-22, which speak of a coming tribulation in Jerusalem and Judea which is the immediate sign of the end. Unless these two periods are contrasted, there can be nothing but confusion; and this there has been, of which we are now suffering the consequences. The famines and pestilences etc. (verses 7-8) are but 'the beginning of sorrows.' Such scourges of the hand of God have from time to time swept fearfully over the earth, but they are as the premonitory drops before the thunder cloud breaks in an unequalled season of tribulation, the like to which has never been seen.

The **second** division of this prophecy comprises verses 15-28 inclusive; giving a definite answer to the second question the disciples asked; viz., as to the sign of His coming and of the end of the age. The sign is the setting up by antichrist of his idol in Jerusalem and the consequent infliction on the land of Israel of a tribulation, which is immediately to be followed by the manifestation of the Lord in glory. The setting up of the abomination (verse 15) is the evidence of the maturity of antichristian apostasy, and is mentioned here, because the Gospel of Matthew as a whole, is concerned with the history of Christendom: i.e. of those professing the Name of Christ whilst Israel is rejecting Him. We could hardly expect the history of Christendom should be touched on without the fact being mentioned of the very heart and centre of it – all the ten kingdoms of the Roman world – becoming apostate.

Although more than 1800 years have passed since the Lord uttered these words, this 'abomination' has not yet stood in the Holy Place; but the whole prophetic Scripture concurs in showing that the Jews, again returning to Jerusalem in unbelief, will there rebuild their temple and re-establish their sacrifices, but without Christ. Accordingly,

He will allow them to fall into the hands of the last great king of the Gentiles, who will blaspheme God, pollute the Temple, take away the daily sacrifice and there plant the abomination that maketh desolate, which will be worshipped (Revelation 13:4,15).

Why should we marvel at this? Even now Christendom is teeming with idolatry from one end to the other! Superstition ending in infidelity and infidelity ending in the idolatry of 'greatness' are the characteristic features of the present hour. The elevation of this image will be but the embodiment and closing act of the iniquity of the age. It will be the avowed establishment of Atheism! Man will worship man and God will be openly rejected and blasphemed.

Until this climax of iniquity, Christianity and Christian testimony will linger around Jerusalem; but as soon as the idol is set up, this will be instantaneously withdrawn. All the disciples of Jesus are commanded immediately to depart; so suddenly, that they are directed to pray that neither the hindrance of the Sabbath nor the inclemency of winter be allowed to delay or impede the rapidity of their flight. The claims of duty may have detained some there up to that moment – perhaps to preach the Gospel of grace – but then they are commanded to depart and to depart instantly; to flee to the mountains; to find a refuge if necessary in dens and caves of the earth; not because of men, or of hostile armies as of old encompassing Jerusalem (for no such armies are mentioned here), but because God is about to interfere and to send upon the Land and City a season of tribulation the like to which has never yet been. The 'vials of wrath' in the Revelation may be referred to as an exposition of the character of that hour, and sufficiently show the reason of that merciful interposition that affords the servants of Jesus deliverance from its terrors.

Verses 27-31 are too plain to need any comment. No word can be more definite than IMMEDIATELY. It is the emphatic word of the chapter, showing the unequalled tribulation to be the sign of Christ's coming and of the end of the age, for which the disciples asked.

It is not the object of chapter 24 to give details of this tribulation or the condition of Jerusalem. Jerusalem and its people had been left to reap the consequences of their rejection of Christ, and this, their season of tribulation, is referred to here because it is to be a sign to the Church. In the Old Testament and in the Revelation we find its history is fully given; but fearful as that hour of tribulation will be, yet the wrath and utterly destroying judgment which follow it on the appearing of the Son of Man in His glory will be infinitely more terrible.

Neither is the outpouring of this wrath of the Lamb described here. This chapter says nothing of what follows on Jerusalem and the earth after the appearing of the Lord and the mission of the angels to gather His believing people, the elect, for Jerusalem and the earth are not the theme of this prophecy. Both of them at that time will be subjects of His wrath, though among the Jews and Heathen also a remnant is to be spared. Both wrath and blessing will follow in their course, but the only act here mentioned as

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performed by the Lord on the earth is the gathering together of His saints; and they are safe with the Lord for ever, before the stroke of His wrath falls either on Jerusalem or on the earth. They will be on the earth during the persecutions of antichrist and during the tribulation in the Land of Israel; though those who are obedient to the Lord's command and flee will escape the latter – a Pella as of old being provided for them as a refuge – but they will be taken from the earth before the destructive judgments are inflicted by the Lord, when He comes to 'tread the winepress of the wrath of God.'

We are commanded to watch for the premonitory signs that shall indicate this consummation. This may seem easy. But is it so? What chapter has been more used to hinder watchfulness than this? for is it not commonly believed to have been fulfilled, at least all the sign part of it, when Jerusalem was destroyed by the Romans? If we believe this, can we be watching for these things now? Could anything more completely defeat the very object of the Lord in teaching us about them than the notion that they have been accomplished long years ago? Yet this is the way in which light is made darkness, and the very words that are intended to guide are turned into instruments to blind!

'Let no man therefore deceive you by any means' (verse 4). We are expressly commanded by the Lord Jesus Himself to watch not only for His return, but for the signs of His return. Nor indeed, is it possible to watch according to His commandment in any other way. We cannot cancel these words, 'Now learn a parable of the fig tree.'

Thus then a distinct reply had been given to the enquiry of the disciples respecting 'the sign of His coming and of the end of the age.' They had thought it nigh, being entirely ignorant of what they were themselves to be the founders. They knew nothing of this lengthened period during which a new 'body' is to be called out, who at the period of the Lord's return will be neither Jews nor Mahomedans, nor Antichristian apostates nor Heathen, but professors of the Name of Jesus. Their history it is that gives its most important moral feature to the age during the last 1900 years, for even 'the mystery of iniquity' itself, which ends in the full development of Antichristianism, receives that development in the very midst of Christendom. Antichristianism, having Jerusalem for its centre, will spread over all the kingdoms of the Roman world; but Christianity, however weak and corrupted, will continue to exist in other parts of the earth. Multitudes will still retain the profession of the Name of Christ, and it is their history that forms the subject of the remainder of this prophecy to the end of chapter 25, in which we are taught the moral aspect of Christendom at the time of the end.

If we imagine some vast waste that had never yielded to the cultivating hand of man, we have an emblem of what the world was when Christianity was first introduced into it; all barrenness and wildness in the sight of God. And if we suppose a fair field of wheat suddenly to arise in the midst, promising an abundant harvest, we should have a picture of what Pentecostal Christianity once was. If again we were to see this fruitful spot spoiled by the intermingling of spurious seed – introduced secretly by some hostile

band – and yet to watch this mingled field gaining day by day on every side, we should have an emblem of what Christendom has been and still is. If we looked again and saw a mass of thorns and briars suddenly arise in the very centre and choke both wheat and tares throughout a wide though not unlimited extent, that would give a picture of what Christendom will be when its very centre, i.e., the ten final kingdoms of the Roman world, shall have apostatised from profession even of the Name of Christ and of God, and will be bowing down to antichrist.

All these spheres are referred to in this discourse, for chapters 24 and 25 form one connected prophecy; and, having learnt respecting the apostate centre, we have now to consider the condition of that part of Christendom which does not become apostate and of which the Lord speaks under four aspects. Firstly, as the servant over the household' (24:45). Secondly, as 'wise and foolish virgins' (25:1-13). Thirdly, as 'traders with talents' (25:14-30); and fourthly, the 'gathering and separation of the sheep and goats' (25:31).

If we regarded appearances as at present exhibited, we might despair of true Christianity being anywhere preserved; for all that does not remain in the darkness of Heathenism seems to be giving itself over to Infidelity or Sacerdotalism, and if it does not perish under one or other of these engines of Satan, it will be as great a marvel as the bush which Moses saw burning but not consumed.

Yet so it will be. True Christianity will not perish from the earth even at the hour of the age's greatest blasphemy! One special object of the concluding part of this prophecy is to teach us that it will retain the exercise of its peculiar functions as well as its ostensibly separate position up to the end; for there will be servants over the household; traders with their talents; and virgins going forth with lamps. But in whatever way it is preserved, it will not be exempt from that which has ever been its characteristic, viz., unsound profession and evil in the midst. There is the evil servant in the household; foolish virgins amid the wise; the wicked and slothful servant possessing a talent; and goats among the sheep.

In imparting the knowledge of these things, the Lord Jesus so teaches, as to bear morally on the souls of His disciples, that they might be stimulated to watch and serve.

Thus, after describing the mad revelry of the ungodly – heedless of every sign and hardened and careless as in the days of Noah – He proceeds to speak of His household, and of the wise and faithful servant employed diligently in giving to each his portion of meat in due season. Yet there is a drawback even here, in the wicked servant who uses his knowledge respecting the Lord's delay for the encouragement of riot and evil.

But the servants of Christ have to watch, not merely because they are in proximity to the riot of an ungodly world but because they live at an hour when slumber has fallen even upon the Church. Theirs will be the ostensible separateness of position, but it will be the separateness of slumberers, even till the very hour when the tokens of the Lord's

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near presence will enable every lip to say, 'Behold, He cometh,' because every eye will see Him.

Then He adds the parable of the talents, as if to indicate the approved place of diligence during the hour of slumber. In the first passage His servants are set in contrast with the ungodly world; in this with the professing church itself. Trading implies watchfulness and energy, and there will be found some who, while the Lord tarrys, occupy diligently till He come. This is not ministerial service merely, but a place open to all saints of using for the Lord whatever they have received. Yet here again the picture is darkened. There was one professed servant who, not because of being overtaken with slumber, but in wakeful deliberate purpose of soul refused to use his talent for the Lord, because he thought the Lord's character hard and exacting.

The parable that follows fully answers the charge of the evil servant and vindicates the ways of the Lord. There can be little of hard exaction in Him Who, when He comes with all His holy angels and sits upon the Throne of His glory, shall call before Him all His flock and own even the weakest of them as His brethren and acknowledge their little services as done unto Himself.

Opposition to 'The Downgrade'

In 1891, a statement of faith was issued which has often erroneously been called 'Mr Spurgeon's Confession of Faith or Manifesto.' Mr Spurgeon emphasised that, although he fully and wholeheartedly supported the affirmation of faith, it was no more his manifesto than that of any other of the ministers who agreed to and signed the statement.

The Manifesto was published in view of the growing change in the Baptist Union. There was compromise by many in the Union on the question of the verbal and plenary inspiration of the Bible. Seven ministers – Archibald Geikie Brown, James Douglas, William Fuller Gooch, G D Hooper, Charles Haddon Spurgeon, James Stephens, and Frank H White – met from time to time and it was suggested, not by Mr Spurgeon, that a plain statement be made concerning the issue. Later, other ministerial brethren joined in the stand being made, increasing the total number of signatories to thirty.

It is interesting to note that the statement included the sentence, '**Our hope is the Personal Premillennial Return of the Lord Jesus in glory.**'

'**Personal Return**' means that the same Lord Jesus Christ, born in Bethlehem and crucified on Calvary, will come back to this earth. Jesus said, 'I will come again, and receive you unto Myself' (John 14:3). When the Saviour ascended, heavenly messengers told the disciples, 'This same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen Him go into heaven' (Acts 1:11).

'Premillennial Return' means that the Saviour will come before the millennium. The millennium is the period of one thousand years which is mentioned six times in Revelation 20. What happens during the one thousand year reign of Christ on earth is frequently spoken of in many passages of Holy Scripture – in both Old and New Testaments.

When this truth is rightly understood and received it opens up so much of the Bible.

It is a fact to be observed that these faithful men in the nineteenth century thought it important to emphasise that they were Pre-millennialists. Why was that so? It is abundantly evident that they saw that Pre-millennialism was the prophetic system taught in Holy Scripture, but there must have been something more in their thoughts than that.

Those thirty men who are all now in glory saw the importance of taking God at His Word. They believed God says what He means and means what He says; that every word of God is pure, that every word of God is true. They saw that the Lord Jesus Christ is to be glorified before all men when He returns to this earth to reign manifestly.

They understood that the earth was created for the ultimate glory of the dear Son of God, and not for the glory of the enemy of God and truth, Satan.

We would contend that pre-millennialism needs to be maintained in order to resist modernism and liberalism. It seems to us that the method used by other prophetic systems to interpret Bible Prophecy resembles the way in which liberals treat Bible History and Bible Doctrine. We would emphasise that whilst spiritual application is not wrong, the plain words of Holy Scripture are to be believed and received in their grammatical sense.

Strangely enough, there are many ministers today who profess to be following in the steps of Mr Spurgeon and yet they embrace a-millennialism or else post-millennialism! Very sadly, we have heard pre-millennialism referred to as heresy!

Then, it would appear that there are many preachers who seem not to know what they believe on prophetic subjects. That is disgraceful, shameful!

It would do some of the present day ministers good if they would return to prophetic truth and consider the teachings of such men as Mr B W Newton. The Sovereign Grace Advent Testimony has recently republished some of these nineteenth century works by Mr Newton and the more important and relevant volumes to read on such subjects would be (1) 'Aids to Prophetic Enquiry,' (2) 'Babylon and Egypt,' (3) 'Prospects of the Ten Kingdoms.' and (4) 'Thoughts on the Apocalypse.' These books may have been written many years ago but they helpfully deal with issues which are still current at the present.

At the time of the first advent, Simeon and Anna had obviously considered the prophetic Scriptures, had taken their words literally, and consequently, had understood what was happening when the Saviour was born.

Christians today, and particularly pastors and preachers, in a similar way should study pre-millennial truth about the second advent and thus procure an understanding of the signs of the times. A few bold men who did this took a stand for truth in 1891.

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May others do the same in our own day and generation. Why not pray for those who minister the Word of God to you that they may be led into prophetic truth? It really is pathetic that so many congregations are starved of these important issues so relevant in these days.

S.A.T.

S.G.A.T. Meetings: God willing, meetings have been arranged during 2018 for our centenary year, and the theme for this special occasion is ‘The Teaching of the Lord Jesus Christ.’ We trust that friends will be interested in this chosen theme, and we would like to see others come to our meetings, which we expect to hold on the fourth Friday of each month except August and December. The Spring Conference is in April and the Autumn Conference in September, when we have afternoon meetings at 4.pm. in addition to the usual evening meetings. All evening meetings are at 7.pm. Details of the meetings arranged for the present quarter are given on the back page and so that you can insert the dates in your diary and arrange to be present, we would mention that the suggested programme is due to be as follows:

April 27 (Aft).....	The Resurrection of the Just	<i>Brian McClung</i>
(Even).....	The Stone of Israel	<i>Brian McClung</i>
May 25	Judging the Kingdom	<i>John Douglas</i>
June 22	The Parable of the Tares	<i>Ivan Foster</i>
July 27	The Parable of the Net	<i>Philip Knowles</i>
September 28 (Aft) ..	Concerning the Temple	<i>Ian Shaw</i>
(Even) ..	Concerning Moses and the Prophets	<i>Ian Shaw</i>
October 26.....	The Throne of His Glory.....	<i>Richard Monteith</i>
November 23.....	Concerning His Coming	<i>David McMillan</i>

Recorded Messages: During 2017, the theme at our meetings has been ‘The Glory of God – Studies in Ezekiel.’ The different subjects and speakers were – The Vision of the Glory of God (*David Park*); The Vision of the Prophet’s Commission (*Gordon Dane*); The Visions of the Glory Departing (*Ivan Foster*); The Vision of the Sins of the Rulers of Jerusalem (*John Douglas*); The Visions of the Parables about Jerusalem’s Condition (*John Douglas*); The Visions of the Siege and Judgment of Jerusalem (*Paul Toms*); The Visions of the Judgment of the Nations around Israel (*Ivan Foster*); The Visions of the Fall of Egypt (*Ian Shaw*); The Vision of the Valley of Dry Bones (*Stephen A Toms*); The Vision of Gog and Magog (*Martin Humphrey*); The Vision of the Millennial Temple (*Richard Monteith*); The Vision of the New Land of Israel (*David McMillan*); The messages can be downloaded from the Sovereign Grace Advent Testimony website. For friends wishing to purchase recordings the prices of the cassettes are £1.20 each and CDs £1.50 each. Prices include postage. The messages can also be heard on www.sermanaudio.com on our page which is, *The Sovereign Grace Advent Testimony*.