

THE HERALD OF TRUTH.

And I saw another angel flying in the midst of Heaven having the everlasting Gospel to preach saying with a loud voice—Fear God and give glory to him, for the hour of his judgment is come.—Rev. xiv. 6, 7.

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EDITED BY GEORGE F. MARTIN

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Its object is to proclaim the truth—"Thy word is truth"—"Sound an alarm" and say, "Behold the Bridegroom cometh."

Persons who wish to receive this paper regularly can have it sent them by sending their names with such donations as they can afford to make, to others the paper will be distributed gratuitously, excepting where they are disposed of by employed newsmen and boys in which cases they will be sold for one penny each.

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VIEWS AND EXPERIENCE

IN RELATION TO

ENTIRE CONSECRATION,

AND THE

SECOND ADVENT:

PRESENTED TO THE MEMBERS OF THE PORTSMOUTH N. H. BAPTIST ASSOCIATION.

BY P. O. BROWN, &c.

Late Pastor of the Middle Street Baptist Church, PORTSMOUTH, N. H.

II VIEWS AND EXPERIENCE IN RELATION TO THE SECOND ADVENT

Let me now, brethren, invite your attention to a continuation of my experience, on another subject. I was always opposed to the introduction into our pulpits and churches, of all the great moral topics which have agitated the minds of the community for a few years past. And I have thought myself more than fortunate, as you well know, in keeping them all out of our midst. Our little bark has safely outdone all the storms to which other churches have been exposed, and from which they have so severely suffered, as I should once have said. I believe I have never preached on one of those topics, and certainly I have never been the open advocate of any of them, unless it might be thought I have been of the cause of Temperance. Here, I confess, I have erred greatly. One of my main reasons for so doing, however, has been because I plainly saw that one excited theme prepared the mind for another, and if one was introduced, a hundred might be, and no one could foresee to what such steps might lead.

When the doctrine of Sanctification began to be generally discussed, I thought it a branch of that very tree from which so much bitter fruit had of late been gathered. And when the doctrine of the Second Advent began to be preached, I thought it an offshoot of the doctrine of Sanctification, and that the friends of the former and the latter would be the same. These convictions were strengthened on listening to several discourses by Mr. Fitch, which were professedly Second Advent Sermons, but, in fact, discourses on Sanctification. I thought him really dishonest, wickedly designing, under the cloak of the Second Advent, to palm off Sanctification upon the churches. I publicly rebuked him for it, and left attendance on his lectures. Nor was I pleased with the two or three discourses which I heard from him on the Advent near. I had even invited my own congregation to give him a hearing, supposing that he was a ripe scholar and a profound theologian. But what was my disappointment and mortification on finding him, as I then thought, such an intolerable perverter of plain texts of Scripture. I can now see that it was myself that was abusing the plain declarations

of God's most holy word, and he was perverting them in my then opinion, because he did not depart from their literal rendering, and give them the spiritual interpretation which I had been taught to do.

I can now see, and am free to admit, that the two doctrines are closely conjoined. Not that every Christian who believes in and embraces the first, will also receive the second, because facts would not bear me out in this remark. But he who has been truly sanctified is better prepared to look at the doctrine of Christ at the door. He is qualified by patience, by lowliness, and by the indwelling influences of the Spirit to sit himself down to the investigation of God's word on this subject, until he arrives at the truth: the ties are rent that once held him to the earth, and he is not only willing, but anxious to soar away and meet Jesus in his descent from the skies.

I never directly preached against the doctrine of Christ's Second Advent at hand, though I have often aimed incidentally to tear up some of the superstructure on which the friends of it were endeavouring to build their theory. I received their books and newspapers, as I could not do otherwise without treating those indecorous who presented them to me. Some of these I read, more perhaps from curiosity than from anything else, just as one might look on and witness a contest between two pugilists, without feeling any special interest in the success of either party, others I carefully stowed away, intending, at the expiration of 1843, to bring them to light again, and hold them up as a monument of religious folly, then, I was intending to correct the presumption of all the foolish and ignorant who had dared to exalt themselves above the wisdom and erudition of the pulpit. Brethren, do not be guilty of as great a sin, lest you provoke the wrath of the Almighty. Only one day previous to the great blessing which God bestowed upon me, and of which I have spoken, I had declared that I would not be seen in a Second Advent meeting. Those composing them, were, I saw, as a class, of too low an order for me to associate with. I had no sympathy for their noise, and for their broken harangues. But how mighty is the arm of God to abase the proud, and to humble the lofty!

On the very next day after, so marvellous had been God's dealings with me, that I could not keep away from just such a meeting as I had heretofore despised. My soul wanted to give utterance to its emotions of love to Christ, and to all whom he had truly purchased with his blood, and now I was determined that the last vestige of pride should be crucified and driven out of my heart, if, indeed, any yet lurked there. Accordingly I repaired to the church where those despised followers of the Lamb were holding a series of meetings, and these, to the rejoicing of many hearts, I told what great things God had done for my soul. I was now favourably disposed towards the doctrine of the Advent near, and was willing to read on the subject, as I did occasionally, while I thought, weighed considerations, and prayed more.

It should have been remarked, that at this time my mind was perfectly free from all care and concern. Brother H— conducted the series of meetings which we had soon determined on holding. Christians were wonderfully quickened, and sinners were pricked in their hearts and cried out, "Men and brethren, what shall we do to be saved?" For about four weeks, I did not myself preach a discourse. The minister's usual anxiety, which attends a revival, was not felt by me. I gave the church, souls, myself, and all into the keeping of God's hands, while I secluded myself in my study, in obedience to what seemed to be the movings of God's Spirit, searching the Scriptures, and weeping and praying before God that he would make known to me. I was aware that there was some truth left, which my mind did not apprehend; and this conviction I expressed to a brother minister who called to see me the day after I was so signally blessed. I sought interviews at various times with the clergyman of the town, hoping that some words would be providentially dropped that would give me a clue to that for which my heart was anxious. But I always left them with disappointed hopes. At times I fancied that it might, perhaps, be my duty to unite myself with another denomination, where there might be more vital piety, more

scripture truth, and a greater field for usefulness. But my views on the leading doctrines of the Bible were unchanged, and I did not and do not feel like sacrificing them on any account. Indeed, these doctrines, as held by our church, never seemed to stand out so prominently on the pages of inspiration as at this moment; they are all harmonious, beautiful, glorious. Well, I would ask myself, with what denomination can I unite? I could fix upon none, a connexion with which I felt would satisfy the strong desires, and calm the restless feelings of my heart. Now my soul was all ecstasy and devotion, and then indescribable darkness and wretchedness would succeed. I wondered that my peace and enjoyment were not as deep and as continuous as those of others who had been baptized with the Holy Ghost; for I was fully conscious of striving, in all things, to please my Heavenly Father; was much in prayer, and felt willing to submit myself entirely to the Divine will. Never did I so feel my weakness, my inability to err, need of the prayers of Christians. O, how I longed to say to each member of my church, and to every one who had access to a mercy-seat—pray for me, how my soul yearned to make known to my dear people my peculiar exercises of mind, that I might have their sympathies.

Greatly was my soul refreshed and comforted on one occasion, about the first of February, during one of our vestry meetings, to hear a number of praying souls arise, and say that it had been deeply impressed upon their minds that they must pray more than ever for their pastor. One of them stated that the burden of his own prayers had long been for me—that the moment he had undertaken to pray for himself, he almost unconsciously and involuntarily found himself praying for me. Three of these individuals were neither members of our church, nor believers in the doctrine of the Second Advent near, although devoted Christians, having come in to enjoy the season of revival. And now my soul flowed out like water in gratitude and thankfulness to God for the intelligence that others were bearing my case continually up to heaven. Immediately we all bowed before God, and my soul wretched and agonized before the Throne, that God would keep my feet from stumbling, take me into his hand, and reveal to me not only all truth, but show me what he meant by the peculiar strivings of his Spirit. On returning to my residence, again I knelt to pour out my desires unto God; and no sooner was my knee bent, than again I found myself, as on the first of January, in the awful presence of Jehovah; fear and trembling seized all my reins, while glory seemed to envelope me. At once, with as much clearness and force as though an audible voice had thundered it in my ear, and down to the very depths of my soul, I was given to understand something to this effect—the glorious reign of Christ—my own responsible connexion with the accomplishment of his triumph over the wicked—breath—lightning. Immediately, and for several days following, my mind dwelt with overwhelming interest on what those things might mean. Now, I thought I could interpret them in this way—God is about to convert the town, and perhaps a large portion of the earth—the day for a temporal millennium is fast dawning—I am to be used as an instrument in effecting these glorious things for Zion; my life is just at its close; all is to be done with the speed of lightning. Again, this was my interpretation. Christ is about to make his personal appearance for the destruction of the ungodly, and the gathering home of the saints;—I am to sound the Midnight Cry—the day of probation has just run out, and all are to be hurried into eternity; these things are to be closed up with the speed of lightning! Impressions of this kind were invariably made upon my mind, whenever I got near to God in holy, agonizing prayer; and whenever my mind wavered in regard to the near approach of Christ to reign on earth either temporarily or spiritually, my mind was completely wretched, though previously I might have been in religious raptures. Frequently when in prayer, I would have such heavenly manifestations, and such convictions wrought on my soul, that I would rise from my knees with the fullest persuasion that Christ was truly at the door. Still I had not studied the Bible with careful reference to the doctrine of the Advent near. I thought the task to be a difficult one,

and I did not feel that I had time then to enter upon it. But I could have no inward rest until I made a commencement.

I now began to search the Scriptures, without note or comment, for myself. I took the chart used to illustrate the visions of Daniel, merely to aid in keeping everything clear and distinct before my mind. It was humbling, notwithstanding all that God had done for me, to study the bible with the aid of a chart, on which I had heretofore looked with so much contempt. There was the figure of a man in a certain attitude—and then, in different postures, the figures of various and most hideous beasts. The repugnance with which I regarded that chart cannot be well conceived. I thought it to have been conjured up by some dreamy, silly person, who was seeking to make every body like himself. But why should I have had this deep-rooted prejudice against those symbols? There is no man, a being proud of his capacities, allied to God, and the destined associate of angels, what symbol more appropriately chosen to illustrate the occurrence of the greatest events which the world has or will ever witness? There is the lion, the bear of the forest, at whose roar man himself trembles and turns pale, and there are the other mighty beasts of the field, next to man in the scale of being, what symbols more appropriate than these with which to mark the scale of time? Those symbols, those pictures, hideous as they appear, why, they are the language of the Bible. And supposing there should be just such a transfer to paper of all events recorded in the word of God, what kind of a scene would be presented before the eye? But the chart is in perfect obedience to the command of God—"Write the vision and make it plain upon tables, that he may read that readeth it." I was totally ignorant of just what the chart was designed to illustrate, and knew not what was the reasoning from it.

I cannot here relate what were my feelings as my investigations went on. I was astonished and humbled to observe the Babylonian kingdom represented by the head of gold; the Medo-Persian by the breast and arms of silver; the Grecian by the belly and thighs of brass, and the fourth kingdom by the legs of iron, and its divisions by the feet and toes of iron and of clay. And then to admit, that our own and other proud nations were represented by the feet and toes, "part of iron and part of potter's clay." I could hardly believe still I would believe it if I had good and sufficient proof for it. Pursuing my study, I was amazed, surprised, delighted, on discovering such a complete correspondence between the vision of Nebuchadnezzar and that of Daniel, and then finding such a perfect likeness between that seen by Daniel and by John the revelator, even to the number of days when the vision should expire. I could but think that John must have been very familiar with the book of Daniel, or that some of his book must have been penned without such inspiration. But I could not reconcile the matter easier than this—it was of God, and he was taking these various means to remind man, at different and remote intervals from each other, that he was not slack concerning his promises, and that he might have some gauge by which to ascertain how fast and at what period the sands of time should all run out. My Polyglot Bible was on my table, and aided me wonderfully in making speedy references to other portions of God's word. Such was the harmony between the books of Daniel and of John, and other books of the Bible, so plainly did the book of Daniel and all the passages to which I had reference for the purpose of comparing Scripture with Scripture, teach the doctrine of the near approach of Christ, that I began to be suspicious of the edition of my Bible, and actually turned to the title-page to see by whom and when it was published. I knew the reference column is the work of man; but still it appears singular, that man, years ago, and probably without any intention of teaching the Second Advent near, should make such happy references.

Having given the book of Daniel a thorough investigation, which I had never done before, supposing if that or any other book of the Bible really taught the doctrine of Christ's speedy coming, those who were more aged, learned and pious than myself, would be likely to ascertain it, and that when they sounded the note of alarm it would be time enough for me to awake,—I was astonished to find the mass of Scripture testimony