

The Christian Science STANDARD

“Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.” — John the Baptist
Matthew 3:2

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STANLEY C. LARKIN, AUTHOR AND EDITOR, 1989 - 2001

“Elias truly shall first come, and
restore all things.”

Matthew 17:11

— *Christ Jesus*

“ELIAS. Prophecy; spiritual evidence opposed to material sense; Christian Science, with which can be discerned the spiritual fact of whatever the material senses behold; the basis of immortality.

“‘Elias truly shall first come and restore all things.’ (Matthew xvii. 11.)”

Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures

— *Mary Baker Eddy*

SPECIAL COMMITMENT OF THE EARLY CHRISTIAN CHURCH

From the earliest times the Christian Church has been regarded as the kingdom of heaven established on earth. We agree with the theologians in saying that “the visible Church is called a ‘kingdom.’ Christ and His Father rule in it, and maintain righteousness, order, safety, and happiness therein. It is called the ‘kingdom of heaven.’ It is of heavenly origin, has a heavenly governor and laws, and is erected to render multitudes fit for heaven.”

Bible scholars also point out that Jesus was more intent upon bringing his disciples and followers into his kingdom than he was in organizing an earthly church body. His followers were, in fact, those who broke with the present world and threw in their lot with the new order — or kingdom of heaven — which was “at hand.” This is the basic idea of the church, and it is the idea on which it was originally formed, and the membership of this church is comprised of those who are seeking to order their thinking and lives by the principles of that kingdom, in which the will of God is the only law.

After his glorious resurrection and ascension Jesus’ students and followers continued to live as they had when he was here, but as their numbers grew they were obliged to introduce some kind of order, which with the passing of time became more detailed. Before long the church became an institution with the mission of establishing the kingdom of God on earth in the consciousness of Jesus’ growing followers.

The records of the early church tell us that it had several wonderful peculiarities which the modern church does not possess. One of these was the evidence of intense ardor and confidence. The disciples had seen their Master resurrected, and then ascended into the kingdom of heaven. Jesus had taught them that the end of the world was to come after his second appearing. They believed his return would occur in their time.

Another peculiarity of the primitive church was that it embraced the whole life of its members. To them, the kingdom of heaven, or new Jerusalem, was the only thing worth troubling about. This material world was unreal and it meant nothing, because Jesus had proved it to them to be nothing. They had been told that they must give up all materiality in order to enter his kingdom and thus they were willing to sacrifice all for Christ and the Church. To flee “the wrath to come” and reach His kingdom was the imperative. They literally became pilgrims on earth, whose home is heaven.

TWO JUDGMENTS FORETOLD BY CHRIST JESUS

In his discussion with his disciples on the Mount of Olives, three days before his crucifixion, as recorded in Matthew, chapter 24, Jesus reviewed again his teaching on the coming destruction of Jerusalem and the end of the world. This Olivet Discourse is found also in Mark, chapter 13, and Luke 21:5-38. Commentaries tell us that in the account given in Luke, Jesus not only discusses (1) the coming end of the world, but also foretells (2) the siege of Jerusalem by Titus, which took place A. D. 70 when the city and its population were destroyed. “But that siege (A. D. 70) and its horrors but adumbrate the final siege at the end of this age . . .” (*Scofield Reference Bible*, unrevised edition, page 1106)

THE MASTER'S VIEW OF THE END

We know that Jesus taught his disciples regarding the end of the world, from his Olivet Discourse recorded in the three gospels mentioned above. In addition, however, his disciple Peter tells us what view Jesus held as to the manner of the end. He writes:

This second epistle, beloved, I now write unto you; in both which I stir up your pure minds by way of remembrance: That ye may be mindful of the words which were spoken before by the holy prophets [Old Testament], and of the commandment of us the apostles of the Lord and Saviour: Knowing this first, that there shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts, And saying, Where is the promise of his coming? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation. For this they willingly are ignorant of, that by the word of God the heavens were of old, and the earth standing out of the water and in the water: Whereby the world that then was, being overflowed with water, perished: But the heavens and the earth, which are now, by the same word are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men. But, beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance. (II Peter 3: 1-9)

THE GLORIOUS NEW HEAVEN AND EARTH

Continuing with II Peter 3: But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up. Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation [behavior] and godliness, looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat? Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness. Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for such things, be diligent that ye may be found of him in peace, without spot, and blameless. And account that the longsuffering of our Lord is salvation;... (II Peter 3:10-15)

This was the teaching of Christ Jesus to the apostles as is stated in II Peter 3, verse 2. It is the same message as that of John the Baptist which will be discussed in more detail further on.

THE END NOT TO OCCUR UNTIL THE GOSPEL IS PREACHED THROUGHOUT THE WORLD

Jesus in his discussion told his disciples:

And ye shall hear of wars and rumours of wars: see that ye be not troubled: for all these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet. For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom: and there shall be famines, and pestilences, and earthquakes, in divers places. All these are the beginning of sorrows. 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. And then shall many be offended, and shall betray one another, and shall hate one another. And many false prophets shall rise, and shall deceive many. And because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold. But he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved. 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. (Matt. 24:6-14)

The end will not come until the gospel is preached throughout the world and all will have had the opportunity to be "saved."

THE FALSE VIEW OF THE MILLENNIUM AND THE MILLENNIAL KINGDOM

Christianity, including many Christian Scientists, have long expected the manifestation of the millennial estate described in Isaiah and Revelation (Isa. 11:6-9; 65:17-25; 66:22; Rev. 20:4-6). They generally interpret these passages as describing an earthly condition of bliss and happiness lasting one thousand years. This interpretation is so universal as to constitute a Christian doctrine.

According to the *Popular and Critical Bible Encyclopedia*, this is a Jewish concept, originating before the first advent of Christ and having taken root in Christian thought. "As the world was made in six days, and as, according to Psalms 90:4 'a thousand years are as one day' in the sight of God, so it has been thought the world would continue in the condition in which it had hitherto been for 6,000 years; and as the Sabbath is a day of rest, so will the seventh period of a thousand years consist of this

millennial kingdom, as the close of the whole earthly state. . . . This period [the period following the six thousand years] was conceived by the Jews as a sort of golden age to the earth, and every one formed such a picture of it as agreed with his own disposition, and with the views concerning the highest felicity which were dictated by the degree of intellectual and moral culture to which he had attained. With many these views were very low, being confined to sensual delights, while others entertained better and more pure conceptions of that happy time.” (Vol. II, p. 1163)

The millennium, however, is that state referred to in Isaiah 65:17-25 as a realm of perpetual blessedness, when “the wolf and the lamb shall feed together, and the lion shall eat straw like the bullock: and dust shall be the serpent’s meat. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain, saith the Lord.”

The view of an earthly, material golden age constitutes a barrier preventing people from making the effort to escape the “horrors” of the “day of the Lord.” It omits the fact that Isaiah said the millennial state would occur after the establishment of the new heavens and the new earth.

These millennial references indicate that after “six thousand years since Adam” there is to come about some significant change in the human situation which will forever alter the course of human history. Along this line of thought we find the following interesting reference in *Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures*, where Mary Baker Eddy writes: “The twelfth chapter of the Apocalypse, or Revelation of St. John, has a special suggestiveness in connection with the nineteenth century. In the opening of the sixth seal, typical of six thousand years since Adam, the distinctive feature has reference to the present age.” (S&H 559:32)

On page 514 of *Science and Health* in the paragraph subtitled “Qualities of thought,” Mrs. Eddy plainly indicates that the millennial state is spiritual, not material, and explains by quoting the well known passage from Isaiah (11:6-9) that he is describing a spiritual state of thought, — “the individuality created by God,” and not the material millennial utopia found in popular Christian thought.

THE MILLENNIUM: A PROCESS

Mrs. Eddy explains the millennium as a process, not a material state or realm in these words from *Miscellany* 239:27: — “The millennium is a state and stage of mental advancement, going on since ever time was. Its impetus, accelerated by the advent of Christian Science, is marked, and will increase till all men shall know Him (divine Love)

from the least to the greatest, and one God and the brotherhood of man shall be known and acknowledged throughout the earth.”

That Mrs. Eddy did not believe the millennium to be a material utopia is further confirmed in her statement in *Science and Health*, p.110:32, where she states: “No analogy exists between the vague hypotheses of agnosticism, pantheism, theosophy, spiritualism, or millenarianism [i.e., ‘belief in the millennium of Christian prophecy’ — *Webster*] and the demonstrable truths of Christian Science; and I find the will, or sensuous reason of the human mind, to be opposed to the divine Mind as expressed through divine Science.”

The words and works of Jesus and his followers confirm the fact that the millennium is actually a process by which we are to gain access to the kingdom of heaven. This is the kingdom of heaven about which Jesus preached throughout his three-year ministry. This is the reign of Christ which is to eventually rule all nations, — the new heaven and new earth, — when “the first heaven and the first earth [are] passed away,” as St. John writes in Revelation 21:1.

Jesus had undoubtedly grown up with the concerns of the people of Judea — that the pagan Roman occupation was extremely oppressive to the religious Jews and that they were seeking ways of deliverance. Their only hope seemed to be in the advent of a deliverer in the form of the oft-prophesied and long-awaited Messiah. Jesus’ early years had been obviously around the synagogue and its teachers, since at the age of twelve years he was found in the temple at Jerusalem “sitting in the midst of the doctors, both hearing them, and asking them questions. And all that heard him were astonished at his understanding and answers.” (Luke 2:46, 47) He was familiar with the writings of the Old Testament Scripture and their prophecies.

All of the teachings of Jesus were aimed at bringing his students and hearers out of the world and into his kingdom. His parables usually began with the words: “The kingdom of heaven is like unto” and so on, and of his healing work he said, “But if I cast out devils by the spirit of God, then the kingdom of God is come unto you.” (Matt. 12:28) His healing work was not merely to repair matter, but to open thought to his kingdom. It was to lift thought above the world into his kingdom.

MARY BAKER EDDY ACCEPTS JESUS' TEACHING ON "THE END OF THE WORLD"

As with Jesus and his disciples, the followers of Mary Baker Eddy must necessarily accept the actual, not mere figurative, end of the world. Mrs. Eddy writes: "Let the Word have free course and be glorified. The people clamor to leave cradle and swaddling-clothes. The spiritual status is urging its highest demands on mortals, and material history is drawing to a close." (*No and Yes* 45:24-27)

SCIENCE AND HEALTH DESCRIBES THE PROCESS

Science and Health throws light on "the end of the world" process and what will undoubtedly cause a mass turning to Christian Science. We read: "Love will finally mark the hour of harmony, and spiritualization will follow, for Love is Spirit. Before error is wholly destroyed, there will be interruptions of the general material routine. Earth will become dreary and desolate, but summer and winter, seedtime and harvest (though in changed forms), will continue unto the end, — until the final spiritualization of all things. 'The darkest hour precedes the dawn.'

"This material world is even now becoming the arena for conflicting forces. On one side there will be discord and dismay; on the other side there will be Science and peace. The breaking up of material beliefs may seem to be famine and pestilence, want and woe, sin, sickness, and death, which assume new phases until their nothingness appears. These disturbances will continue until the end of error, when all discord will be swallowed up in spiritual Truth. . . .

"As this consummation draws nearer, he who has shaped his course in accordance with divine Science will endure to the end. . . . Those who discern Christian Science will hold crime in check. They will aid in the ejection of error. They will maintain law and order, and cheerfully await the certainty of ultimate perfection. . . . 'He uttered His voice, the earth melted.' This Scripture indicates that all matter will disappear before the supremacy of Spirit." (S&H pages 96 and 97)

All loyal Christian Scientists accept *Science and Health* as divinely inspired. We find nothing in any of Mrs. Eddy's recorded statements implying that anything in *Science and Health* is meaningless, extraneous, or frivolous. The time has come for each of her loyal followers to ponder the important points quoted above and give due consideration to their application to our times.

Mrs. Eddy further writes: “It is undoubtedly true that Christian Science is destined to become the one and the only religion and therapeutics on this planet.” (*Miscellany* 266:29-2) What will cause the inhabitants of this planet in the twenty-first century to radically depart from materialism and embrace Christian Science?

THE PROPHET MALACHI FORESEES TWO ADVENTS OF CHRIST

In the book of Malachi we have his prophecies of the future coming of Christ in two distinct advents. In chapter 3, verses 1 through 6, is the prophecy of the First Advent. In chapter 4, verses 1 through 6, is his prophecy of the Second Advent, — also, verse 1 describes the judgment that is to occur after the second coming, — the destruction of the world by fire. Verse 2 describes the second coming as the Sun of righteousness rising and possessing “healing” in its “wings” (rays).

MALACHI FORESEES TWO ELIJAH-TYPE MESSENGERS

Malachi chapter 4, verse 5, states: “Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord.” Properly translated with English idiom it should read: “Behold, I will send you a prophet Elijah . . .” Elijah is a type for all time. It is in this sense that Jesus understood it (see Matt. 11:14; 17:11, 12; also Luke 1:17). (Cf. *Dummelow*, p. 615) The Jews interpreted Malachi to mean that the actual Elijah would return and prepare the way for the Messiah who would defeat their enemies and set up a great millennial kingdom in Palestine, and that they would rule the world from Jerusalem. They did not accept the meaning of Malachi that there would be two advents as well as two Elijah-type messengers.

JOHN THE BAPTIST, ELIJAH-TYPE NUMBER ONE

The spiritual attitude of the early Christians in regard to the end of the world is better understood as one contemplates the work and mission of John the Baptist. We know from the gospels that John was a child of promise and that he was born in a city of Judah (cf. Luke 1), when his parents were old. Both of his parents were descendants of priestly families and his mother was related to the mother of Jesus. He had deeply religious interests and was familiar with the writings of the Old Testament prophets. He saw himself as fulfilling prophecy and said: “I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness, Make straight the way of the Lord, as said the prophet Esaias [Isaiah 40:3-8].” (John 1:23)

THE MISSION TO WARN

When we look at the prophecy in Malachi we see that the special message of this messenger, John the Baptist, was to warn the world of the great judgment — the end of the world — and prepare the race for salvation. The words of Malachi are: “Behold, I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me: and the Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to his temple, even the messenger of the covenant, whom ye delight in: behold, he shall come, saith the Lord of hosts. But who may abide the day of his coming? and who shall stand when he appeareth for he is like a refiner’s fire, and like fullers’ soap.” (Mal. 3:1, 2) *Scofield’s Reference Bible* here cross-references “day of his coming” with Malachi 4:1: “For, behold, the day cometh, that shall burn as an oven; and all the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly, shall be stubble: and the day that cometh shall burn them up, saith the Lord of hosts, that it shall leave them neither root nor branch.”

THE VIPERS

John the Baptist, Elijah-type number one, knew he was the forerunner of the Messiah, and that the deliverance of the Jews and of the whole world was not a military victory over their national enemies, but a spiritual victory over “the world, the flesh, and the devil.”

What was this voice crying in the wilderness? And what was its message? The first recorded words of John were: “Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.” (Matt. 3:1, 2) And his other cry: “O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come?” (Matt. 3:5-7) In the desert where John had been living, often there were grass fires. Many insects may be burned up, but the wise vipers flee and are seen moving ahead to escape the flames. As Hastings’ *Dictionary of the Bible* (page 474) states it: “. . . He [John the Baptist] heard God’s voice in nature as well as in His word: as he brooded on the signs of the times, the barren trees of the desert, fit only for burning, and the vipers fleeing before the flaming scrub, became emblems of the nation’s peril and lent colour to his warnings of impending wrath.” Also, *The Interpreter’s Bible* explains this passage: “In Luke 3:7 all the hearers were a ‘brood of vipers’ who fled like snakes from a field . . . on fire.” (Vol. 7, page 264) One cannot fail to see John’s message in his reference to the fleeing vipers — it can have no other meaning than the world is coming to its end by fire. (See S&H 515:5)

ELIJAH-TYPE NUMBER TWO

Malachi, in chapter 4, presents the Second Advent of Christ, together with the second Elijah-type messenger who this time was to serve, not as a forerunner, but as a “Restorer” and is directly involved in the events associated with the end of the world. The words of Malachi are: “He shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers.” The commentary states: “the ‘fathers’ are the patriarchs and prophets of Israel, the ‘children’ are their degenerate descendants who have alienated the heart of ‘their fathers’ by their disobedience to their godly precepts. The preaching of [Elijah-type number two — a ‘Restorer’] will turn the heart of the children to imitate their just (i.e. pious) ancestors, and thus the heart of their ancestors, now alienated, will be turned to them in love and approbation.” (*Dummelow*, p. 738)

Thus we have Elijah [N.T. “Elias”] as a type of the forerunner to the First Advent, warning Israel “to flee the wrath to come.” And, at the Second Advent, this “Elijah-type” ministers to the re-gathered Israel and all the world, aiding them in fleeing the wrath.

In chapter 4, Malachi foresees the second coming of Christ in the rising of the Sun of righteousness. *Scofield’s Reference Bible* (unrevised edition) refers this “Sun” to Genesis 1:16, as signifying the “greater light” in the two advents of Christ. Prior to the Second Advent “the sun is not seen, but there is light. Christ is that light (John 1:4, 5, 9), but ‘shineth in darkness,’ comprehended only by faith. As ‘Sun of righteousness’ He will dispel all darkness. . . . The ‘lesser light,’ the moon, reflecting the light of the unseen sun,” is the state of the world prior to the second coming. (*Scofield* page 4)

As Jesus and his three disciples were coming down from the Mount of Transfiguration, about nine months before his crucifixion, we read in Matthew, “And his disciples asked him, saying, Why then say the scribes that Elias [Elijah] must first come? And Jesus answered and said unto them, Elias truly shall first come, and restore all things. But I say unto you, that Elias is come already, and they knew him not, but have done unto him whatsoever they listed. Likewise shall also the Son of man suffer of them. Then the disciples understood that he spake unto them of John the Baptist.” (Matt. 17:10-13)

Scofield’s footnote, page 1023, states: “All the passages must be construed together (Matt. 17:10-13; 11:14; Mark 9:11, 12, 13; Luke 1:17; Mal. 3:1; 4:5, 6). (1) Christ confirms the specific and still unfulfilled prophecy of Mal. 4:5, 6: ‘Elias shall truly first come and restore all things.’ Here, as in Malachi, the prediction fulfilled in

John the Baptist, and that yet to be fulfilled in Elijah, are kept distinct. (2) But John the Baptist had come already, and with a ministry so completely in the spirit and power of Elijah's future ministry (Luke 1:17) that in an adumbrative and typical sense it could be said: 'Elias is come already.' Cf. Matt. 10:40; Philemon verses 12 and 17, where the same thought of identification, while yet preserving personal distinction, occurs (cf. John 1:27)."

THE GREAT RESCUE OPERATION

The central theme in the life of Moses was the deliverance of the Children of Israel from Egyptian bondage by leading them out of the land of the Pharaohs and bringing them into Canaan. An even greater call is now upon the human race for a universal salvation from a planet that is about to undergo divine judgment. Do not Christian Scientists today have a parallel responsibility in the events which are developing as a result of the second coming? Are we not called on to engage in the greatest rescue operation in history? Christian Science as taught by Mrs. Eddy is not a religion established for the pursuit of mere worldly pleasure but to establish the kingdom of heaven in individual consciousness. The mission of Christ Jesus was to save the world, — the human race, — by bringing humanity safely into his kingdom. He was not saving the world by making possible a materially healthy pursuit of worldly happiness, — "eating, drinking, marrying and giving in marriage."

To anyone who is imbued with this prophetic vision of the judgment of the world, it is apparent that material possessions and luxuries would be of diminishing value!

Go forth in hope! Go forth in might!
To all your nobler self be true,
That coming times may see in you
The vanguard of the hosts of light.

— *Sentinel* XIX, page 483

VANGUARD OF THE HOSTS OF LIGHT ELIJAH-TYPE NUMBER TWO

Just as John the Baptist appeared in the fulfillment of prophecy for the First Advent, so we are assured that our mission at the Second is of vital necessity to the Bible promises, as "vanguard of the hosts of light." Please join with us in our commitment to pursue, under the leadership of Mary Baker Eddy, the purpose and role of the Elijah-type at the Second Advent, — that is, to "restore all things."

Our Leader writes in *Science and Health*, p. 566:1: “As the children of Israel were guided triumphantly through the Red Sea, the dark ebbing and flowing tides of human fear, — as they were led through the wilderness, walking wearily through the great desert of human hopes, and anticipating the promised joy, — so shall the spiritual idea guide all right desires in their passage from sense to Soul, from a material sense of existence to the spiritual, up to the glory prepared for them who love God. Stately Science pauses not, but moves before them, a pillar of cloud by day and of fire by night, leading to divine heights.

“If we remember the beautiful description which Sir Walter Scott puts into the mouth of Rebecca the Jewess in the story of *Ivanhoe*, —

When Israel, of the Lord beloved,
Out of the land of bondage came,
Her fathers’ God before her moved,
An awful guide, in smoke and flame, —

we may also offer the prayer which concludes the same hymn, —

And oh, when stoops on Judah’s path
In shade and storm the frequent night,
Be Thou, longsuffering, slow to wrath,
A burning and a shining light!”

THE COMING SPIRITUAL CENTURY

“The day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night.” (II Peter 3:10) To the ignorant materialist the twenty-first century will be one of doom and gloom, but to those who have shaped their course in accordance with divine Science it is bright with the promise of the new heavens and new earth.

“Pilgrim on earth, thy home is heaven; stranger, thou art the guest of God.”
— *Science and Health* 254:31

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The Christian Science Endtime Center is established to uphold Mary Baker Eddy’s place in Bible prophecy, and to restore and preserve Christian Science as taught by her in the Massachusetts Metaphysical College in the 1880s.