

## **EFFECT OF PROPHETIC FULFILLMENT TODAY ON OUR HOPES**

Br. Ted Smith

(This discourse was the first part of a symposium given at the Palo Alto, California convention on Saturday, Jan. 30, 1971. The subject was “EFFECT OF PROPHETIC FULFILLMENT TODAY ON”—“Our Hopes” and “Our Daily Lives.” The first part was by Theodore A. Smith; and the second part was by George B. Wilmott.)

When I read the assignment that was given to me, there was a Scripture that came immediately to my mind—“And when these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh.” (Luke 21:28) Yes, that is what the fulfillment of prophecy does to us—we “look up, lift up our heads,” realizing that this means our “deliverance is drawing nigh.” There is one word that covers this and that is HOPE—hope that the deliverance of the church from earthly conditions is close at hand.

I noticed that our subject does not contain the word “hope” as relating to one particular thing hoped for, but it contains the plural form—“hopes”—h-o-p-e-s, with emphasis upon the letter s. And I think this is very fitting, for we, as the Lord’s people have hope of many things. So we are going to treat the subject from this standpoint—that each fulfillment of prophecy is identified with a distinct hope that something is going to happen later on.

It may serve no useful purpose to try to arrange the fulfillment of the various prophecies in a certain order, and the respective facets of hope identified with each fulfillment, so we will not attempt any particular order, but will take them as they occur to our mind.

The first prophecy that seems to us to take logical precedence over all others is found in Matt. 24:44 to 47 and Luke 12:42 to 44. This prophecy has to do with the promise of the Lord that at his second advent, he would choose a special servant, make him chief steward over all his goods, and would appoint this servant to give the Lord’s people their portion of meat in due season. The fulfillment of this prophecy is so clearly evident that there can be no mistake. Bro. Russell was living at the time our Lord returned in 1874 and when we study his ministry and the responsibilities that were placed upon him and take note of his grasp of Bible truths, we recognize that he was “that special wise and faithful servant.” He had full charge of all the Lord’s work, on a world-wide scale—thus he was chief steward over all the Lord’s goods. He was chief steward over all the Lord’s goods, in another sense too, and that was in his grasp of all the intricate details of the Divine plan, the intricate details of the Holy Spirit as pertaining to the Christian life and being in God’s service, and last, but not least, his grasp of the important and intricate details of prophecy, past, present and future.

But what has this to do with one of the facets of hope that we have as a result of seeing the fulfillment of this prophecy? It is this—through the ministry of our Pastor we are “given meat in due season.” What is meat for? It is for our nourishment as new creatures. Now here is where the hope element enters in—if we eat this spiritual food we are going to grow strong in mind and heart, and if we keep this up faithfully to the very end of our course here on earth, we will be acceptable to the Father, and we will have the hope that when we pass beyond the veil, we will be acceptable to the Father, and our Lord will confess our name before the holy angels, and confess our name before the Father, and we will have a glorious share in the first resurrection.

Incidentally I looked up the word “meat” in Strong’s concordance and it means “nourishment.” So that is what “meat in due season” is for—to nourish us as New Creatures. The same word is used in Heb. 5:14 “But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.”

Before proceeding with our subject, we would like to quote a few lines from our Pastor as to our attitude toward revealed prophecy. On page 17 of Vol. 2 the Pastor wrote, “Those permitted to view God’s grand chart of the ages, which so clearly maps out the orderly arrangement, the deep design and the wonderful scope of the divine plan... should be anxious to discover whatever God may be pleased to reveal concerning its times and seasons... Faithful children of God long to know when the King of Glory shall come in and the prince of darkness be bound; when the children of light shall shine forth as the sun, and the darkness be scattered; when the saints shall be received into full divine adoption, and the groaning creation released from the bondage of corruption and when our heavenly Father’s glorious character shall be fully revealed to an astonished world, causing all who love righteousness to bow their hearts in adoration and love and obedience.

“To be devoid of such desires indicates a lack of interest in, and appreciation of God’s plans.” (End of quotation.)

The second prophecy that we shall consider has to do with the Times of the Gentiles. I can remember some time back, making a special study of this subject, and how I was in awe of our Pastor’s spirit of reverent inquiry of the Word of God—to find out what God was pleased to reveal to his saints. With only a few Old Testament scriptures to go on, our Pastor studied carefully, and came to the conclusion that it was God’s intention to permit Gentile rule for a period of 2,520 years, and the terminal date was computed to be 1914. When the first World War started in 1914, the prediction was confirmed and great was the joy of God’s people at this evidence of the fulfillment of prophecy. There were to be four universal Gentile empires beginning with Babylon. Babylon was succeeded by Medo-Persia; Medo-Persia was succeeded by Greece and Greece was succeeded by Rome.

According to Dan 2:44 it was to be in the days of these kings that the God of heaven would set up a kingdom of his own. In 1874 God's Anointed returned from heaven; and according to the parable of the nobleman going into a far country, the nobleman was to return invested with a kingdom. There in 1874 Christ stood up on Mount Zion, and in 1914 the Kingdom, in the person of Christ, smote the image upon his feet. We note here the words of Dan 2:34 and 35, "Thou sawest till that a stone was cut out without hands, which smote the image upon his feet that were of iron and clay, and brake them to pieces. Then was the iron, the clay, the brass, the silver, and the gold, broken to pieces together, and became like the chaff of the summer threshing-floor; and the wind carried them away, that no place was found for them; and the stone that smote the image became a great mountain, and filled the whole earth."

The hope that is engendered in our hearts by seeing the fulfillment of the prophecy of the end of the Gentile Times is centered in the final words just quoted—"the stone that smote the image became a great mountain, and filled the whole earth." Yes, we have the soul-satisfying hope that the Kingdom of God which has smitten the Gentile image will become a great mountain and we will have a new heaven and a new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness.

It is interesting to note the language used by our Pastor concerning the end of the Gentile Times and the first World War. In the article entitled PRESENT DUTY AND PRIVILEGE OF THE SAINTS in the Feb. 15, 1915 Tower, found on Reprint pages 5631 and 5632, we find a number of statements that indicate clearly to the Pastor that the Kingdom was in operation overthrowing the nations. Here is one, "But we see nothing here to conflict with the thought that the present smiting of the nations is under kingdom control. The fact that some of the members of the kingdom class are still in the flesh does not militate at all against this thought. We see the kingdoms of this world now being dashed to pieces, and we are expecting to see the process continued until they are completely ground to powder. They shall become as the chaff of the summer threshing-floor, and the wind shall carry them away. Then shall they be found no more at all. Dan. 2:35." This is the first paragraph on Reprint page 5632.

Then in the next paragraph we find other interesting expressions, "Our thought is that we should look for still further evidences day by day that the Gentile Times have ended and that God's kingdom has begun its work. We are expecting to see multiplied proofs of the kingdom power, though the world will not recognize it as such until it is manifested in the flaming fire of anarchy, which is still further along. The present step is the war of the nations. The next step will be Socialism—an attempted Socialism—among the people. Then the third step, anarchy, will gradually come on. When this symbolic fire shall prevail, then the world will realize what we are trying to tell them now; namely, that God's kingdom is taking control, and that these various demonstrations are evidences that our Lord is taking his great power."

The following paragraph (par. 3, Reprint page 5632) contains a few more words of special interest. The “2520 years of [Gentile] rule are in the past, and they must now submit to a complete overthrow. We are expecting that the work of their crushing will steadily continue until its full accomplishment.”

The succeeding paragraph also contains interesting expressions, “At the sounding of the seventh trumpet Messiah was to take unto himself his great power and reign. That trumpet is now sounding! ‘And the nations were angry and thy wrath is come.’ (Rev. 11:18) Surely the nations are angry now!... And this war was allowed to occur at about the end of the Times of the Gentiles, at the appropriate time when they are to be dashed to pieces with the iron rod of the iron rule. (Psa. 2:6-12) It is our judgment that we shall see more of this iron rule and its breaking influence, not only upon the nations but upon society at large.”

So our hope is now thrilled with the idea that the old order is being destroyed by Kingdom power, and in due time this Kingdom will fill the whole earth with a rule of righteousness—the “desire of all nations.” It is important to continually bear in mind that when we are speaking of the end of the Times of the Gentiles, we are dealing with the final universal empire of Daniel’s vision, viz., the Roman Empire—and the Roman Empire is a thing of the past—there is no universal rule from the city of Rome.

The next prophecy that we shall consider is EARTH’S GREAT JUBILEE. Again we are in awe at the spiritual perception of our beloved Pastor. We find the time element of the Jubilee type considered in Vol. II, showing 1874 as the beginning year of the thousand-year Jubilee. A few of our brethren are skilled in computer operation, and they have brought to our attention that 1874 is proved beyond all doubt as the only date that would fit all the requirements in determining the correct date of the antitypical jubilee. Today we are seeing the fulfillment of the antitypical jubilee. All mankind are in agitation over their rights and there is much lightning and rumbling of thunder in connection with this agitation.

I have been in the habit for years past of clipping out items that would prove that we are in the very midst of the fulfillment of prophecy. I have one in particular that is in the form of a cartoon, dated Sept., 1960. Two human figures are shown, but the heads represent the two main political parties. One had the head of a donkey, and the other had the head of an elephant, representing as we know the Democratic party and the other representing the Republican party. These two figures are standing at a table covered with an assortment of papers labeled “Old Political Campaign Mishmash.” The two figures look at one another in alarm and the question is asked, “Do You Hear a Trumpet?” Over their heads and in the background somewhat is a trumpet and from this trumpet comes a loud blast—“World Revolution!” How meaningful this is to ourselves as Watchers. Yes,

there is a “World Revolution”—old concepts are being examined and rejected with violence. Even in Russia, young people are agitated and the whole world is being shaken with the blast from the Jubilee Trumpet.

Now what effect does this have upon us from the standpoint of hope? Oh we can see that injustice, and inequities are being recognized and men are clamoring for the correction of these unequal human conditions. All along the line the hail is coming down with crushing force and nothing shall escape the storm. All four aspects of human endeavor and relationships are being affected—politically, financially, socially and religiously the world is in an upheaval. So now we have hope that as the truth on all subjects is bringing the hidden things to light, eventually this will lead to the new order when the knowledge of the Lord shall cover the earth as the waters cover the deep, and finally Truth will triumph and mankind will have a pure language (only truth) to instruct them, and all mankind will be brought to a knowledge of the Truth, and all the willing and obedient will be brought to serve the Lord with one consent. (Zeph. 3:8, 9) What a thrilling and delightful hope this is!

The next prophecy we shall consider is found recorded in Mal. 4:5, 6—“Behold I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord. And he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse.” Again we are in awe of the spiritual perception of the one chosen of the Lord to ferret out the meaning of this prophecy for us. The Elijah class, the Christ, has preached the message of righteousness in the world, and if the world had been in the right condition of heart there would have been a reformation and a turning to do God’s will in the earth. But such was not the case, and as a result we see the great time of trouble raging over the whole earth, and getting more severe as the years go by.

By an understanding of the typical significance of Elijah, pointing forward to the grand work of the antitypical Elijah in the Millennial Age, we have a strong hope that we will have a part with our Lord as members of the Elijah class—our Lord the Head, and ourselves the body members to carry on a work of reformation and blessing for the groaning creation. What a hope this is—to think of being associated with our Lord in delivering mankind from the sentence of death and then bringing them up by judgment, to all that was lost in Adam. How we rejoice in this prospect and have our longings satisfied that ere long the poor groaning creation will see the manifestation of the sons of God and be delivered from its groaning condition.

The next prophecy we shall consider is found recorded in 2 Thess. 2:3, “Let no man deceive you by any means; for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that Man of Sin be revealed, the Son of Perdition.” How grateful we are that we have been given understanding of this prophecy, and that we know who the Man of Sin

is, the true Antichrist. Not long ago we had the pleasure of being present when a film was shown concerning the regathering of Israel. The operator at the time was a church minister. I was thrilled by the scriptures that were quoted concerning the return of Israel to the land promised them. After the picture was over, this minister was making a number of remarks and one of them was his expectation of the antichrist. Just exactly what he had in mind, I could not be certain, but one thing I knew for sure and that was that he did not know that Papacy was the antichrist, and, by the grace of God, I did know.

Another thing too was very impressive to me showing how richly favored we are. I asked this minister what was the purpose of showing the film, or what did his group have in mind? His reply was that they felt they must evangelize the Jew for Christ. He was in entire ignorance of Paul's words in Rom. 11:25, "that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fullness of the Gentiles be come in." Having the Truth, we knew it was not God's plan for us to try to convert Israel as a nation to accept Christ now as their Messiah. No, we wait for this pleasure when the full number of the Christ are chosen and glorified and the Kingdom is in full operation.

But now as to our having hope as a result of understanding the identity of the Man of Sin—we have the hope that this Man of Sin will eventually be consumed by the bright shining of the presence of Christ and the true Christ will be recognized and will establish a kingdom of righteousness in the earth to take the place of the Kingdom of Papacy which is established upon a foundation of Satanic lies and deception of the world. And we can see the fierce burning of the time of trouble and that Papacy is feeling the intense heat and her own people are eating her flesh. Many are the books today that are revealing the hidden things about Papacy. One by Daniel Callahan is entitled THE MIND OF THE CATHOLIC LAYMAN and on the front of the jacket are these words, "Baffled bishops, puzzled priests, uncertain laity, and all who are interested in the present mood of the Church in America can learn from this volume." Another one is entitled A MODERN PRIEST LOOKS AT HIS OUTDATED CHURCH and this is by Father James Kavanaugh. A third one is by Nino Lo Bello, entitled THE VATICAN EMPIRE and on the jacket are these words, "An authoritative report that reveals the Vatican as a nerve center of high finance—and penetrates the secrecy of Papal wealth."

One of the most thrilling prophecies is concerning the restoration of Israel to their promised land. Of course the restoration of Israel is prophesied by many texts found in the Old Testament. Let us take Jer. 16:14 and 15 as a good example—"Therefore behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that it shall no more be said, the Lord liveth that brought up the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt; but, the Lord liveth that brought up the children of Israel from the land of the north, and from all the lands whither he had driven them; and I will bring them again into their land that I gave unto their fathers." We see all this taking place, and this gives us hope concerning the future things prophesied of Israel. This hope is so well expressed by Isa. 2:1-4, "The word that Isaiah the son of

Amos saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem. And it shall come to pass in the last days [we note this carefully—“THE LAST DAYS”] that the mountain of the Lord’s house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it. And many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob: and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem. And he shall judge among the nations, and shall rebuke many people, and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks: nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more.”

Here is a little item that is quite up to date. Premier Eshkol of Israel said that “In our generation we are seeing the miracle of dry bones drawing near to one another.” He said that he thought they had succeeded in providing it with sinews, flesh and skin. But he asks, “But will our strength alone be sufficient to infuse a spirit of life into it so that these dry bones may live?” Isn’t that thrilling?! And he said the rise of Israel would be a light to the nations. And we have the wonderful hope of restoring the Ancient Worthies and placing them here upon earth to act as the center of restored Israel through whom the blessings of the Lord will flow to all mankind when the spirit and the bride say come, and “whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely.”

Before going on further, we want to quote the text of the last chapter of Vol. III—Isa. 52:7, “How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace, that bringeth good tidings of good, that publisheth salvation; that saith unto Zion, Thy God reigneth!” With all our hopes, is it any wonder that we take pleasure in announcing this wonderful fact that our Beloved Elder brother has returned and is now reigning?!

There is a very interesting cluster of prophecies in symbolic form in the 14th chapter of Revelation. The setting is in connection with the Lamb standing on Mount Zion. This of course is a picture of the return of our Lord and he stands on Mt. Zion which is a symbol of his being in a position of kingly authority. He has associated with him 144,000 singers and these singers have their Father’s name written in their foreheads. And these singers sing as it were a new song, and no one but these singers could learn this song. Using the Diaglott translation of V. 2 we find a beautiful thought that is full of meaning to us for we have had a part in its fulfillment. Here is how V. 2 reads, “And I heard a Voice from heaven,” and then John tells us what this voice is like or what it sounds like—it is “as the sound of many waters, and as the sound of great thunder, and the voice... was as that of harpers playing on their harps.” What a sublime picture of the song of Harvest Truth that is sung by the portion of the 144,000 that are on earth! The Lord has honored his people with the joy and privilege of singing the most beautiful song that has ever been sung on earth—the song of the good news of the Divine Plan of the Ages. Why “as it were a new

song?” Well the gospel song had become so mixed with confusing error that it did not make very good music any more—there were discordant notes, sour notes, and those who had a longing for truth, felt like covering up their ears. So the Lord had the Truth come from a new channel, the messenger of the Laodicean period, and what melodious music has proceeded from those on earth who have been used of the Lord to sing this song. It was as the sound of many waters—various truths were expressed, and also many different nationalities were used of the Lord to proclaim the message. And it was as the sound of great thunder—the precious Truth was not whispered throughout the earth, but it was proclaimed with great volume so that it attracted the attention of the whole world—millions of tracts were distributed, and millions of volumes were published and hundreds and hundreds of newspaper sermons and innumerable public meetings were employed to give forth the message. And the intriguing part of it all was that this voice of truth sounded like harpers harping with their harps—when a harp is played well, it produces music of rare quality that is soothing to our senses.

These harpers were not defiled with women. The symbolic meaning of this expression is that those who sing the song of pure truth are not supporting any false church, and they are not confused with contradictory doctrines.

So, dear friends we have seen the fulfillment of this prophecy, and we have had an actual part in it—the part of the 144,000 which has been here on earth has sung this beautiful song and great has been their joy. Now how does this create in us the sentiment of hope in our hearts? if we have sung this song with the Holy Spirit of that truth, then we have actually received an earnest of the spirit and we look forward with joy to the time when we will be born of the spirit and experience perfect rest beyond the veil. What songs we will sing then can only be imagined; but Eph. 2:7 gives us a hint—“That in the ages to come he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus.” In the ages to come, our gracious Heavenly Father is going to show additional and exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us. God has been very kind to us in his grace already, and we look forward to our joint-heirship with Christ in “glory, honor and immortality”—what it will be like in the ages to follow we can only surmise, but that it will make us exceedingly happy we can be certain.

Continuing on now in the 14th chapter of Revelation, we find another symbol—“And I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation and kindred, and tongue, and people, saying with a loud voice, Fear God, and give glory to him; for the hour of his judgment is come: and worship him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters.”

It might seem a little odd to associate the “everlasting gospel” with the proclamation that the “hour of God’s judgment is come”? However, this is very fitting and appropriate

because the everlasting gospel means “good news” as we know, and is it not good news that God has arranged to have a righteous judgment day, when all that is unrighteous is to be revealed and banished from the earth eventually, and when all mankind will be given an opportunity to come to a knowledge of the Truth and be judged righteously and lovingly and the worthy be rewarded with joy and everlasting life, and the unworthy to be destroyed from the race of the earth. When it is rightly understood, all mankind will welcome the judgment day of God. How beautiful is the thought of Psa. 98:9, “With righteousness shall he judge the world, and the people with equity.”

We have seen the fulfillment of this in our day and have even had a part in the proclamation of the everlasting gospel as identified with the Day of Judgment. This is one of the characteristics of the Harvest Truth we have—the Day of Judgment is shown to be a desirable time to all whose hearts are right and who appreciate righteousness. Now what does this have to do with creating hope in our hearts? Well, we have not only had a part in the proclamation of this pure truth, but we see the beginnings of this judgment day upon the nations, and we saw the beginnings of this in the rejection of Babylon and the selection of an agency outside of Babylon for the proclamation of the precious truth. This being true, we look forward to a continuation of this judgment day, until righteousness is fully established in the earth by the end of the Millennium, when all the unrighteous, both men and spirit beings and Satan will be consigned to the destruction of the Second Death.

The 8th verse of Rev. 14 reads as follows: “And there followed another angel, saying, Babylon is fallen, is fallen, that great city, because she made all nations, drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication.” This is another prophecy that has been fulfilled in our day. Babylon has been identified and her true character has been exposed and we have come to understand how the nations in past centuries have drunk of the wine of her fornication; and we have seen how drunk they became as a result of that wine. Seeing all this and understanding the true situation, we have had hope inspired in our hearts that Babylon is not only rejected by God, but is to be entirely destroyed in the fire of anarchy that is to take place after the present revolutionary phase of earth’s experiences is completed.

In connection with this prophecy of verse 8, is the stern warning of verses 9 to 11 that we must keep entirely separate from the beast and the image of the beast, for if we do not, we will be forced to drink of the wine of the wrath of God. We have hope from this that if we do keep ourselves separate from that which is condemned by God, we will have an abundant entrance into our inheritance beyond the veil.

Verse 13 contains one of the most joyful thoughts of hope that we can entertain as Christian people. Here is what the verse says, “And I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Write, Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith

the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them.” Believing as we do that our Lord has returned from the far land of heaven, and that his first work was to be the rewarding of the sleeping saints, we have the joyful hope that, as we finish our course, we do not need to sleep as did our brethren before our Lord returned. WHAT A HOPE THIS IS!

Let us read the blessed words of Paul in 1 Thess. 4:15-18, “For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the presence of the Lord, shall not precede them which are asleep. For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God; and the dead in Christ shall rise first; then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air; and so shall we ever be with the Lord. Wherefore comfort one another with these words.” And this we do—we do “comfort one another with these words” of hope.

Then the words of Paul in 1 Cor. 15:51 and 52, “Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump; for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.” As each one finishes his course today, we have such joyful and hopeful thoughts that such has been raised in the first resurrection, in the twinkling of an eye, and is with the Lord in heavenly glory with all the other saints. But an immediate change is not the only blessing we hope for. Our labours will be over and our works shall follow us—what a hope, that as we are engaged in the work of the Kingdom now assigned to us by our Lord, we will go right on with Kingdom work when we get beyond the veil. This is a transfer of location that we will have no cause to find fault with or grumble about. In this life, a change of location in our temporal work can result in a lot of unpleasant changes; but not so with our change of location in the first resurrection—we will be thankful for the change.

There is still more in this wonderful chapter of Rev. 14. Verses 14 to 16 read as follows, “And I looked, and behold a white cloud, and upon the cloud one sat like unto the Son of man, having on his head a golden crown, and in his hand a sharp sickle. And another angel came out of the temple, crying with a loud voice to him that sat on the cloud, Thrust in thy sickle, and reap: for the time is come for thee to reap; for the harvest of the earth is ripe. And he that sat on the cloud thrust in his sickle on the earth; and the earth was reaped.”

Our Lord gave us the parable of the Wheat and the Tares. According to the parable, the wheat and the tares were to grow together until the end of the age, and then the Lord would give instructions to the reapers to do a separating work—the tares were to be bound in bundles for burning and the wheat were to be gathered into the barn. We have witnessed a striking fulfillment of this prophecy. The Harvest Message was sent out into

the world and it acted as a sickle. The message caused the tares to draw back and be more tightly bound in their bundles, and the wheat was attracted by the message and separated themselves from the company of the tares. Such were drawn to the Lord without any denominational strings or cords. Such felt the power of the truth drawing them to Christ as their Redeemer and Head. With better understanding such reaped ones could become more intelligent and zealous.

The Lord came seated upon a white cloud. I have wondered if a white cloud could mean that his judgment would be favorable to the wheat class that he was seeking with the sickle of truth. And he had a golden crown upon his head, suggesting that he had returned as king and as such he was doing a reaping work, gathering the final members to kingdom glory with himself.

And what hope is engendered in our hearts by our witnessing the fulfillment of this prophecy? We have the hope that as we are able to recognize the fulfillment of the reaping work upon ourselves and upon our brethren, we can be confident that the Lord will finish the work of reaping us and will bring us safely to the barn condition beyond the veil. What a hope this is! and what an interest we can take in the harvest work placed in our hands now!

The final prophetic picture in chapter 14 is found in verses 17 to 20. It is concerning another reaping work, only this time it is not the reaping of wheat from tares, but the gathering of the clusters of the vine of the earth. This vine is contrasted with the vine mentioned by our Lord—"I am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman." And speaking to his disciples our Lord said (John 15:5), "I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit." The fruit on the true vine is much different from the fruit on the clusters of the vine of the earth. The fruit produced upon the true vine are the various graces of the Holy Spirit—"love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance; against such there is no law." (Gal. 5:22, 23) But the fruit of the vine of the earth is so different—all the ugly elements of human selfishness; and these clusters are cast into the great wine-press of the wrath of God; and this is the meaning of the present time of trouble such as never was since there was a nation.

We see the beginnings of this crushing in the winepress of the wrath of God, and we have the hope from this that as God hates all unrighteousness He will complete the work of ridding the earth of everything that is wrong, and, as expressed in Mal. 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."