

IN THE TWINKLING OF AN EYE

by

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(Author of *Mark of the Beast*)

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CHAPTER TWENTY-ONE

THE PLACARD

RIDING back to his office from that meeting Tom Hammond asked himself:- "Ought I to begin to make this near Return of our Lord for His church, the subject of my 'Prophet's Chamber Column' for to-morrow's issue?"

"I must seek special guidance about this," he presently decided.

The cab was nearing the office when he suddenly murmured:- "HE might come to-day!"

Even as he murmured the words his eyes seemed to see a striking way of exhibiting his new-found faith in the Return of his Lord, and he came to a rapid decision. Lifting the flap in the roof of the cab, he told the driver to go on to a certain Sign and Ticket writer's. Arrived at the place, he explained to the writer that he wanted a card three feet six inches long, proportionate in width, very boldly, handsomely written with just the two words upon it, in the order of his sketch.

He had taken an odd piece of card from the man's scrap heap, and with his pencil he drew out his idea, thus:-



TO-DAY?
PERHAPS!

"How soon can I have it?" he asked.

"In a couple of hours, sir!"

"Pack it carefully and I will send a messenger for it!"

Hammond was turning from the counter, when the man said:-

"I beg your pardon, sir, but if it is not too bold a question, may I ask what the two words mean?"

"They mean," smiled Tom Hammond, "that JESUS CHRIST, GOD's son, may come suddenly to-day, before even you have time to finish the work upon my order!"

The man's face wore a puzzled look. Then suddenly it brightened a little, as he said:-

"Ah! I sees, its somethink religious. That ain't in my line, not a bit, sir. I ain't built that way. Now, my misses is! She's the best wife a man ever had, I can't find a speck o' fault wi' her, but, there it is, yer know, she's gone, fair gone, sir, on religious things!"

"Do you love her? Would you like to lose her?" asked Hammond.

"Like to lose her, sir? why, no, sir! I believes I should - I should - well I don't know what I should do, if she wur took!"

There was a note of deep gravity in Tom Hammond's voice, as he said:-

"Then let that motto warn you, as you prepare to write it, that even before you can finish it, the CHRIST who is to come again, who will surely come now very soon, may come. Then, when you go to look for your wife, when you are perhaps expecting her to call you to your tea, she will be missing. You will call her, search for her, yet never find her. Because, if she is a true child of GOD, she, with all true Christians, will have been snatched away unseen from the world, caught up to meet their Lord in the air."

"Good gracious, sir! yer give me the creeps!" gasped the man.

“ **‘Seek ye the Lord’** - your good wife's Lord, - **'while He may be found,'** my friend."

With this parting word Tom Hammond left the shop.

Two hours and a half later the splendid bit of sign writing hung upon the wall of Hammond's room.

It was a most striking placard. The first letter of the word nearly eight inches in length, and in brilliant crimson, the other letters six inches long in deep, purple black.

As he sat back and regarded it where it hung, Tom Hammond mused on all that he had heard that afternoon, of the effects upon the lives of those who possessed a real heart apprehension of the truth of the near Return of the Lord.

"One can scarcely conceive," he murmured, "what London, what all the civilized, and so-called Christian world, would be like, if every man and woman, who *professes* to be a Christian, lived in the light of the truth that the Lord's return was near, was imminent. **'Every man'** (he was recalling the truth quoted that afternoon, **'Who hath this Hope in him, purifieth himself even as He (JESUS) is pure.'** "

The rest of the day was a busy one. Many callers came in. Everyone noticed the strange placard. Some asked what it meant. Modestly, but with strong purpose, and with perfect frankness, Hammond told each and all who enquired, of his change of heart, and how possessed with the fact that CHRIST's return was imminent, he had had the placard done for his own, and for others quickening and reminder.

People smiled indulgently, but entered into no argument with him. He was too important a man for that, and, equally, they dare not pooh-pooh his testimony, wild as it appeared to most, if not all of them.

~ end of chapter 21 ~

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