



THE COMING OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST



by

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“ If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God ”
(Colossians 3. 1).

“ Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world; looking for that blessed Hope, and the glorious Appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ ”
(Titus 2. 12, 13).

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“ Behold I come quickly; and My reward is with Me, to give every man according as his work shall be ” (Rev. 22. 12)

Foreword

We are considering, dear friends, the Coming of Christ, a deeply important subject—but what subject is not important when we come to the Word of the Lord? But this subject seems particularly important because it is neglected, or misunderstood, by such a large number. We find, moreover, in the second epistle of John, verse 7 (lit.) that one of the signs of Antichrist will be a denial of Jesus Christ COMING in the flesh. Not merely of Jesus Christ COME, but of Jesus Christ COMING in the flesh. Antichrist may at the OUTSET deny this, and a SPIRIT of Antichrist may at the outset deny this—it would seem—by an attack on the COMING OF THE LORD and afterwards by counterfeit comings, i.e., imitations of which Matthew 24 gives us warning. When we realize how much of the precious Word of God is prophecy, it becomes us, if by grace we are IN Christ Jesus, to search particularly into that event which will be the centre of so many events which concern That Person Who is beyond all persons, even the Chiefest among ten thousand, our Lord Jesus Christ.

The Lord's Coming Literal and Personal

Our first point is that the coming of Christ is **literal** and **personal**. Literal, and not merely what has been called “spiritual.” It is personal, and moreover, not merely the coming of an event, but of a Person. But we must not hastily, glibly and proudly, speak against all who seem to doubt the literal and personal Coming of Christ. It is so easy to be proud when we see something of the Scripture, but it is fitting to be humble as we learn more of Scripture in God's own light (Psalm 36). Oh, that the Lord would cause us to know much more, for we realize that true knowledge would be associated with the love and knowledge of **Himself**. We must realize that there often comes into the mind a LITTLE pride of what “we know,” or a LITTLE despising of those who know less, or a LITTLE impatience toward them, which is despising in the germ; or something that shows by its character how little we know the Word of God, in spirit and in truth. Some have conceived that the coming of the Lord is at death; others, have thought that His return is an introduction of blessings gradually until we reach their goal and climax. A large number, it must be mournfully said, have not considered the subject at all. To them the earth is too attractive, and the things of “That Day” are put on one side. The things of time and sense can be seen and felt, and they hold when they are HELD; but if, by grace, we lay aside every weight, and look forward beyond the valley of ease (and to a faithful one, the valley of humiliation and suffering), to the mountain top of the return of our beloved Lord—if we look on this, we shall find, by the grace of God, that it will affect our whole manner of life, and the Holy Spirit will thereby draw us away from worldliness. Thus will

the subject be **practical**, and it is our hearts' desire that our meditation may be practical even today !

I have suggested we should not hastily speak against any who believe differently from us. Do not misunderstand me. Those who are "in Christ Jesus," and who realize His grace, must hold **His** friendship beyond all friendship, and **His** Word beyond all words. Compromise is always unfit for those who have been redeemed at such tremendous cost. Their love to Christ must be more than EVERY "These," even as He said to Peter, "Lovest thou Me more than these ?" I do not suggest that we should make differences of opinion matters of indifference, nor that we should make divergencies merely technical and imply that they only concern teachers, or those in authority. **Truth** is so sanctifying that error must be, if one may so put it, in practical effect, unsanctifying. Therefore, every believer, whatsoever be his position, should be concerned about truth. But I do hesitate lest we should speak with that glib self-assurance which thinks that one passage or another passage, handled with mental pride, can settle a dispute, whereas some, who have at least as much spirituality as those who would silence them, are often permitted to be misled temporarily (as a chastisement it may be), on the very points at issue.

Let us realize that we believe in the **spiritual** presence of the **Lord Jesus now**. Although we show forth the Lord's death TILL he come, we still hold fast the Word "Where two or three are gathered together into My Name, there am I in the midst of them," and we all realize that which is beyond words (cf. John 14: 21, 23) and only partly illustrated in connection with the indwelling work of the Holy Spirit, the Other Comforter Who came to **represent** Him. Therefore we must not off-handedly assume, without prayerful meditation, that where we have a reference to the coming of the Lord that it must be His return in glory, while we assume the gracious presence of the Spirit representing Him in other passages. We need to think thoughtfully and ponder each verse. A few minutes Bible "study" and a mental use of a few distorted texts out of their context will never satisfy the heart that desires simply to follow the Lord in the plain path, surrounded by many by-ways.

The Lord's Coming in Glory Distinguished from the Passing Away of Believers

When we come to 1 Thessalonians 4, and weigh the expression, we find there "The Lord Himself shall descend from heaven, with a shout, and with an archangel's voice"; not only is the word "The Lord Himself," but there is an expressed contrast with the passing away of believers in death, and there is a distinct revelation that it will take place for **all** redeemed ones **together**. Moreover, ACCOMPANYING circumstances are defined. "The Lord Himself shall **descend** . . . with an archangel's voice, and with God's trump, and the dead (plur.) in Christ shall rise first," and so forth. Surely when we look into EVERY WORD of the passage it is far stronger than simply saying "The Lord will come." It must demand a **literal** and **personal return** of our beloved Saviour. So that if we weigh it carefully our arguments AGAINST erroneous teaching are increased, but they will not be uttered with the self-confidence which is the ruin of so much "Bible Study" today.

Take, too, Acts 1. The attendant circumstances there show that a literal, personal coming is demanded. "This same Jesus, who was received up from you into the heaven, shall so come, in like manner as ye beheld Him going into the heaven." There cannot be an allusion to His "spiritual" return, because this is dealing with a **literal** ascending, and therefore instances a **literal** returning. Furthermore, there is not one passage in the Scripture which can be brought against the expected literal coming of the Lord. Again, all the various passages which speak of a King reigning in righteousness, and of the setting up of a perfect Government, with Jerusalem as its centre—all these prophecies focus themselves upon the appearing of that **personal** Saviour Who came the first time to die for the guilty, and Who comes the second time that they might be glorified together with Him. Not only so, but the past fulfillments of what one might call twofold prophecies, are surely decisive. Often we have a prophecy of the **two** comings of Christ, and half is fulfilled; but half is yet to be fulfilled. If the first half of one prophecy has been fulfilled **literally**, will not the second half be realized in the same way? If our beloved Lord was **literally** the Seed of the woman, being born of a virgin at Bethlehem, and if He literally was the one "despised and rejected of men," and then took the curse, hanging on a tree—if He summed up prophecies in Himself with such marvellous exactness, and **LITERALLY**, how can we say for a moment that the other half of the same prophecies, and other similar prophecies are to be understood in a way that is not literal? Surely this would be to make havoc of the Words of God, and to injure those consciences of ours that need no injuring—rather do we need to keep them tender, and receptive of all truth, to believe it with simplicity that men would call folly, but yet with a simplicity which is well-pleasing to **Him** Who gave us His word, not to confuse us, but to guide us along the path by the leading of the Holy Spirit, the path which finishes with "all the truth."

The Coming of the Lord Pre-Millennial

The second point of our subject is that the coming of the Lord is **PRE-MILLENNIAL**. Let me remind you that the Millennium is the Latin word for a thousand years, and these thousand years are mentioned several times in **Revelation 20**. "Pre" means "before." The coming of the Lord is before the thousand years. This is plain from **Revelation 20** where we have a definite **ORDER**. In **Revelation 19** we have the coming of Christ literally and personally, linked with the Marriage Supper of the Lamb, and then **Revelation 20** comes afterwards. Now we have to ask ourselves, is it a fresh narrative of the same period? I think any one unbiased looking into it will be compelled to say, No, it is the continuance. For if at the end of chapter 19 we have the dealing with the beast and the false prophet, those climaxes of evil, in **Revelation 20** the Holy Spirit at once goes on to speak of the dealing with the other person of the Satanic trinity, even of the dragon. He is laid hold of and bound for a thousand years, until he, too, is found in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone in eternal consciousness of eternal wrath.

Furthermore, the pre-millennial return of our beloved Lord is emphasized by the revelation that Scripture gives of the **STATE** of the world at the coming. **Matthew 24** shows us that there will be a very

unsatisfactory condition, with some saying, “ Lo here ” “ Lo there,” and that when our beloved Lord returns it will not be to a peaceful earth, but to an earth in which there will have been those who have rebelled against Him, and the nation of Israel instead of acknowledging Him, will only THEN be brought to mourn. As Matthew 24 says, “ The tribes (not of the earth, but) of the LAND shall mourn.” Besides, the sun, moon and stars, with their terrors, suggest the coming of the Lord before the Kingdom, not afterwards. For if there is to be a kingdom of **gradual** improvement—as many pray for this development and extension of the kingdom of God, in accord with usual human ideas—if there is to be a kingdom of gradual improvement, we should not expect that its climax could be the coming of the Lord in judgment, but the coming of the Lord in approval. Not only does Matthew 24 illustrate this solemn crisis, but all the passages that speak of the return of our Lord (or most of them), indicate the ruined state of the earth. When the Son of Man cometh, shall He really find the faith ON THE EARTH ? No, He shall not—is the implied answer; for the majority of the world will be rebelling against Him, and holding entirely aloof from Him.

It is true there will still be a remnant according to the election of grace, who shall be caught up to meet Him in the air, and a remnant brought then to mourn, but the majority will be going their own way, and myriads enlisted under the army of ANTICHRIST, until in that awful climax they are swept away in the river of blood. Then 2 Thessalonians 2 shows that the wicked one advances in his fearful manifestation of evil against the appearing of the Lord Jesus Christ. The general principle, furthermore, would demand that the coming of Christ should be before the kingdom. The Kingdom demands a King. Christ is the King; shall He not come to establish it ? Shall He not come to set it up ? Does He not return as the One to take that which belongs to Him in accord with the parable of Luke 19, where we read of the one who went to take for Himself a kingdom and to return ?—and we find His return to set up that kingdom.

Apostolic Warning Against False Teaching

We pass next to 2 Thessalonians 2, to which I would ask your careful and prayerful attention. There are several difficulties in this chapter. First, through the break of construction grammatically in verse 3, filled up by the words in italics “ that day shall not come.” **Secondly**, through old English words which occur “ He who now LETTETH will let.” **Thirdly**, through the mistranslation, especially of verse 2 “ The Day of the Lord HAS SET IN,” NOT “ The Day of Christ is at hand ”; and verse 7 where there is **no expression** “ taken out of the way,” But a “ becoming (or arising) out of the midst.” Shall we look through the passage word by word ? “ But we beseech you, brethren, by (or on behalf of) the parousia (the being beside) of our Lord Jesus Christ, and our gathering together unto Him.” “ On behalf of the parousia,” as though that truth had been “ outraged ” by perversion, and therefore the apostle comes forward on behalf of the truth, that men had insulted, that men had put on one side; he would stand for the whole truth. We beseech you, brethren, on behalf of the parousia which has been so terribly misrepresented. If there is any portion of God’s word which

has been misinterpreted it is that which concerns the **parousia**, and surely our jealousy for the truth should lead us to join in the words of the apostle. We beseech you on behalf of the parousia, that truth, or portion of truth which has been so maligned and misrepresented. “That ye be not soon shaken in mind,” rather “Soon shaken from the mind,” from the fixed mind which you once had, for the apostle trained all the believers, even when young Christians, to have in their minds the knowledge and joy of the coming again of the Lord. “Ye turned unto God from the idols, to be bondmen of a living and true God, and to wait for His Son from the heavens, whom He raised from the dead.”

The Christian life is not by any means complete unless we live “awaiting the blessed Hope and the appearing of the glory of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ” (Titus 2: 13, R.V.). I think there is much help gained by leaving out FOR A MOMENT the intervening words, and read thus “Instructing us that we should LIVE . . . awaiting.” The other words then come in the light of the expression “That we should live . . . awaiting.” We may be sure of this that if we “LIVE AWAITING” we shall be denying ungodliness and worldly desires. Yes, if we live awaiting, we shall be those who are seeking to anticipate the Day when we shall be fully zealous of good works. Then comes the added statement of 2 Thessalonians 2, “Nor be troubled.” Some were shaken from their mind to adopt error. OTHERS were troubled IN their mind. Those who were unstable were leaving their knowledge for “opinions”; others were troubled to know what **should** be their belief. The apostle deals with both the wandering ones who had gone far, and those who were at least vacillating. Then he adds “Neither through a spirit,” not merely “through spirit,” but evidently “through a spirit”—some evil spirit who rose up in the assembly to make a declaration against the truth, as we read in 1 Corinthians 12, some dared to say Jesus was anathema, and in 1 John we see that they ventured to deny that Jesus Christ had come in the flesh. “Neither through a spirit, nor through a word,” for as soon as some evil spirit spoke in the assembly, it was easy for one who was unsettled to stand up to corroborate the lie: his evil ministry is characterized as a “word.” How very sad to note in certain modern movements similar occurrences. “Nor through an epistle purporting to come from us” (or through us). Evidently an epistle had been written professing to be written by Paul. We know how forgeries are common in all days. The apostle used to sign his letters, and he alludes to this “The salutation of me Paul, with mine own hand; remember my bonds,” and in one epistle he writes with that beautiful simplicity of affection which inspiration did not take away but only intensified, “Ye see with how large letters I have written you with my hand,” the big handwriting of a man whose eye-sight was strained beyond measure, and who felt uncomplainingly throughout his whole nervous system all that tremendous loving effort which characterized the whole of his life, beyond mere natural power. But even the signature of Paul, with all its intense characteristics, could be forged; or, at least, an epistle had been forged, and perhaps it had gained currency the more because the apostle had **used** different ones to write as amanuenses his letters. It was the more easy, therefore, to say this was a letter from Paul, for many would not know the handwriting of an amanuensis. Then he adds apparently that “This letter had joined together with the

evil spirit and the word in the assembly professing that “ the day of the Lord has set in,” or “ has taken its stand.” That was the evil teaching at Thessalonica. The result of it was (as we shall see) in the third chapter, some had stopped their work (3: 11). There were some “ disorderly, working not at all, but busybodies.” They may have said, “ The coming of the Lord has taken place, the day has set in; it is well, now we can settle down, we can live no longer as persecuted ones; we need not to work, the kingdom has arrived.”

The apostle, therefore, in the first chapter brings before believers that their time of rest is **NOT** to arrive until the period “ when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with His mighty angels (1: 7) in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God.” “ **REVEALED** ” not coming in secretly. “ **REVEALED WITH FLAMING FIRE** ”; and **not suddenly without men’s knowledge** of the event at all. The passage reads on in the second chapter “ Let no one have deceived you away along any turning.” There are plenty of turnings and byways, to attract us away from the truth of God, but let us keep in the way of that truth. The apostle adds, “ Because, unless there shall have come the apostasy, and there shall have been unveiled the man of sin, the son of destruction, who lieth against (i.e., is set against), and raiseth himself over all that is being called God, or that is an object of worship, so that he into the temple of God has taken his seat, showing himself that he is God. . . .” The sentence is unfinished. He appears to be about to add something like this—“ For unless the apostasy shall have arrived, and all these other things, that day has not set in,” but he suddenly breaks off with spiritual forcefulness, “ Do you not remember that when I was with you I kept on telling you this ? ” Here is the imperfect tense. He had kept on talking about it. Here he does not finish his sentence. The words put in, in verse 3, seem to veil the wondrous **intensity** of the apostle. He goes on with his long sentence (no unusual thing in the inspired messages through Paul), throughout verse 3, and verse 4, and then there ought to be a dash at the end in our translation, followed by “ Do not you remember that when I was with you I kept telling you this ? ” Next he adds at once, “ And now you know (now that you are reminded, you must know) that which is **holding down**.” The word “ withholdeth ” is the word to “ hold down,” and occurs also where we have the expression in verse 7, “ He that letteth will let.” Now you know what **withholdeth** with a view to his being unveiled at the appointed time !

The Unveiling of the Man of Sin

Antichrist has an **unveiling**, even as Christ has an unveiling. “ For the mystery of iniquity is already **inworking**, only there is one holding down now, until there has become **OUT OF THE MIDST**, and **THEN** shall be **unveiled** the lawless one.” You will notice in verse 3 the apostasy which shall have come first, and then the **man** of sin be unveiled. Thus the structure of the sentence is, to a certain extent, the same. The word “ come ” (the verb) is first there; so here the verb comes first. We may read “ Until there shall have become out of the midst, and **THEN** be unveiled.” The other possible translation “ Until it shall have become out of the midst (i.e., the **mystery** shall be manifested) and then shall be unveiled the lawless one ” has the same meaning. The “ then,”

the contrast with the “now,” both of verse 6 and 7, and with the “already” also. There are three distinct words, the “already,” the “until,” and the “then.” “And then shall be unveiled the lawless one, whom the Lord shall destroy (or take away).” This word “take away” is, I believe, in the correct reading from the same root as the word in verse 13 “God hath chosen you from the beginning.” There is a little doubt as to the manuscript reading here. So God chooses His people of life, but this one shall be taken away for judgment. There are contrasts throughout this chapter, for if we have the PAROUSIA, or the PRESENCE of Christ, in verse 9 we have an **opposite** parousia, “even him whose PAROUSIA IS AFTER THE WORKING OF SATAN.” Thus there are several contrasts. We come back to verse 8, “Then shall be unveiled the lawless one.” **Now** it is the mystery of lawlessness or wickedness inside the ephah, but **WHEN** the talent of lead is removed (for this passage alludes definitely to Zechariah 5) when the TALENT OF LEAD which holds down is removed, wickedness shall spring up out of the midst, no longer as a system, but crystallized, as it were, in a person, the wicked one. This passage, like Matthew 13, must be understood, I submit, in the light of Zechariah 5’s vision. Matthew 13 declares that there is a woman with three measures—exactly the same as the woman and the ephah of Zechariah and that the woman hides the leaven in the meal until the whole is leavened. So here, we have lawlessness hidden in the **MIDST**, until it springs out from the midst, no longer as a woman (the system of evil of Revelation 17), but as a man (the lawless one).

As He Who was more than a “man” has left the **BRIDE**, to be His representative, so Satan has his counterfeit. Just as the church was told to be looking for the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ so the **system** of evil is looking for the coming of Antichrist. In each case the **woman** leads up to the **man**, “Even him (says verse 9) whose parousia is according to the working of Satan with all powers and signs and wonders linked with a lie, and in all deceivableness of **THE** unrighteousness in those who are perishing, as a reply to the fact they welcome not the **love** of the truth with a view to their having been saved, and, because of this, God will send them a working of deceit with a view to their having believed the lie, that they all might have been judged who believe not the truth, but had pleasure in the unrighteousness.” Blessed are we, if by grace, we are in the next verse: “But **WE** are in debt to give thanks to God always for you, brethren who have been beloved by the Lord, because God chose you from the beginning with a view to salvation, in sanctification of the Spirit, and by belief of the truth.” The **truth** **VERSUS** the lie ! The Spirit of God **VERSUS** that evil Spirit who rose up in the assembly to lead men away from the word of God ! The collection of the **CONTRASTS** in this chapter would be a most profitable heart study.

The Lord’s Coming to be in Manifested Glory

Here we see clearly that the evil work which the Lord prophesied in **Matthew 24** concerning a **SECRET** coming, had taken a hold in Thessalonica ; it fascinated and attracted. The Lord said distinctly in **Matthew 24** that His people should be careful. Many would come and say, “The Lord has come.” Do not accept those who teach a **secret coming**; He will come **gloriously** and **manifestly**. We find that the Lord has anti-

pated all with perfect accuracy. He, foreknowing, declared how men would and will mistake and pervert the truth, and thus there has come and will come the attack on the revelation of the Lord Jesus in **manifested** glory. I believe that all along the ages there has been the same working, and many Godly believers have been misled. 2 Thessalonians witnessed as to the idea that the **secret** coming had taken place: But what then have many done? Have they received the warning? Even beloved children of God have often unwittingly spoken in a way that prepares the time when many will declare that a **secret** coming **has** taken place. So we find the general teaching has ensnared many **true** and earnest children of God, the teaching which denies the precious Scripture concerning the revelation in **manifested** glory. We find among many dear, earnest, serious believers, even at the present time—developments of the theory of a **secret** coming. And apart from this we find, also, that this thought of the **secret** coming is sometimes linked with systems and movements which are quite out of accord with the simple sobriety of the Gospel, and often with very unsatisfactory claims to supernatural powers. Furthermore, the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ **secretly** is a great help to such a system as Zion's Watchtower, or Russellism. Evil often works along the same lines. Let us hold fast the faithful word **UNTIL** the appearing of our Lord, as Timothy was instructed. Let us be those who realize that His return shall be as **lightning**, not only in its suddenness but in its vividness, and in its **manifested** glory.

The Time of the Lord's Coming Likened to the Days of Noah and Lot

We pass next to the **two** aspects of the Parousia. Shall we turn to **Matthew 24**? The only Gospel which uses the word "parousia," even as it is the **only** Gospel which contains the word "**church**." In some respects Matthew is particularly a "Church Gospel," if I might use the word, not that I desire it, but in opposition to the theory of a "Jewish Gospel." In Matthew 24 we read (verse 27) "For as the lightning cometh from the east, and shineth unto the west, thus shall there be also the parousia of the 'Son of Man'." Notice the definite statement that it will be **manifest** and **vivid**. The "parousia" means the "being beside," but there are two aspects of the parousia, and they are distinguished further on in the chapter. We read from verse 36 "But concerning that day and hour no one has known, not even the angels of heaven but my Father only. But as the days of Noah were, thus shall be the parousia of the Son of Man." Notice the expression "The **DAYS** of Noah." "For as they were in the **DAYS** before the flood, eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until which day Noah entered into the ark, and did not recognize until the flood came and took them away, thus shall be the parousia of the Son of Man." So we see in verse 37 the "**days**" likened to the parousia, and in verse 38 the "**day**" likened to the parousia, the **days** and the **day**. There are **two** aspects of the parousia; one, a period, for the word does not mean a coming, but a **being beside**; the other, an event of **one day**. The first aspect is likened to the **days** of Noah just before the flood; the second aspect to **the day**.

Luke 17 illustrates the same point, though without the use of the term "Parousia," and let me mention while speaking of the word that it also

occurs in the epistles, not only the Gospel of Matthew; for example, 1 Thessalonians 2: 19; 3: 13; 4:15; 5: 23; James 5: 7, 8; 2 Peter 1: 16; 3: 4; and in 3: 4 it is manifestly the coming of the Lord in manifest glory. The MEANING of the word is seen by 2 Corinthians 7: 5-7; 2 Corinthians 10: 10 where it is used in a different way, not concerning the coming again of our Lord. Well then, to return to Luke 17 we read in verse 26 “ And as it came to pass in the days of Noah, thus shall it be also in the days of the Son of Man. They kept on eating, they kept on drinking, they kept on marrying, they kept on giving in marriage, until the **day** in which Noah came into the ark, and there came the flood and it destroyed all away. Thus also as it became in the **days** of Lot (**DAYS** plural again), they kept on eating, they kept on drinking, they kept on buying, they kept on selling, they kept on planting, they kept on building houses, but in the **day** in which (**DAY**, no longer days), the **day** in which Lot came out from Sodom it rained fire and brimstone from heaven, and destroyed them all away. Thus shall it be in the **DAY** in which the Son of Man is being unveiled. In That Day,” etc.

I think Revelation 12 may help to give us a key. There we are told that a little period before the Lord descends, the heavenly places are cleared. At present there are wicked spirits in heavenly places, and Satan has great power there, but in Revelation 12 Michael and his angels fight, and the dragon is turned out with his angels from heaven—from the air which is to be specially prepared for the redeemed **three and a half years before** the redeemed are caught up. What if that period of three and a half years is viewed as the transition period, uniting two dispensations, not that the saints are caught up at the beginning of it, but there is the preparation at the beginning of it. That the saints of God are **on earth** during the reign of Antichrist is clear, for there is **no promise** that they shall be caught up before. Secondly, we are told in Daniel 7 that Antichrist persecutes the saints of the high places, and the **people** of the saints; not only Israel who are the “ people,” but also the “ saints of the high places,” and in Daniel 8 he attacks a **heavenly** people, for he casts “ stars ” down to the ground, and in Revelation 13 we find that he blasphemes those who tabernacle in heaven, a **heavenly** people. Revelation 12 brings out the same teaching. It may be through misunderstanding the preparatory work with regard to the parousia, that many have thought that the **two stages** of our Lord’s coming will be years separated. There is no promise to us to be saved out from the period of the tribulation. The great tribulation is not called by God **wrath**, but is (as tribulation **elsewhere**) training for God’s people. The promise is to be saved out of the **HOUR OF TESTING** (Revelation 3: 10), which is vastly different—the “ **HOUR** ” in Revelation being in every case but one distinguishable **CLEARLY** from the long period of tribulation. The **ONE HOUR** in which Babylon’s glory comes to nought is the **last** hour of the seventh seal, of which we are told there is silence in heaven half an hour. The saints are caught up at the **sixth** seal and the **seventh** trumpet. The seventh trumpet alone of the trumpets has two stages mentioned. “ In the **days** of the seventh angel when he shall **BEGIN** to sound (rather, ‘ when he is about to sound,’) the mystery of God shall be finished,” not a word here about the kingdom. “ And the seventh angel sounded,” and the words came forth, “ The kingdoms of this world have become (rather the kingdom of this

world has become—the world empire of man) the kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ.” Thus we have the **two** close stages of the Lord’s coming; the first, to **catch up** His redeemed; and the second, **on** (not “over,” as some would render) to this earth, when coming from Edom (**Isaiah 63: 1**) His feet shall stand on the mount of Olives; and there are not seven years in between them, nor even three and a half years in between them, but a **brief** period of “days.” “We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed in a moment in the twinkling of an eye, **AT THE LAST TRUMP**”; even the trumpet which is the **seventh** in the book of Revelation. There is **no** promise of the catching up of the redeemed before.

The Lord makes Noah to be a type of His people in Matthew 24. Now we know Noah’s experience. The Lord told him there was the coming of the flood generally. **THEN**, seven days before the flood, the Lord gave a warning, and **THEN** we are told he entered into the ark the very **day** the flood came. So with the redeemed they have had the special warning all the time; then there will come seven years of Anti-christ’s kingdom when there will be peculiarly a **getting ready**, and then, by the grace of God, they will be received into the place of safety, and soon after that there will be (when the ark is lifted up from the earth, and they are lifted up from the earth), the destruction of earth’s glory and earth’s greatness. Many of God’s dear children thought that we shall be delivered, that we shall be taken away, before the great tribulation, because they have felt that the tribulation is God’s **wrath**, but it is not so. They have, moreover, thought that it was unbecoming the Lord’s people to be on earth when God is dealing with Israel in a special national way, but God will plainly deal with Israel **AND** the Gentiles at the same time, and **Matthew 22: 7** was in the present dispensation (See also **1 Thess. 2: 16**). He can deal with more than one class at the same period of dispensation. Furthermore, our beloved Lord was on earth during a period when God was dealing with Israel. Moreover, some have thought that we must be caught up before the tribulation, else we shall be looking for signs instead of Christ. I can understand such an argument appealing to an **unbeliever**, but how can it appeal to a believer? Are we dependent on bare logic and bare human reasoning for our hold of the “blessed hope”? It is a poor thing if we are. Take the case of Peter. The Lord told him he would become **old**, and then be put to **death**, yet Peter looked for that blessed hope, and lived in the light of it, and wrote about it (See **2 Peter 3: 12-15**). Did Peter ever seem to say, “My knowledge that I am to get old and die, will **hinder** the early saints looking for that blessed hope”? No, the blessed hope is a **SPIRITUAL** hope which rules out the poor, ugly, lazy logic of unbelief, and that looks **beyond intervening events**, and **ABOVE** intervening events, to **Him, Who is beyond events**, even our beloved Lord Who will return.

Types of Christ’s Coming—Enoch and Elijah

The **TYPES** of Christ’s coming are very interesting. The catching up of Enoch and the catching up of Elijah must afford us types, though these types are not particularly mentioned in the later Scriptures. This is remarkable. May we not say the Lord knew how they would be misused as to time. “Enoch walked with God, and he was not, for

God took him.” So it will be with the redeemed; they will walk with God, for **Revelation 12** shows they will be in “**HEAVENLY**” places in conscious enjoyment ere the Lord comes to earth. We have a man-child born in heaven, a revival which will lead on to the coming of the Lord. Elijah was caught up with chariots and horses. The fact of Elisha doing wondrous works afterwards, and the fact that we are said to have twice as many miracles of his recorded, may bring before us the future glory of that future day.

But Noah also is a type. The Lord referred to him in **Luke 17**. Then we have types concerning God’s arrangement for His saints **INSIDE** the types of our beloved Lord’s coming in **Leviticus 23**. We are told that **ten** days before the day of Atonement there would be a blowing of the trumpets, the first day of the seventh month. Israel counts that as the new year at the present time. But God only appointed a blowing of trumpets; how suggestive! Then afterwards comes the day of Atonement, and, after that, the feast of tabernacles suggestive of the glory on earth when the Lord has applied His work to the nation of Israel. It is noteworthy that the offering at the time of the first day of the seventh month in **Numbers 29** is said to be one young bullock, one ram, seven sheep, and one he-goat for a sin offering, the same offering that we have brought before us on the tenth day of the seventh month—the one bullock, the one ram, the seven sheep and the one he-goat. Thus we have the two days closely linked; the first, the blowing of trumpets; the second, the application of the Lord’s work to Israel (**Zechariah 13: 1**).

Leaving the type of the parable of the Good Samaritan, and the two pence suggestive of the days, the **2,000** years (cf. **Hosea 6: 2**) we come next to the signs of the times. I need not speak much about these, many of which are **SINS** of the times. The Lord has marked them out, and we are to look upon them; we are to see the **budding** (not “fruit” **Matthew 21: 19**) of the fig tree. We should realize that everything with respect to Israel and the Zionist movement, and the spread of democracy is heading up to the exaltation of that vile person (who will be the counterpart of Antiochus Epiphanes) who will have his revelation against the Lord, and will head up the present dispensation in one revolt against God. It may be said that if we know the signs of the times, and if we know the events, we know **WHEN** the Lord will appear. May I remind you that an argument which proves too much would prove nothing. Almost everyone who suggests this acknowledges that **Matthew 24** deals with the coming of the Lord in manifested glory. Yet it is in connection with **that** coming the very signs are given, and the events which lead up to it are set forth, but the Lord particularly says there that His people are to watch, because they do not know the **day** nor the **hour**. Therefore the knowing of signs and the knowing of events cannot hinder the true watching, if our hearts are right.

Accompaniments of the Lord’s Return

The accompaniments of our returning Lord’s advent are very remarkable. To the redeemed ones there will be the ushering into His presence with the Marriage Supper of the Lamb, and the solemn Judgment Seat when they receive the things done through the body. To Israel will be the pouring out of the Spirit of grace and supplication, and

the tribes of the land will mourn, and some also will return from distant lands, that the **spared remnant** may become the "ALL Israel" which shall be saved, and men shall call them the priests and ministers of God. Then will the temple be God's centre, and Jerusalem, be His city. He shall reign in Mount Sion before His ancients gloriously. The accompaniments for Antichrist and his forces are serious; for the Lord having come up from Edom, and having entered Jerusalem's temple to render recompense to His enemies, will go forth. He will have further multitudes trodden down in His winepress, till the blood splashes to the bridles of the horses. There will also be "accompaniments" to those of the nations who are spared. Some who were caused to abstain from attacking the Lord's redeemed will then hear the gracious words "Inasmuch as ye did it unto one of the least of these My brethren, ye did it unto Me." Others will be dealt with in Divine Judgment when the "goats" are gathered apparently to Jerusalem for the Lord's holy severity. Beloved friends, this is not merely something for the mind but something for the **heart**. We live in the last days; they are reaching their climax. Soon "He That shall come will come, and will not tarry." Men may tell us that the doctrine of God concerning election will make us not practical, and that the doctrine of the coming of the Lord, or that part of the ONE doctrine of God relating to the coming of the Lord, will make us dreamy. Thanks be unto God, we realize that it is far otherwise. "Everyone that hath this the hope in **Him** purifieth himself, even as He is pure" (1 John 3: 3). As we live waiting for that blessed Hope, so we deny ungodliness and worldly desires; as our eyes are beyond the things of this world, we shall know what it is to look at the things which are not seen; the things which are eternal, and to manifest the likeness to Him Who is at the right hand of God at the end of that course along which we are hastening; Whose return is not merely an event, but the seeing of **Himself face to face** Who died for us, and Whom we love, though we love but faintly. What will it mean to us when He shall come, about Whom we have often spoken, about Whom we have often sung, about Whom we have so often thought? What will it be to us to see Him and look upon Him Who died for us, that we, undeserving ones, might be saved from an eternal hell? Beloved friends, the thought of seeing Him, our beloved Lord, in the **unity** of the redeemed, and the gathering together of that company whom no man can count, the thought of seeing our beloved Lord must surely make us more willing to endure the trials of the present days, and to go through those trials which are but stepping stones to further exaltation; for if we "**remain under**" with Him, we shall reign with Him.

The difficulties are but to lead us on to glory, and soon that day will dawn, though the signs of it may sometimes appear to us no larger than a man's hand. "The Lord is not slack concerning His promise as some men count slackness, but is longsuffering to usward, not willing that **any** should perish, but that **all** should come into repentance" (2 Peter 3: 9). He is waiting for His people to be gathered out from the **sects** and **systems** of men, into the repentance in the Spirit, that will lead on to the knowledge of the will of God, that there may be, as in the days of the first coming, a people made ready for the Lord, who, though they be few in number comparatively, will nevertheless be the company upon which He has set His heart, and who will meet Him in the air, and who

shall be ever with Him. May we, by grace, be found in that company, unless He is pleased that we should fall asleep ere that Day, and even then we shall be found in it, for “the dead in Christ shall rise first.” There is no power for earth’s reformation, there is no putting right of the Eastern question or of the Jewish problem, there is no dealing with anything of man apart from the coming of the Lord. We are not to be social reformers, we are not to improve the world, we are not to have HUMAN church systems and church arrangements, but we are to be those who are stepping out from these systems, and arrangements of men, and who seek to be gathered on the lines of the will of the Lord, that there may be a measure of reviving generally to please Him, which will reach its climax and consolation not merely in a reviving but in the personal coming of the Reviver.

Questions and Answers

Q. Does not the Judgment Seat of Christ come about this time ?

A. The Judgment Seat of Christ comes, I believe, in between the beginning of the seventh trumpet and the descent to earth, i.e., it comes when the saints are caught up. And the judgment seat of Christ is linked with the Marriage Supper of the Lamb.

Q. And all this takes place absolutely in a moment of time ?

A. Not a moment of time. “The DAYS of the seventh angel when he shall be about to sound.” Mark the word “Days.”

Q. I was under the impression that it took three-and-a-half years.

A. There is no Scripture for that, although I can understand your holding that opinion, for some time ago I held the same view but found I had no Scripture for it. What Scripture would you suggest ?

Q. The Scripture which says that the days shall be shortened for the sake of the elect.

A. But surely that passage means that if the Lord had not made those days SHORT no flesh would be saved, but because of the elect, those days shall be short; in other words the Lord will not let them become 1,260 years, as the “historical” school of interpreters suggest, but the great tribulation will simply be a brief period, otherwise it would wear everyone out.

Q. Is not this referring to the same period as Daniel’s “Time, times and a half time ?”

A. Yes, that is CUT SHORT. You do not think it is shorter than three-and-a-half years, do you ?

Q. That is half seven, half perfect.

A. Quite so.

Q. Truly perfect is God’s dealings but half in time ?

A. Yes. The first half of the seven years Antichrist acknowledges almost all “Religions”; he makes a covenant with them; then at the

middle of the seven, ere the three-and-a-half years, he breaks His covenant with Israel and destroys the temple sacrifices, and says they are not to have them, and puts his image there; and then for three-and-a-half years there is the climax in which he is persecuting Israel, the earthly people, and persecuting also the heavenly people too, the saints of the high places.

Q. I was noticing today that the Swedenborgian teaching is exactly as you put it; everyone is to come out of the sects and systems and join their own special party; they must join a special company, or else they will not be right.

A. The Swedenborgians are not pre-millennialists. Apart from their very strange origin and their denial of the Triune God, I do not think their belief as to the coming of the Lord is at all parallel with what I have suggested.

Q. It was only as to your summing up, about shaking off the fetters of sects and systems.

A. The passage to which I was referring was the testimony in **2 Peter 3**. The Lord is waiting for all His people to come into repentance. He is not slack concerning His promise as some men count slackness, but is longsuffering to usward—speaking to His beloved people. But in the days when 2 Peter was written some had been wandering off into sects and systems of men, and 2 Timothy tells us that the servant of the Lord was in meekness to instruct those who opposed themselves, peradventure God would give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth—**REPENTANCE** again, you see. “Second” epistles are often parallel. Believers are to recover themselves out of the snare of the devil, those who have been taken alive by him. They are evidently living saved ones, but they have been taken alive, in the snare of the Devil (margin). Now surely every system that deviates from the Lord’s arrangements is a snare of the Devil. It is our desire to go back simply to “the will of the Lord.” In what measure any of us have reached this I am sure we ought to be thankful to the Lord, and **not proud**. But we realize that we want to get further back to the Lord’s fulness of things, and the fulness of carrying out His words. But I brought it forward to show that the Lord has promised to come in connection with a people **prepared** for Him, a **REVIVAL**—and I think the hearts of all His redeemed people are set on revival.

Q. As to the “two days” in the parable of **Luke 10**.

A. Each day seems a type of a thousand years, but Hosea 6. 1-3 goes beyond the two days’ period. The “third day” when “we shall live in His sight” is the third “thousand years”.

Q. What is the Jewish date ?

A. About 5700. They have counted wrongly. It ought to be more. But we cannot find out exactly. God “**hides**” some things, and it is a mercy.

Q. What about saints getting back to the “ heavenly places ? ”

A. I mean in **conscious** enjoyment unitedly of the heavenly calling which we cannot say is common now among the Lord’s people. While believers are engaging in politics and in the affairs of earth, and worldliness, which is manifested in a thousand ways, you cannot say the heavenly calling is realized. There must be snares of the Devil wherever these things are acknowledged.

Q. Does it not say that the Lord shall return with ten thousand of His saints ?

A. Scripture says, “ Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousand of His holy ones ”; it may be angels or it may be His people, or both. If it is His people who have been caught up, that is in accord with what has been said. There is the interval of the “ **hour.**” We are distinctly told in Revelation, “ Because thou hast kept the word of My patience, I also will keep thee **out of the hour of testing,**” and evidently no one of them in the body of Christ pass through the hour of testing. The **LAST** “ vials ” are in the hour of the testing, and they are full of the **wrath of God**; the word “ **WRATH** ” is there. During the time the saints are on the earth (the heavenly placed saints), you do not find that word “ **wrath** ” used in the same way in Revelation; it is when they are caught up the word “ **wrath** ” comes forward. You will find that word occurs in the **last** vials which come very quickly one after the other, and which concern the last hour. The last vials are **not** during the great tribulation period.

Q. Are the last vials poured out in the last hour ?

A. I think so, definitely, because they follow one after the other. “ In them is filled the **wrath of God** ” it says, “ summed up,” the conclusion of the wrath of God as to the present dispensation. Saints are seen in glory ere they commence (**Revelation 15: 2**).

Q. Did you suggest that the followers of Christ should have nothing to do with politics ?

A. I cannot see how they consistently have any share in the world’s politics because they are to have no partnership with unbelievers, and if you and I both are united to send a man to a Parliament or “ Congress ” we are at once making a partnership in spite of the words “ Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers.” Moreover, the ideal candidate would be one who would simply stand for the **rights of the Lord**. You must vote for something wrong whomever you vote for, which would not be in accord with Scripture. Furthermore, the ideal candidate would not be a candidate at all, because he would have to go higher than “ Parliament ” or “ Congress.” The Lord Jesus said, “ If My kingdom were of this world, then would My servants fight.” I must either take **NO** part in politics, or I must take part in a warlike attempt to set up the kingdom of Christ. Nothing in between will suit a child of God; he must either take the sword for Christ, or he should take no such part at all in the present dispensation, because of Christ’s words, “ Else would My Servants fight.” The Lord Jesus never took any part in politics, though He was a Jew by birth when He condescended to become a

Man. We are told that “ If we remain under, we shall reign with Him.” The word “ If we suffer ” is really to “ **remain under,**” and the Corinthians were blamed because they had reigned “ without us,” says the apostle. Now if anyone takes part in politics he has a very small share in the reigning. We are not to reign **before** Christ comes back.

PERCY W. HEWARD.

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