

THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST

by

Various Authors

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CHAPTER TWO

THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST

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Study of Prophecy—Three Great Comings—The Stone Cut out of the Mountain—How will He Come?—When?—Watch!—Not at Death —The Order of Events—For Young Converts—At the Communion Table—The Millennium—No Universal Conversion —Reunion with Friends—The Oft-repeated Promise and Prayer

IN SECOND TIMOTHY, third chapter, verse sixteen, Paul declares: “**All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness.**”

But there are some people who tell us, when we take up prophecy, that it is all very well to be believed, but that there is no use in one trying to understand it; that future events are things that the Church does not agree about, and it is better to let them alone, and deal only with those prophecies which have already been fulfilled.

But Paul doesn't talk that way; he says: “**ALL Scripture is . . . profitable for doctrine.**”

If these people are right, he ought to have said: “Some Scripture is profitable; but you can't understand the prophecies, so you had better let them alone.” If God did not mean to have us study the prophecies, He would not have put them into the Bible. Some of them are fulfilled, and He is fulfilling the rest, so that if we do not see them all completed in this life, we shall in the world to come. Prophecy, as has been said, is the mold in which history is cast. About one-third of the Bible is prophetic, and a large portion of the remainder is typical of things that were to come.

Three great comings are foretold in the Word of God.

- First, that Christ should come; that has been fulfilled.
- Secondly, that the Holy Ghost should come; that was fulfilled at Pentecost, and the Church is able to testify to it by its experience of His saving grace.
- Third, the return of our Lord from Heaven —for this we are told to watch and wait “**till He come.**”

I do not want to teach anything dogmatically, on my own authority; but to my mind this precious doctrine—for such I must call it—of the return of the Lord to this earth is taught in the New Testament as clearly as any other doctrine in it. If you read the twenty-sixth chapter of Matthew, the sixty-fourth verse, you will find that it was just this very thing that caused His death. When the high priests asked Him who He was, and if He was the true Messiah, what does He reply:

“I say unto you, Hereafter shall ye see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven.”

That was enough. The moment they heard that, they accused Him of blasphemy, and condemned Him to death, just because He said He was coming again.

Whoever neglects this has only a mutilated Gospel, for the Bible teaches us not only of the death and sufferings of Christ, but also of His return to reign in honor and glory. His second coming is mentioned and referred to over three hundred times, yet I was in the Church fifteen or sixteen years before I ever heard a sermon on it. There is hardly any church that does not make a great deal of baptism, but in all of Paul’s epistles I believe baptism is spoken of only thirteen times, while he speaks about the return of our Lord fifty times; and yet the Church has had very little to say about it. Now, I can see a reason for this;

THE DEVIL DOES NOT WANT US TO SEE THIS TRUTH

for nothing would wake up the Church so much. The moment a man realizes that Jesus Christ is coming back again to receive His followers to Himself, this world loses its hold upon him. Gas stocks and water stocks and stocks in banks and railroads are of very much less consequence to him then. His heart is free, and he looks for the blessed appearing of His Lord, who, at His coming, will take him into His blessed Kingdom.

Some people say, “The prophecies are all well enough for the priests and clergy, but not for the rank and file of the Church.”

But Peter says, **“The prophecy came not by the will of man, but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost,”** and those men are the very ones who tell us of the return of our Lord.

Look at Daniel, where he tells the meaning of that stone which King Nebuchadnezzar saw in his dream, that was cut out of the mountain without hands, and that broke in pieces the iron, the brass, the clay, the silver, and the gold.

“The dream is certain, and the interpretation thereof sure,” says Daniel. Now, we have seen the fulfillment of that prophecy, all but the closing part of it. The kingdoms of Babylon and Medo-Persia and Greece and Rome have all been broken in pieces, and now it only remains for this stone, cut out of the mountain without hands, to smite the image and break it in pieces till it becomes like the dust of the summer threshingfloor, and for this stone to become a great mountain and fill the whole earth.

BUT HOW WILL HE COME?

We are told how He is going to come. When the disciples stood looking up into heaven at the time of His ascension, there appeared two angels, who said unto them (Acts first chapter, verse eleven): **“Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus which is taken up from you into heaven shall so come in like manner as ye have seen Him go into heaven.”**

How did He go up? He took His flesh and bones up with Him. *“Look at me; handle me; a spirit has not flesh and bones as ye see me have. I am the identical one whom they crucified and laid in the grave. Now I am risen from the dead and am going up to heaven.”*

“He is gone,” say the angels, “but He will come again just as He went.”

An angel was sent to announce His birth to the Virgin. Angels sang of His advent in Bethlehem. An angel told the women of His resurrection. Two angels told the disciples of His coming again. It is the same testimony in all these cases.

I do not know why people should not like to study the Bible, and find out all about this precious doctrine of our Lord’s return. Some have gone beyond prophecy, and tried to tell the very day He would come. Perhaps that is one reason why people don’t believe this doctrine. He is coming—we know that; but just when He is coming we don’t know. Matthew settles that: **“But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only.”** The angels don’t know. It is something the Father keeps to Himself.

In Luke we read: **“The Son of man cometh at an hour when ye think not.”**

McCheyne, the Scottish preacher, once said to some friends, “Do you think Christ will come tonight?”

One after another they said, “I think not.”

When all had given this answer, he solemnly repeated this text: **“The Son of man cometh at an hour when ye think not.”**

Commenting on the text: **“It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in His own power,”** Spurgeon said: “If I were introduced into a room where a large number of parcels were stored up, and I was told that there was something good for me, I should begin to look for that which had my name upon it, and when I came upon a parcel and I saw in pretty big letters, ‘It is not for you,’ I should leave it alone. Here, then, is a casket of knowledge marked, **‘It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in His own power.’**”

“Cease to meddle with matters which are concealed, and be satisfied to know the things which are clearly revealed.”

If Christ had said, "I will not come back for 2,000 years," none of His disciples would have begun to watch for Him until the time was near, but it is

THE PROPER ATTITUDE OF A CHRISTIAN

to be always looking for his Lord's return. So God does not tell us when Christ is to come, but He tells us to watch. Just as Simeon and Anna watched and waited for His first coming, so should true believers watch and wait for His return. It is not enough to say you are a Christian, and that you are all right. You are not all right unless you obey the command to watch.

We find also that He is to come unexpectedly and suddenly. "**For as the lightning cometh out of the east and shineth unto the west, even so shall also the coming of the Son of man be.**" And again, "**Therefore be ye also ready, for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh.**"

Some people say that means death; but the Word of God does not say it means death. Death is our enemy, but our Lord has the keys of Death. He has conquered death, Hell and the grave, and at any moment He may come to set us free from death, and destroy our last enemy for us.

In the last chapter of John there is a text that seems to settle this matter. Peter asks the question about John, "**Lord, what shall this man do? Jesus said unto him, If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee? Follow thou me. Then went this saying abroad among the brethren that that disciple should not die.**"

They did not think that the coming of the Lord meant death; there was a great difference between these two things in their minds. Christ is the Prince of Life. There is no death where He is. Death flees at His coming. Dead bodies sprang to life when He touched them or spoke to them. His coming is not death, He is the resurrection and the life. When He sets up His kingdom, there is to be no death, but life forevermore.

Look at that account of the last hours of Christ with His disciples. What does He say to them? "If I go away I will send death after you to bring you to Me" or "I will send an angel after you?" Not at all. He says: "**I will come again and receive you unto Myself.**"

It is this that makes the fourteenth chapter of John so sweet.

There is another mistake, as you will find if you read your Bibles carefully. Some think that at the second coming of Christ everything is to be brought about in a few minutes, but I do not so understand it.

THE FIRST THING HE IS TO DO

is to take His Church out of the world. He calls the Church His bride, and He says He is going to prepare a place for her.

We may judge, says one, what a glorious place it will be from the length of time He is in preparing it, and when the place is ready He will come and take the Church to Himself.

In the closing verses of the fourth chapter of I Thessalonians, Paul says: **“If we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with Him . . . We which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent 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.”** That is the comfort of the Church.

If my wife were in a foreign country, and I had a beautiful mansion all ready for her, she would a good deal rather I should come and bring her to it than to have me send someone else to bring her. He has prepared a mansion for His bride, the Church, and He promises for our joy and comfort that

HE WILL COME HIMSELF

and bring us to the place He has been all this while preparing.

There was a time when I used to mourn that I should not be alive in the millennium; but now

I EXPECT TO BE IN THE MILLENNIUM

Dean Alford says—and almost everybody bows to him in the matter of interpretation—that he must insist that this coming of Christ to take His Church to Himself in the clouds, is not the same event as His coming to judge the world at the last day. The deliverance of the Church is one thing, judgment is another. Christ will save His Church, but He will save them finally by taking them out of the world.

Some may shake your heads and say: “Oh, well, that is too deep for the most of us. Such things ought not to be said before young converts. Only the very wisest characters, such as the ministers and the professors in the theological seminaries, can understand them.”

But, my friends, Paul wrote about these things to the young converts among the Thessalonians, and he told them to comfort one another with these words. Here in the first chapter of I Thessalonians Paul says: **“Ye turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God, and to wait for His Son from heaven, whom He raised from the dead, even Jesus, which delivered us from the wrath to come.”**

To wait for His Son—that is the true attitude of every child of God. If he is doing that, he is ready for the duties of life, ready for God’s work; yes, that makes him feel that he is just ready to begin to work for God.

Then over in the next chapter he says:

“For what is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? Are not even ye, in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christy at His coming?” And again, in the third chapter, thirteenth verse: **“To the end that He may establish your hearts unblameable in holiness before God, even our Father, at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all His saints.”** Still again, in the fifth chapter and twenty-third verse: **“I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.”**

He has something to say about this same thing in every chapter; indeed, I have thought this Epistle to the Thessalonians might be called the Gospel of Christ’s Coming Again.

Take the account of the words of Christ at the communion table. It seems to me the devil has covered up the most precious thing about it. **“For as often as ye eat this bread and drink this cup, ye do show forth the Lord’s death till He come.”** But most people seem to think that the Lord’s table is the place for self-examination, and repentance, and making good resolutions. Not at all; they spoil it that way. It is to show forth the Lord’s death, and we are to observe it till He comes.

Some people say, “I believe Christ will come on the other side of the millennium.”

Where do they get it? I can’t find it. The Word of God nowhere tells me to watch and wait for signs of the coming of the millennium, (such as the return of the Jews,) but for the coming of the Lord; to be ready at midnight to meet Him, like those five wise virgins.

At one time I thought the world would grow better and better until Christ could stay away no longer; but in studying the Bible I don’t find any place where God says so, or that Christ is to have a spiritual reign on earth of a thousand years. I find that

THE WORLD IS TO GROW WORSE AND WORSE,

and that at length there is going to be a separation. The Church is to be translated out of the world, and of this we have two examples already, two representatives (as we might say) in Christ’s Kingdom, of what is to be done for all His true believers. Enoch is the representative of the first dispensation, Elijah of the second, and, as a representative of the third dispensation, we have the Saviour Himself, who entered into the heavens for us, and became the firstfruits of them that slept. We are not to wait for the great white throne judgment, but the glorified Church is set on the throne with Christ, and to help to judge the world.

Now, some think this is a new and strange doctrine, and that they who preach it are speckled birds. But let me say that many spiritual men in the pulpits of Great Britain, as well as in this country, are firm in this faith. Spurgeon preached it. I have heard Newman Hall say that he knew no reason why Christ might not come before he got through with his sermon. But in certain churches, where they have the form of godliness, but deny the power thereof—just the state of things which Paul declares shall be in the last days—this doctrine is not preached or believed.

They do not want sinners to cry out in their meetings, “What must I do to be saved?”

They want intellectual preachers who will cultivate their taste, brilliant preachers who will rouse their imagination, but they don't want the preaching that has in it the power of the Holy Ghost.

We live in the day of

SHAMS IN RELIGION

The Church is cold and formal; may God wake us up! And I know of no better way to do it than to get the Church to look for the return of our Lord.

Some people say, "Oh, you will discourage the young converts if you preach that doctrine."

Well, my friends, that hasn't been my experience. I have felt like working three times as hard ever since I came to understand that my Lord was coming back again.

I look on this world as a wrecked vessel. God has given me a lifeboat, and said to me, "Moody, save all you can." God will come in judgment to this world, but the children of God don't belong to this world; they are in it, but not of it, like a ship in the water; and their greatest danger is not the opposition of the world, but their own conformity to the world. This world is getting darker and darker; its ruin is coming nearer and nearer; if you have any friends on this wreck unsaved, you had better lose no time in getting them off.

But someone will say, "Do you then make the grace of God a failure?"

No; grace is not a failure, but man is. The antediluvian world was a failure. The Jewish world was a failure. Man has been a failure everywhere when he has had his own way and been left to himself. When the Son of God left Heaven, and came to this sin-cursed earth to open up a new and living way whereby we might return to God, the earth would give Him no better quarters than a manger for His birthplace, no place to lay His head during the years of His ministry, and only the cruel cross in His death.

Nowhere in the Scriptures is it claimed that the whole world shall be brought to the feet of Christ in this dispensation. In the fifteenth chapter of Acts, James says: "**Simeon hath declared how God at the first did visit the Gentiles, to take out of them a people for His name.**" That is one reason for our Lord's delay. He is waiting until the elect are all gathered out, until His Gentile bride is complete.

Now, don't take my word for it. Look this doctrine up in your Bibles, and, if you find it there, bow down to it, and receive it as the Word of God.

Take Matthew, twenty-fourth chapter, verse fifty: "**The Lord of that servant shall come in a day when he looketh not for him, and in a hour that he is not aware of, and shall cut him asunder, and appoint him his portion with the hypocrites; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.**"

Take II Peter, third chapter, fourth and fifth verses: **“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.”**

Go out on the streets, and ask men about the return of our Lord, and that is just what they would say:

“Ah, yes; the Lord delayeth His coming! I don’t propose to trouble myself about it. It will not be in my day.”

But Peter goes on to say, verse ten: **“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.”**

We have no right then to say when it will not come, any more than we have to say when it will come. As someone has said, Christ’s second coming does not occur so quickly as impatience, nor yet so late as carelessness, supposes.

There is another thought I want to bring to your attention, and that is: Christ will bring our friends with Him when He comes. All who have died in the Lord are to be with Him when He descends from His Father’s throne into the air.

An interval of time ensues between this meeting of all His saints in the air and His coming with all His saints to execute judgment upon the ungodly, to chain Satan in the bottomless pit for the thousand years, and to establish the millennial reign in great power and glory.

“Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection; on such the second death has no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with Him a thousand years.”

“But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were past; this is the first resurrection.”

That looks as if the Church was to reign a thousand years with Christ before the final judgment of the great White Throne, when Satan shall be cast into the Lake of Fire, and there shall be new heavens and a new earth.

When Christ returns, He will not be treated as He was before. There will be room for Him at Bethlehem. He will be welcome in Jerusalem. He will reveal Himself as Joseph revealed himself to his brethren. He will say to the Jews, “I am Jesus,” and they will reply: **“Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord.”** And the Jews will then be that nation that shall be born in a day.

“Behold, I come quickly,” said Christ to John. Three times it is repeated in the last chapter of the Bible. And almost the closing words of the Bible are the prayer: **“Even so, come, Lord Jesus.”**

Were the early Christians disappointed, then? No; no man is disappointed who obeys the voice of God. The world waited for the first coming of the Lord, waited for 4,000 years, and then He came. He was here only thirty-three years, and then He went away. But He left us a promise that He would come again; and, as the world watched and waited for His first coming and did not watch in vain, so now, to them who wait for His appearing, shall He appear a second time unto salvation.

Now, let the question go round, “Am I ready to meet the Lord if He comes tonight?”

“Be ye also ready, for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of Man cometh.”

~ end of chapter 2 ~

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