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Manner of Christ's Coming

THERE is no event in our Lord's work which is of more importance than His second coming; and, it is safe to say, no doctrine of the Bible is more ignored, abused, or ridiculed at the present time than this. It is made to mean everything except what it does mean. It is often placed in the great progressive scheme of God's providence where it does not belong. It has been perverted in every way, and made the butt of endless jest and jeer. But it is a Bible doctrine nevertheless, one of mighty comfort if rightly understood.

The coming of Christ is said to be a secret event; it is said to take place at death; it is said to be at conversion; it is said to be the outpouring of the Spirit of God; it is said to be in Modern Spiritualism, or Christian Science; it is said that it will be a local coming, a coming to one locality; and it is said that it will be a literal, visible appearing of the personal presence of the Messiah.

What is the truth of the matter? This must be decided by the Bible, which teaches all there is to be learned upon the subject.

THE ORIGINAL WORDS.

As much is made of the original terms, and as much confusion has been caused by their misapplication, it may be well to

examine these terms, and to ascertain from the Scriptures their meaning. These words are:—

1. The verb *erchomai* and its derivatives, defined as follows:—

“*To come, to go, to pass.* By the combination of this verb with other terms, a variety of meanings results, which, however, is due, not to a change of meaning in the verb, but to the adjuncts. *Ho erchomenos*, He who is coming, the expected Messiah. Matt. 11:3, *et al.*”—*Bagster*.¹

This word, therefore, simply indicates the act of *coming, going, or passing*. Whatever other meaning it has is shown by the words with which it is connected. It is not used simply in connection with the coming of our Lord, but in other instances. See, for example, “coming,” in Luke 18:5; Rom. 15:22; John 5:7; 2 Cor. 13:1; “go,” in Matt. 14:29; and “went,” imperfect of “go,” in Mark 3:19; Heb. 11:8. This word is translated in the common version by the following terms: “appear,” “brought,” “come,” “coming,” “enter,” “fall,” “go,” “grow,” “light,” “next,” “pass,” “resort,” “set.” But in all these instances the word signifies to come, to go, to pass.

2. The verb *ephistēmi*, defined by Bagster as follows:—

“To place upon, over, close by; to stand by, or near; to come suddenly upon [Luke 2:9; 24:4]; to come upon, assault [Acts 6:12; 17:5]; to come near, approach [Luke 10:40]; to impend, be instant, to be at hand [1 Thess. 5:3]; to be present [Acts 28:2]; to be pressing, urgent, earnest [2 Tim. 4:2].”

See Luke 21:34; 1 Thess. 5:3 for its use in reference to the coming of the judgments of God.

3. *Hēkō*, which is defined to mean “to become, to have arrived.”—*Bagster*. It is defined by Liddell and Scott to have come, to have reached a point, to have come back, returned, etc. It simply means that the coming is accomplished.

¹ Bagster's definitions of the Greek are preferred to others only because they are shorter. See Liddell & Scott, *et al.*

4. The noun *parousia*, which is defined as follows: "*Presence* [2 Cor. 10:10; Phil. 2:12]; *a coming, arrival, advent* [Phil. 1:26; Matt. 24:3, 27, 37, 39; 1 Cor. 15:23]."—*Bagster*. Liddell and Scott's Lexicon define: "*A being present, presence, of persons.*" See 2 Cor. 10:10, where it is translated *presence*, and 2 Cor. 13:1, where it is translated *coming*. It denotes *personal presence*. This word is translated in our common version by the terms "coming" and "presence" only.

5. The noun *apokalupsis*, translated coming only in 1 Cor. 1:7. It is defined:—

"A disclosure, revelation [Rom. 2:5]; manifestation, appearance [Rom. 8:19, 1 Cor. 1:7; 2 Thess. 1:7; 1 Peter 1:7, 13; 4:13]; met. spiritual enlightenment [Luke 2:32]."—*Bagster*. "An uncovering, disclosing, making known; a revelation, especially of divine mysteries; revelation; of persons, a manifestation; the *Apocalypse*, N. T."—*Liddell and Scott*.

The verb from which it is derived means to disclose, reveal, to uncover, to manifest. The noun is rendered in the common version by the following words: "appearing," "coming," "manifestation," "revelation."

6. There is another word not translated coming, but "appearing" and "brightness," namely, *epiphaneia*. It is defined "*appearance, manifestation* [1 Tim. 6:14; 2 Tim. 1:10]; *glorious display* [2 Thess. 2:8]."—*Bagster*. "Appearance, manifestation," "an apparition," "the visible surface," "the mere surface, outside," "outward show."—*Liddell and Scott*.

These are the words used in connection with the coming of Christ—the first, *erchomai*, meaning the mere act of coming, going, or passing; the second, *ephistēmi*, meaning to come suddenly upon; the third, *hēkō*, meaning to be come, to have arrived; the fourth, *parousia*, meaning *personal presence*; the fifth, *apokalupsis*, meaning revelation, manifestation, disclosure,

appearance; the sixth, *epiphaneia*, meaning manifestation, appearing, brightness, or glorious display.

THE "SECRET RAPTURE."

Because of these various terms, and from expressions in connection with them, it is held by some that there will be a "secret rapture," or a coming of Christ like a thief, to take "the bride," or "first fruits," home to Himself. This coming, it is said, will be known only to the righteous. One will be caught up here, another there, till the requisite number are gathered out. Christ will then come with this elect, immortalized company, and every eye shall see Him. He will then be manifested in His glory. Prayerful study of the Bible will reveal the truth. Let us examine some of these passages.

There are several expressions which speak of a coming of Christ or of the day of the Lord in a way which indicates the uncertainty of that event. Some of these follow:—

"For ye know not what hour your Lord doth come [*erchomai*]. But know this, that if the good man of the house had known in what watch the thief would come [*erchomai*], he would have watched. . . . Therefore be ye also ready; for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of Man cometh [*erchomai*]." Matt. 24: 42-44. Also verse 46. The Lord of that servant, shall come in a day when he looketh not for Him. Verse 50. "After a long time the lord of those servants cometh [*erchomai*], and reckoneth with them." Matt. 25: 19. "The bridegroom came [*erchomai*]." Verse 10. "Ye know not when the Master of the house cometh [*erchomai*], at even, or at midnight, or at the cock crowing, or in the morning." Mark 13: 35. "For the Son of Man cometh at an hour when ye think not [*erchomai*]." Luke 12: 40. Also verses 39, 43. In verse 46 we have *hēkō* (will have come) again. "That day cometh [*ephistemi*] unawares." Luke 21: 34. "The day of the Lord so cometh [*erchomai*] as a thief in the night." "Are not in darkness, that that day should overtake [*katalaubanō*, to come suddenly upon, overtake, surprise] you as a thief." 1 Thess. 5: 2, 4. "But the day of the Lord will come [*hēkō*, will have come] as a thief in the night." 2 Peter 3: 10. "If therefore thou shalt not watch, I will come [*hēkō*, will have come] on thee as a thief." Rev. 3: 3. "Behold, I come [*erchomai*] as a thief." Rev. 16: 15.

There are some passages parallel to those quoted. But wherever this uncertainty of the coming is expressed, when secrecy is implied, the word used is always one of those just mentioned. Not that the words themselves imply such a com-

ing, for they simply mean the mere coming or going or passing itself, or the fact that the coming or going or passing is already over. The other expressions used with the words must denote the kind or manner of coming.

The next principal word used in naming the second coming of Christ is *parousia*. The following are some passages in which it occurs where it is rendered coming:—

“What shall be the sign of Thy coming [*parousia*]?” Matt. 24: 3. “For as the lightning cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west; so shall also the coming [*parousia*] of the Son of Man be.” Verses 27, 37, 39. “They that are Christ’s at His coming.” 1 Cor. 15: 23. “Coming of Stephanas.” 1 Cor. 16: 17. “Coming of Titus.” 2 Cor. 7: 6, also verse 7. “Unto the coming of the Lord.” 1 Thess. 4: 15.

The word occurs and is rendered “coming” in the following passages: Phil. 1: 26; 1 Thess. 2: 19; 3: 13; 5: 23; 2 Thess. 2: 1, 8, 9; James 5: 7, 8; 2 Peter 1: 16; 3: 4, 12; 1 John 2: 28. It is rendered presence in 2 Cor. 10: 10 and Phil. 2: 12.

The above is every instance where *parousia* occurs. It ever means *personal presence* when applied to individuals. At least some passages in which it is found prove that this must be the case, and no other passage forbids it. When used for the second coming of Christ, it denotes a visible, personal coming, vivid as the lightning flashing from one part of the heaven to the other. None of the other words used are opposed to the idea conveyed by the meaning of *parousia*. Yet the context in which the verb *erchomai* is sometimes found shows clearly that it has reference to an event which the world will not see and know, as they would see and know the lightning flash. Is there another event or other events beside the *parousia*, or personal presence, of Christ?

Is there but one coming of Christ, or are there several? The Bible presents three different events in the close of Christ’s priestly work, which in our English version are referred to as “comings.”

THE FIRST OF THESE COMINGS IS

shown in Matt. 25: 10 as the coming of the Bridegroom. The parable in which this text is found does not tell us the time of

this coming, but it reveals this, that it is when the marriage of the Lamb is about to be consummated, or when the Bridegroom *comes* to take His bride. What is meant by the term marriage? Who or what is the bride?

We reply to the latter question first. It is most plainly declared that the bride is the New Jerusalem. In Rev. 21:9 it is recorded that an angel said to John, "Come hither, I will show thee the bride, the Lamb's wife." And the next verse reveals as clearly as words can who the bride is: "And he carried me away in the spirit to a great and high mountain, and *showed me* that great city, the *holy Jerusalem*, descending out of heaven from God." And this is in harmony with the word of the Lord through Paul and Isaiah. Paul says in Gal. 4:26, "But Jerusalem which is above is free, which is *the mother* of us all." And Isa. 9:6 declares that Christ is "the everlasting Father." We are of God, begotten through Him. Jerusalem is our mother, and is therefore the Lamb's wife.

But this New Jerusalem is also the capital of the Abrahamic inheritance, or the kingdom of the Seed, Christ. It is that city for which Abraham looked, "whose builder and maker is God" (Heb. 11:10), the capital of that "better country" (verse 16). This same thought is also presented in Isa. 62:4, 5: "Thou [Jerusalem] shall no more be termed Forsaken; neither shall thy land any more be termed Desolate; but thou shalt be called Hephzibah [my delight is in her], and thy land Beulah [married]; for the Lord delighteth in thee, and thy land shall be married. For as a young man marrieth a virgin, so shall thy sons marry thee; and as a bridegroom rejoiceth over the bride, so shall thy God rejoice over thee." The same truth is taught in Isaiah 54. Jerusalem which is above is now said to be barren; the children have not yet come home, and she is represented as mourning for them. See Gal. 4:26, 27. Isa. 54:5 reads as follows: "For thy Maker is thine husband; the Lord of Hosts is His name; and thy Redeemer the Holy One of Israel; the God of the whole earth shall He be called." More evidence might be presented, but this is sufficient to prove that the Bridegroom is Christ, and the bride is His everlasting kingdom, of which the New Jerusalem is the representative or the

capital city, the palace of the King, the home of His redeemed people, the church of the living God.

When does Christ take this kingdom? He was not a King while here; He prevented those from making Him King who so desired. He went away from earth "to receive for Himself a kingdom, and to return." Luke 19: 11, 12. He now reigns a kingly priest on His Father's throne. Rev. 3: 21; Heb. 8: 1; 5: 10; 7: 1, 2.

He sits on the Father's right hand till His foes are subdued by the Father. Ps. 110: 1. The same truth is expressed in Zech. 6: 12, 13 and 1 Cor. 15: 24-28. Of this last text we give the following paraphrase, which will be found to harmonize with the other scriptures above quoted and referred to:—

"Then cometh the end [of the present age, Christ's priesthood], when He [Christ] shall have delivered up the kingdom [of grace] to God, even the Father; when He [the Father] shall have put down all rule and all authority and power. For He [Christ] must reign [on His Father's throne] till He [the Father] hath put all enemies under His [Christ's] feet. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death. For He [the Father] hath [then literally, now in purpose] put all enemies under His [Christ's] feet. But when He saith all things are put under Him [Christ], it is manifest that He [the Father] is excepted, which did put all things under Him [Christ]. And when all things shall be subdued unto Him [Christ], then shall the Son also Himself be subject unto Him [the Father] that put all things under Him [Christ]; that God may be all in all."

It is manifest from the above that it is not until the close of Christ's priestly work that He receives His kingdom, or that the marriage takes place; and the going in to the marriage, or the coming of the Bridegroom, must precede the marriage itself. To those of our readers who are familiar with the question of the priesthood of Christ, the time of the coming of the Bridegroom to the marriage will be readily understood. A study of the subject shows:—

(1) That the sanctuary built by Moses was typical of the heavenly; (2) that the priests ministered unto the example and shadow of heavenly things, even the ministry of our great High Priest (see Ex. 25: 9; Heb. 8: 5; 9: 1-12; 8: 1); (3) that as the earthly sanctuary had two apartments, the holy and the most holy, so also has the heavenly (see Rev. 4: 5; 8: 3; 11: 19 com-

pared with Heb. 9: 1-7); (4) that as the high priest closed his round of service in the most holy place (Heb. 9: 7), so Christ, the antitypical Priest, would finish His there; (5) and as that work was in reality a judgment work, in which men would be cut off, or their sins cleansed and put away by the cleansing of the sanctuary (Leviticus 16), so Christ cleanses the heavenly sanctuary from all remembrance of sin in the close of His ministry, which is also (as it must be) a judgment work (Heb. 9: 23, 24; Rev. 14: 6, 7); (6) that the 2300 days, or years, of Dan. 8: 14, beginning in 457 B. C., ending in A. D. 1844, reach to the cleansing of the heavenly sanctuary, or the work of the investigative judgment, which determines who are worthy of life and a part in the first resurrection (Luke 20: 35; 1 Cor. 15: 51, 52); (7) that at the end of this investigative judgment, at the end of Christ's priesthood, which will close before Christ comes, the decree which forever settles the cases of all responsible beings, which shows that all have either accepted of Christ or closed their hearts to the voice of mercy, goes forth from the lips of the Judge (Rev. 22: 11, 12; Zeph. 2: 1-3). All this may be abundantly proved.²

This *coming* to take the kingdom is shown in Daniel 7. In verses 9 and 10 is presented the great Judge of all, surrounded by holy angels, opening that great tribunal. This opening according to the prophecy (see book noticed below) took place in 1844. Just at this time, as Daniel views this dread tribunal, he sees the following:—

“I saw in the night visions, and, behold, one like the Son of Man *came* with the clouds of heaven, and *came* to the Ancient of Days, and they brought Him near before Him. And there was given Him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve Him.” Verses 13, 14.

This coming, therefore, is not a coming to this earth, but a coming to the Ancient of Days in heaven, where He sits as Judge in the last closing work, in the most holy place of the

² “Christ Our Advocate,” price 10 cents.

heavenly temple. Christ not only finishes His work as priest in the most holy place, but He then receives His kingdom. This was the *coming* (*erchomai*) or *going* in of the Bridegroom. Those who trusted God's word in 1844, followed Christ by faith into the most holy place and His closing work. This coming or going did not close probation, but it fulfilled the prophecy of Dan. 8: 14 and Rev. 10: 6, 7. God revealed it through the prophetic word.

THE SECOND OF THESE COMINGS

of Christ is after this judgment work is over, and He comes to reckon with His servants, or decides forever the cases of all living. Matt. 25: 19. At the time this judgment work closes, the following decree goes forth *previous* to the coming of Christ to this earth:—

“He that is unjust, let him be unjust still; and he that is filthy, let him be filthy still; and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still; and he that is holy, let him be holy still. And, behold, I come quickly.” Rev. 22: 11, 12.

This *coming* to reckon ushers in a time of momentous importance. When that decree goes forth, the day of salvation ends and the day of Jehovah's fierce anger begins. Zeph. 2: 1-3. This is evident from the decree itself. That day will be of greater moment to those then living than any other ever known. It will not be ushered in by the sound of a trumpet. Christ will simply lay off His priestly robes, and put on the garments of vengeance. Isa. 59: 17, 18; Rev. 15: 5-8. This does not mean an arbitrary cutting off of God's mercy toward the wicked; it is the sad announcement of the God of love that men have decided their own cases by willfully closing their ears to His appeals, and their hearts to His love. They have so identified themselves with the sin that with the sin they must be destroyed. The approach of this time will not be indicated any more than was the approach of the angel of Jehovah, who slew the firstborn of Egypt; in the language of Scripture, that day “will come as a thief in the night.” 2 Peter 3: 10. The following passages, before quoted, refer to the same time:—

“For ye know not what hour your Lord doth come [*erchomai*]. But know this, that if the good man of the house had known in what watch the thief

would come [*erchomai*], he would have watched. . . . Therefore be ye also ready; for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of Man cometh [*erchomai*]." Matt. 24:42-44. "Blessed is that servant, whom his Lord, when He cometh [*hēkō*, is come], shall find so doing." Verse 46. "After a long time the lord of those servants cometh [*erchomai*], and reckoneth with them." Matt. 25:19. "The bridegroom came [*erchomai*]." Verse 10. "Ye know not when the Master of the house cometh [*erchomai*], at even, or at midnight, or at the cock crowing, or in the morning." Mark 13:35. "For the Son of Man cometh [*erchomai*] at an hour when ye think not." Luke 12:40. Also verses 39, 43. "Will come [*hēkō*, will have come] in a day when he looketh not for Him." Verse 46. "That day come [*ephistemi*] upon you unawares." Luke 21:34. "The day of the Lord so cometh [*erchomai*] as a thief in the night." "Are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief." 1 Thess. 5:2, 4. "If therefore thou shalt not watch, I will come [*hēkō*, will have come] on thee as a thief." Rev. 3:3. "Behold, I come [*erchomai*] as a thief." Rev. 16:15.

The fitness of speaking of this event as a coming will be seen if we will consider the change in relation between Christ and mankind. Previous to this time He appears in the presence of God for them as priest, pleading His blood in their behalf; but when that day is reached, He is no longer priest, but appears as *judge* to execute sentence. But this coming is not to this earth, but a coming forth from the heavenly sanctuary, where He has till this time stayed the vials of wrath from the world, to execute judgment upon the guilty. Rev. 11:15-19; 15:5-8; Dan. 12:1. Those who have accepted of Christ, will not be overtaken as a thief. Like the Israelites in Egypt, the sprinkled blood of the Lamb of God will keep far from them every plague. Psalm 91. There are other passages which relate to the same time, but the reader will have no hesitation in referring them to the proper event. The Greek word used in all these cases is either *ephistemi*, *erchomai*, or *hēkō*, or their derivatives.

This coming to execute judgment, or the beginning of the day of the Lord, when Christ closes His work as high priest, is thus alluded to by the prophet:—

"For the Lord shall rise up as in Mount Perazim, He shall be wroth as in the valley of Gibeon, that He may do His work, His strange work; and bring to pass His act, His strange act. Now therefore be ye not mockers, lest your bands be made strong; for I have heard from the Lord God of hosts a consumption, even determined upon the whole earth." Isa. 28:21, 22.

By referring to Josh. 10: 10, 11 it will be seen how God visited His wrath upon His enemies by His own supernatural power. Great hailstones were cast upon them, such as will be under the last plague when all the wicked perish. Rev. 16: 21; Job 38: 22, 23. It will be indeed God's *strange* work and *strange* act. Heretofore wrath has been restrained; but when that event takes place, and Christ comes forth from the heavenly sanctuary to punish the wicked, it will be doing His strange work. Sin must of necessity be destroyed, and men have so identified themselves with sin that they must perish with it. God's mercy is manifest in their destruction. The garment of the righteousness of God and the shield and buckler of truth alone will save man then. That day will come as a thief, but it will not overtake the faithful as a thief. He who watches not will have his house spoiled by the thief, but he who watches will not be taken unawares. Even so it will be when the day of the Lord comes, and Christ comes forth from His work as priest.

As before stated, the "coming" (or going) of the two events above mentioned is indicated by the Greek words *erchomai*, or *heko*, or *ephistemi*, or their derivatives. The above words may also relate to that coming of Christ which is surpassingly glorious and visible; but these words of themselves would *not* indicate the *manner* of the event. Other words are also used to show what the *manner* of the real advent of Christ to this world is; this event is commonly called the second advent or second coming of Christ. It is

HIS SECOND PERSONAL COMING TO THIS EARTH.

The words used to show what this coming will be are *parousia*, *apokalupsis*, and *epiphaneia*. The first of these words denotes "presence." Christ was present at His first advent; He will be at His second. He is now absent, and the Holy Spirit is His representative during this time. John 16: 7. This second coming, or personal presence, indicated by the word *parousia*, is claimed by some persons to be invisible to the world, but it is a sufficient reply to this to show (*a*) that this is not the obvious use of the word (see 1 Cor. 16: 17; 2 Cor. 7: 6, 7, where the

word *parousia* is used of the bodily, visible presence of Paul's friends); and (b) the connection where the word is used of Christ's coming absolutely forbids a secret coming, or, as sometimes called, "secret rapture." Let us notice some of these texts.

In Matt. 24: 3 the disciples ask our Saviour, "What shall be the sign of Thy coming [*parousia*, presence]?" Jesus gives them the signs which would indicate that His coming was near. He implies that there would arise classes who would teach local and secret comings of Christ. Some would say, Christ is here; others would say, He is there. Some would say, He is in the secret chamber; some that He was in the desert; but no credence must be given to such teaching. His *presence* [*parousia*] is not to be revealed in that way. No one knoweth the day or the hour when it will burst upon the world, but when it does occur, it will be "as the lightning cometh out of the east and shineth even unto the west, so shall the coming [*parousia*] of the Son of Man be." Verse 27.

Another passage will be sufficient to indicate the *manner* of this coming. In 1 Thess. 4: 15 the apostle speaks of some who will remain "unto the coming [*parousia*] of the Lord." The next verse gives the manner of that coming: "For the Lord *Himself* shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the Archangel, and with the trump of God." The very opposite of a "secret rapture" is revealed to us in this text. The expression "the Lord Himself" shows that He does not come by a representative. It is in His own person. And "the voice of the Archangel," the "shout," and "the trump of God" clearly show that this is not a coming in the stillness of spirit to only a few. "Every eye shall see Him, and they also which pierced Him." Rev. 1: 7.

The word *apokalupsis* ("revelation, manifestation") also applies to this second coming. It is rendered "coming" only once, and that is in 1 Cor. 1: 7. It is rendered "revelation" in 2 Thess. 1: 7 (see Revised Version), and 1 Peter 1: 13; and "appearing" in 1 Peter 1: 7. At the time when Christ will be revealed in His awful glory, then also will come the "manifestation" (Greek, *apokalupsis*, Rom. 8: 19) of the "sons of

God," made like Christ and sharing His glory. 1 John 3: 1-3; Phil. 3: 21. The word means a complete showing forth. When the Son of God was first upon earth, it was a "coming" to earth, but it was not His "revelation" or "disclosure." His divinity was veiled by humanity. He had no form nor comeliness that men should desire Him. Isa. 53: 2. He was to many only a prophet, to many more the son of Joseph and Mary. But He will come again, and that coming will be a revelation of all that His people have believed Him to be, "Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God." He will be seen then as the blessed Redeemer, the Lifegiver, the mighty Creator and Recreator, the King of Kings and Lord of Lords. Every knee shall then bow, and every tongue shall then confess that Jesus Christ is Lord. Phil. 2: 11.

The word *epiphaneia*, rendered "appearing" and "brightness," refers, when used of Christ, to His appearing, shining forth, or glory, which will be revealed when He comes. See 1 Tim. 6: 14; 2 Tim. 1: 10; 4: 1, 8; Titus 2: 13, where it is rendered "appearing," and in 2 Thess. 2: 8, where it is rendered "brightness." "That wicked" will be destroyed "with the brightness [*epiphaneia*, shining forth] of His coming [*parousia*, presence]."

The word *erchomai* also refers to the same event as well as to others. That simply denotes His coming, as in Luke 21: 27. *Parousia* applied to the same event as in Matt. 24: 27 and 1 Thess. 4: 15 shows that this coming will bring the veritable, literal *presence* of Christ. *Epiphaneia* shows, as in 2 Thess. 2: 8, that that coming, or *parousia*, is overwhelmingly glorious, "the glory of His Father" (Matt. 16: 27). This is also taught by Luke 21: 27. And the word *apokalupsis* shows that all this *coming* and *glory* and *presence* of the Son of God are the revelation of His divine majesty and complete fullness. What the people of God have believed by faith, that glorious coming and presence of Christ will then reveal to all.

From the foregoing evidences, therefore, we can come to no other conclusion than this: The Scriptures reveal but one second coming to this earth of our Lord Jesus Christ; that this coming will not be invisible and secret, but personal, literal,

visible, with the shout of triumph and the trump of God; and that those events which are spoken of so as to indicate secrecy, or stillness, are shown by a study of the sanctuary and priesthood of Christ to be events which precede the visible coming of Christ in the clouds of heaven, and are tributary to that glorious coming—the culminating event of the series.

There are several points more which we wish briefly to note, referring the reader to other works for a fuller exposition of this important subject.

1. *The Importance of Christ's Coming.*—There is no event connected with the salvation of the race of more importance; there is no one given greater prominence in the New Testament. At that time the living wicked will perish at His presence (2 Thess. 2:8; Rev. 19:21), the dead in Christ shall be brought back from the prison house of the grave (1 Thess. 4:16, 17), the living righteous, together with them, made immortal (1 Cor. 15:51-54), and the eternal reward given to the people of God (Matt. 16:27; Luke 14:14; Rev. 20:12). At that time Christ will sit upon the throne of His glory (Matt. 25:31), and the blessed hope of His people of all ages will enter upon final consummation (Job 19:25-27; Ps. 17:15; Isa. 25:8, 9; 26:19; Jer. 31:15-17; Eze. 37:11-14; Acts 24:14, 15; Titus 2:13; Rev. 22:20). Surely it is an event of the utmost importance; and yet apathy and indifference in regard to our Lord's coming are everywhere manifest among them that profess His name.

2. *The Time of Christ's Coming.*—The definite time of the Lord's coming is not revealed in the Scriptures. In fact, we are positively told that of "that day and hour knoweth no man." Matt. 24:36. We are told just as emphatically, however, that the "more sure word of prophecy" will give us light concerning that event (2 Peter 1:16, 19); that "there shall be signs" of His coming (Luke 21:25-27); that the wicked will not heed these signs of the day of God and Christ's coming, and therefore will not understand them, but rather scoff at the warnings (Dan. 12:9, 10; 2 Peter 3:3, 4), and hence will be taken as in a snare (Luke 21:34; 1 Thess. 5:2, 3). On the other hand, the people of God will understand from the "sure

word of prophecy" that Christ's coming is near (Matt. 24: 33); they will not be in darkness (1 Thess. 5: 1, 4), and therefore will be gladly waiting to meet Christ when He comes (Isa. 25: 8, 9). Almost all the signs predicted have taken place; the coming of the Lord is near.

Fellow-sinner, are you ready for His glorious appearing? Will *you* meet Him then as a friend? He died to redeem you; He is coming again to take to His eternal, glorious home all those who have yielded to His wondrous love and holy, beneficent rule. Will you not do it now?

Fellow-Christian, are *you* ready for His "glorious appearing"? John was. He longed for his Lord's coming. Paul loved His appearing. Do you love Christ?—Then you will love His *parousia*, His personal presence? Do you love wife, or husband, or father, or mother, or son, or daughter, or friend? If you truly love them, you love their personal presence. If you love Christ, you will love His presence; you will desire, yea, long to know that His coming is near. You will watch for that coming; the blessed hope will purify your heart. 1 John 3: 3.

Weary pilgrim, in life's weary way let thy heart be cheered; thy Lord is coming. His chariot wheels hasten. Soldier on the battle field, fight on, prove loyal; thy King will soon appear. Not "distant hope nor dim" is thine. The rays of coming morn already light the east; the Sun of Righteousness is about to rise with healing in His beams. Does the world—worse, does a worldly church—laugh at thy faith, mock thy hope?—Hold fast. Believe on, hope on, love on. In a "little while" "thine eyes shall see the King in His beauty," thy Friend, Redeemer, Lord. "He shall appear to your joy, and they shall be ashamed." Happy indeed those who can say at that time: "Lo, this is our God; we have waited for Him, and He will save us; this is the Lord; we have waited for Him, we will be glad and rejoice in His salvation." All "the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall [then] be revealed in us." Reader, we long that you shall share Christ's glory here and hereafter.

M. C. W.

THE LORD'S DAY

THE TEST OF THE AGES

BY MILTON CHARLES WILCOX



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