Preface

This book is in four sections.

Section one is a full copy of a book by Ernest Hampden-Cook who was the editor of the translation of the New Testament by Weymouth.

This Edition of Weymouth’s translation with its footnotes has a lot to say about the Second Advent. These notes are found in the key scriptures about the Second Advent.

Mr Hampden-Cook became convinced that the Second Advent occurred in AD 70 after reading the book ‘The Parousia’ by The Revd J Stuart Russell M.A.

Because of this he published his Book ‘The Christ has Come’ which is the first section and I recommend that the main chapters are read before the 2nd and 3rd prefaces.

Section two contains a relevant extraction of another book by Prof. Daniel Lamont ‘Christ and the World of Thought’. This book was recommended to me by Prof. F F Bruce. See Letter at back of Book.

The view that the Second Advent took place in AD 70 was held by some theologians in the 18th and 19th century but was overtaken by the Brethren view expounded by J N Darby amongst others. Now this futurist view of Darby’s is generally excepted view of everybody these days and to oppose it, one is considered to be a heretic.

Section three are my personal views since we now have the State of Israel in existence. I have tried to reconcile all the scriptures including the book of Ezekiel. The charts are from my book ‘373 A Proof Set in Stone’ I have given attention to this fact and tried to create a model scenario that takes all the relevant scriptures into account.

Section four. The views that the Second Advent as a past event in ‘The Parousia’ by Dr Stuart Russell was written without the knowledge of the re-establishment of the people of Israel to Palestine.

Peter Bluer
THE NEW TESTAMENT IN MODERN SPEECH

AN IDIOMATIC TRANSLATION INTO EVERY-DAY ENGLISH FROM THE TEXT OF THE RESULTANT GREEK TESTAMENT

BY THE LATE

RICHARD FRANCIS WEYMOUTH
M.A., D.Litt. (London)
Fellow of University College, London, and formerly Headmaster of Mill Hill School; Editor of "The Resultant Greek Testament"

EDITED AND PARTLY REVISED BY

ERNEST HAMPDEN-COOK, M.A.
Formerly Exhibitioner and Prizeman of St. John’s College, Cambridge; B.A., London

THIRD EDITION
(SECOND IMPRESSION)

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JAMES CLARKE & CO., 13 & 14 FLEET STREET
1910
THE CHRIST HAS COME

THE SECOND ADVENT
AN EVENT OF THE PAST

AN APPEAL FROM HUMAN TRADITION TO THE
TEACHING OF JESUS AND HIS APOSTLES

By Earnest Hampden-Cook

B.A., LONDON ; M.A., CAMBRIDGE

Exhibitioner and Prizeman of St. John's College; Editor and Part Reviser of Dr. Weymouth's New Testament in Modern Speech; late Resident Secretary of Mill Hill School, London

THIRD EDITION. FIFTH THOUSAND WITH IMPORTANT ADDITIONS AND CHANGES

London

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1905
The Author Ernest Hampden Cooke before his death put all his valuable books in John Rylands Library, Manchester, UK. This was a very thoughtful deed he did, so that books that cannot be obtain now, can be researched in this Library.

Also the book ‘The Great day of the Lord’ 1894, by Alexander Brown can download it from my Web site www.biblemaths.com. It is a very good commentary of the book of Revelation dealing with the 2nd Advent being fulfilled in AD 70.
καθηγητής ἤμων ἐστιν εἰς, ὁ Χριστὸς. πάντες δὲ ὑμεῖς ἰδελφοὶ ἑστε.

πάς ὁ πρόδρομος καὶ μὴ μένων ἐν τῇ διδαχῇ τοῦ Χριστοῦ θέν αὐτὸν ἐξει; ὁ μένων ἐν
tῇ διδαχῇ, οὗτος καὶ τὸν πατέρα καὶ τὸν υἱὸν ἐξει.

ὁ ἄνθρωπος ἐμὲ καὶ μὴ λαμβάνω τὰ ρήματα μου ἐξει τὸν κρίσις ταύτων ὁ λόγος τοῦ Ἰησοῦ
τοῦ οὐρανοῦ, ἐκεῖνος καὶ αὐτὸν ἐν τῇ ἐσχάτῃ ἡμέρᾳ.

Criticisms of this book, and suggestions as to future editions,
will be welcomed if addressed to the Author (Mr. E.
Hampden-Cook, Sandbach, Cheshire). And all who accept the
belief here contended for are respectfully urged to do their
utmost to make it more widely known.

Affectionately dedicated

to

JAMES STUART RUSSELL, D.D.,

AUTHOR OF

"THE PAROUSIA."
I. INTRODUCTION.

• Revelation has been progressive.
• Man's understanding of the Bible progressive also.
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• A world-wide judgment yet to come.

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• 2 Thessalonians
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• Romans
• Philippians
• The Pastoral Epistles
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• 2 Peter
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Prayer and the Holy Spirit

OTHERS WHO TEACH A PAST SECOND COMING IS FOUND IN THE BIBLIOGRAPHY
Personal appreciations and press notices of the preceding additions

“The view expounded in this marvellous work amounts to a new revelation. Never in all my life have I read a book of which the logic has appealed to me irresistibly. The author has fully established the main position for which he contends. Indeed in my opinion no scientific fact and no case in law courts was ever more clearly and certainly proved”

- A barrister at law

“For more than twenty years I have held that the prophecies of the New Testament concerning what is known as the second advent were fulfilled for the most part in the years 68 - 70 AD., and that the thousand years sometimes called the ‘Millennium’ dated from 70 AD. I reached these conclusions after a long and patient study of all the passages in the scriptures bearing on the subject, and preached them to my people at Praed street, not without arousing much inquiry and lengthened discussions - meetings held in the week to hear and answer questions started by the Sunday sermons. It was therefore of great delight to me to read The Parousia some year or two afterwards and a fuller pleasure as I did years after that, that The Parousia was written by my friend and neighbour, Dr J S Russell. Your book adds to my thankfulness. For I am sure that the promulgation of this interpretation is necessary to take the reproach from the scriptures cast upon them by the current theory and also to remove a lethal influence from the Churches of the Lord Jesus Christ” [that Christ and his Apostles were mistaken about the nearness of his coming again], Ed.

— John Clifford MA., BSc., D.D.

“I have read your work with much satisfaction and believe that you set forth the truth of the New Testament doctrine of the Parousia”


“I agree with you that there was a Parousia of Christ at the destruction of Jerusalem - not at all more hard to believe than that the Parousia to St Paul on the way to Damascus. But I believe that there is going to be another at the ‘times of the Gentiles’ (see Luke 21.24) and an Almighty presence then on earth or in the air - not at all more irrational that the reign of Jehovah for ages in the temple”


“Your view is so novel that I cannot grasp it all in a day, but if it removes a world of mystery - nearly all my religious difficulties vanish. “This key opens every door in the New Testament.”
“Mr Hampden Cook has taught me one lesson for which I heartily thank him - the duty of placing supreme confidence in the teaching of Jesus Christ.” “Straight as an arrow, and clear as sunbeam”

“You have given me the clue to the understanding of the New Testament, of which I have been in search all my life.”

“Much ability, Calmly argumentative in tone”

— Aberdeen Free Press

“This luminous, if erratic, theologian asserts that Jesus was as good as His word and really came back to earth. Single minded sincerity is manifested throughout this infatuated brochure”

— Agnostic Journal

“There is a harshness in the title which may grate on over sensitive ears. But there the harshness ends, for the subject is approached with such reverential earnestness and with such honesty of purpose that we lose sight of the text in the fine arguments of the sermon. Unlike the majority of new doctrines, it does not undermine our faith. We commend this clever work to students of theology and searchers after truth”

— Ayrshire Post

“We are pleased to bear testimony to its spirit of reverence, faithfulness and Christian charity. If we take the whole words of Christ in the literal sense so constantly insisted upon by pro-millenarians, there is no alternative but to accept the view defended with so much cogency and skill in this volume. On such terms the argument is absolutely decisive”

— Australian Independent

“Too long has the wayfaring man has bee fooled by the mountain loads of theological dogma. It must needs be that men after erring and straying should at length grow weary and make at least an attempt to regain the old highway. Mr Cook appeals for evidence not to what men have said, but to what the Bible says. This book assists in simplifying once more the Bible narrative encumbered as it had been by the teaching of the scribes. Read in the light of the truth (granting it truth) that the Second Advent did take place, the whole of the New Testament becomes a clear, consecutive comprehensive narrative of the greatest events that have ever transpired on this Earth of ours WE commend the book to our readers”

— Barnet Press

“We have no opinion about the Second Advent, but at any rate we are glad of this: that a past Second Advent seems to mean more charity and more fair dealing”

— Barrier Miner Broken Hill, N.S.W.

“Striking and deeply interesting. A wealth of argument and powerful reasoning”

— Birmingham Chronicle
Mr Hampden-Cook writes ably and thoughtfully — British Weekly

“Really amounts to a re-statement of the whole subject of eschatology. Will be eagerly purchased and read. The argument is stated with great clearness, conciseness and perspicacity, and the book gives evidence of careful study, wide information, and accurate scholarship. Whether Mr Hampden-Cooke’s view is accepted or not, this book will do much to establish his reputation as a Biblical scholar” — Christian Colonist (Adelaide)

“Very clearly states what has come to be a settled conviction with many critics” — Christian Commonwealth

“It is clear that we are now living in the midst of the Millennium. Such is the doctrine laid down in this little book. We should not have thought it. But we are bound to say that, literal interpretation of the Bible being assumed, Mr Hampden Cook’s little book is a most careful and ingenious interpretation of confessedly hard sayings” — Daily Chronicle

“Entitles the Author to no mean place among our modern theologians” — Dundee Courier

“Written with great freshness and power. A reverent spirit and a desire to get at the truth animate every page” — Dunfermline Press

“Much learning and remarkable skilful argument” — Evangelical Messenger, Cleveland, Ohio, U.S.A.

“The Author makes no random, intemperate assertions” — Falkirk Herald

“No one after reading the book can pooh-pooh the position, or contemptuously brush aside as having nothing in it. A courageous, honest, and scholarly attempt to grasp the significance and master the details of a great momentous theme. There is throughout a ring of sincerity and candour, as well as of marked devoutness of spirit, which all theologians would do well to emulate” — Freeman

“An attempt to prove that as Christ predicted it, so it must have taken place. There is no record of it, but we must recollect that ‘the annals of the Church for nearly a century after the destruction of Jerusalem are almost blank!’ As a matter of Gospel exegesis, Mr Cook has a strong case. If one thing is clear about the teaching of Jesus, it is that He was coming again in the lifetime of the apostles” — Freethinker

“Weighty, scholarly, and suggestive. It is a powerful argument. What patient research and sterling ability can do to establish the proposition is done” — Gentleman’s Journal
“A remarkable and startling volume, both on account of the theory it advances and on account of the plain reasoning and powerful arguments the author uses with such convincing effect. The author has every reason to feel gratified at the vast influence the book is exerting upon Christian thought. The evidence justifies him in the firm belief that the Second Advent took place in A.D. 70. Seldom, if ever, has a great issue been stated and carried out to its conclusions in a more ingenious, able and logical fashion.”

— Govan Press

"Ideally able and noteworthy. One may say, without exaggeration, that it seems to turn upside down the common view of the subject. The author seems to have Scripture, at least, completely on his side."

— Ormnack Herald

"Vigorous and closely reasoned. The author believes that this view gives coherence and clearness to very much that seems utterly dark and almost incomprehensible on the traditional method of interpretation, and solves not a few of the perplexing puzzles of Christian eschatology. What ever may be thought of his conclusions, it is impossible not to admit the patient diligence of his investigations; for there is scarcely a sentence in the New Testament bearing on the point which he does not quote and discuss, and always with the most reverent and devout spirit, and with the most obvious readiness to yield implicit subjection to what is proved to be the mind of Christ. Much that he advances is of profound interest; as for instance, when he points to the very curious and remarkable absolute silence respecting the history of the Christian church from about AD. 70 for nearly half a century. We commend his book to the candid study of all lovers of the truth."

— Independent

"Written in a truly pious and lovable spirit to prove an impossible thesis. Whatever worth may be in the argument is not for us."

— Inquirer (Unitarian)

"Fresh and original. Well-argued and convincing."

— Inver Gordon Times

"It is surprising how much Mr. Cook finds in the New Testament to support his singular theory. The book is well written and lucidly argued, and opens up questions that call for investigation."

— Inverness Courier

"Earnest and scholarly. Most interesting and instructive."

— Irish Congregational Magazine

"A religion that is not heroically militant is not worthy of the named, and so far as our author’s views conspire to kindle in the church new life and new enthusiasm we welcome them."
"There is much in the book that Bible should see and consider. It is written with considerable force."
— John O’Groats Journal

"A very powerful work. Mr Hampden-Cook believes in the literal fulfillment of Christ's prophecies, and will not tolerate the doctrine of a mistaken Christ and of mistaken apostles on a question so vital. He has no sympathy with those who think the whole matter of the Second Advent mere illusion. And on the other hand he gives us good ground to think that those who are now looking for the Second Advent are very erroneous expositors of the Scriptures. The school of interpretation ably represented by Mr. Hampden-Cook will have to be reckoned with, both by those who spiritualize away the Second Advent, and by that confident and aggressive school who, while they maintain a Second Advent, an busy explaining away the truer meaning of Christ's language."
— Kew. J. C. Kirby, of Port Adelaide (in the Christian Colonist)

'A clever, thoughtful, even learned book.'
— Manchester Courier

'Plausible—and forcibly put.'
— Manchester Examiner

* Well written. Ably put."
— Methodist Times

'This wonderful book.'
— Midland Times

'Conceived in a spirit of earnest, even reverent inquiry, and written with constant appeal to the Law and the Testimony. Bases itself on the impregnable rock of Scripture, and honestly and fearlessly appeals with powerful arguments to the Christian conscience. The single-mindedness, diligence, and accuracy of its reasoning will be appreciated."
— Midlothian Herald

"The argument is altogether ingenious and ably sustained"
— Northern Ensign

"We fear that the startling title of this book will lead to its being set aside as one of those fearful and wonderful apocalypses which make us astonished from time to time by the depths of human folly as revealed in their author and of human credulity as displayed in their implicit believers. It would, however, be unjust in the highest degree to Mr. Hampden-Cooke's thoughtful little work to place it on a level with the 'Flying Rolls' and 'Coming Wonders' of our day. The Argument is sustained through with a reverent and rigid adhesion to the teachings of Scripture, as well as by a scholarship which is none the Less evident because it is never paraded before the reader. The argument is ingenious, and it is stated with a severe adherence to the express declarations of Scripture. which offers a refreshing contrast to the enormous assumptions of writers who build up a whole structure of thought as to the politics of the day on the fancied meaning of the clay in the toes of Nebuchadnezzar's image. It almost seems at first as if Mr. Hamden-Cook may have found the master-
key to unlock the hard sayings of Christ and His apostles about the future."

— Old Gospel Oak Evangelist (Oxbridge)

“We cannot speak too highly of the earnestness, logical power, and wide learning of the author. He has a very great deal of weighty evidence to bring forward.”

— Perth Constitutional

"If this [the past Second Advent] could be proved, there would be an end, of course, to the controversy between pre-millenarianism and post-millenarianism; and the Christians attitude toward many questions would have to be gravely reconsidered. The writer conducts his argument with much learning, moderation, and ability."

— Presbyterian

"Very impressive. The Scriptural evidence is certainly very striking."

— Rothesay Express

"A learned and acutely reasoned essay. Full of Scriptural and theological learning."

— Scotsman

"A startling hypothesis. Stated, argued, and indeed proved so far as the nature of the cane admits. Beautifully written . . . fresh and original . . . fits into all the predictive passages in connection with the Second Advent. Before any one condemn the theory as rubbish it would be wise to read the book, and if he does not agree with the conclusion he will at least be charmed with the pleasing style and reverential spirit of the author"

— Scottish Leader

"Great ability and singular clearness and unfailing reverence."

— Sunday School Chronicle. "From the standpoint of the logician, the position is exceedingly strong, if not unassailable. This is a book to be read; and to be read carefully with unbiased mind."

— Tasmanian Mail, Hobart

"The author of this work is a devout Christian, earnestly seeking to advance the came of truth and those who read his work cannot fail to be impressed, if not convinced, with the force of the arguments he employs."

— Victorian Independant

“ It may be of interest to record that on the occasion of a recent visit to Aberdeen, the veteran missionary. Dr. John Chalmers, of Hong Kong, expressed himself as deeply convinced of the truth of this — the preterist — view of New Testament prophecy. Dr. Chalmers states that with great pleasure he has recommended Rev. A. Brown's book on the subject to other missionaries in the East and that, above all, it has enabled him to give a find revision to his translation of the New Testament into Chinese which is about to be issued, and to give due emphasis therein to the Greek words which not only in the Epistles and the Apocalypse, but also in the Gospels, indicate the nearness of Christ’s Second Advent to the apostolic age.

— British Weekly
PREFACE TO THE THIRD EDITION

Since the second edition of *The Christ Has Come* was published the author's belief on the subject of the past Second Advent has undergone certain changes. These changes he now proceeds to indicate, and he is not without hope that they will help to commend to a much larger number of Christian people the main truth for which he contends.

The Translation of the Saints.- St. Paul predicted that at the "Parousia," or Second Advent of the Lord Jesus, the saints who had remained on earth until that time would pass straight to Heaven. The apostle also declared that this statement was no mere opinion of his own, but that it rested on divine authority - the fact had been definitely revealed to him by Christ. "This we say unto you by the word of the Lord: that WE (necessarily including some at least of those to whom he was writing) that are alive that are left unto the coming of the Lord . . . shall be caught up in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be. with the Lord" (1Thess 4:15,17). Jesus also had expressly declared that before the generation of men to whom He spoke had passed away the Son of man would send forth His angels with the sound of a great trumpet, and that they Would gather together His elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other. On that day, two men, for example, would be at work in the field, or two women would be grinding at the mill: one would be taken, and one would be left (Matt 24:31,34,40,41).

So too when our Lord's apostles were saddened by the announcement that He was soon going to leave them, He comforted them with the certainty that His visible presence would only be withdrawn from them for a short time, and that when He had fully prepared a home for them in the Father's house of many mansions He would Himself come back to fetch them away from the earth. "And if I go and prepare a place for you, I come again and will receive you unto Myself; that where I am, there ye may be also" (John 14:3) In the first two editions of *The Christ Has Come*, it was assumed that this removal of watchful and consecrated believers to Heaven at the time of the Parousia in 70 A.D. necessarily involved a great physical miracle in the sudden and total disappearance of their earthly bodies. This, in itself, would have been quite as possible and credible an event as the translation of Enoch and Elijah (Gen 5:24; Heb 9:5; 2 Kings 2:11, and the ascension of the Lord Jesus (Mark 16:19; Luke 24:51; Acts 1:9).

Only the most saintly Christians (corresponding to the Wise Virgins of the parable, Matt 24.) were then to be withdrawn from the world. The early church was composed mainly of women, of slaves, and of the poor, in that age of fierce social and political tumult, when human life was held very
cheap, the act that in every part of the known world a few members of a despised and hated religious sect were thus suddenly missing from their homes might easily escape record by the secular historian, while the break or gap which undoubtedly occurs at this point in the Christian annals would go far to explain the silence of Church history.

But in the present day the progress of Science has created so keen a prejudice against physical miracles that the idea of the disappearance of the bodies of these early believers is altogether repugnant even to the majority of Christian people. It is therefore with no small sense of relief that the author has now reached the conviction that the teaching of Jesus and his apostles does not necessarily imply that any such a physical miracle was to take place. In other words, in all likelihood the "rapture" or "translation" of the saints presented, to those left behind, the outward appearance of sudden death.

They (i.e. their spirits) were suddenly caught up to meet the Lord, but their earthly bodies perished. These believers did not "sleep," for surviving as they did till the coming of the Lord they were entirely exempted from the intermediate state of Hades or Paradise into which God's people had hitherto passed at death (Luke 16:22; 23:43; John 3:13; Acts 2:34; Heb 11:39, 40). In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, a great change came over them (1 Cor 15:52). And then, without interval or delay, they passed with Jesus away from earth to share the glory and blessedness of His heavenly Kingdom. Revelation 12. illustrates the true meaning of the words "caught up," if, as Dr. Stuart Russell, the author of The Parousia, believed, the man-child who was "caught up unto God and unto His throne" denotes the martyrs of the Jewish-Christian Church.

They, of course, did not escape physical death. And St. Paul, in 2 Corinthians 12:2-4, manifestly regards it as a possible thing that a man should be "caught up" into Paradise, without his body sharing in the rapture. "Whether in the body or apart from the body, I know not," he says.

It is also an historical fact that at the time of the destruction of Jerusalem the mortality among both Jews and Christians throughout the known world was very great. And thus it may well be that physical death completely hid, from those left behind, the solemn truth that in accordance with His oft-repeated promises Jesus personally and visibly returned to the earth to deliver His saints and judge His foes, ere the generation of men to whom He spoke had passed away. Until He came, and until they had seen Him coming, many of them did not taste of death (Matt 16:28), but immediately afterwards they did.¹

¹. See also Note on John 21:21-23, page 84
Matthew 24:29,30 - The astronomical marvels recorded by Josephus¹ War 6. 5.2, as having been witnessed at the destruction of Jerusalem, appear to afford an adequate explanation of our Lord's prediction in Luke 21:25, that at that time there would be "signs in sun and moon and stars." But it now seems probable that Matthew 24:29,30 describes what Christ's watchful saints and Christ's inveterate foes subjectively experienced in their own consciousness in articulo mortis at His coming - an event which primarily and directly concerned them, and them alone. The Kingdom of God being thus strictly within them (Luke 17:20), its advent could have no merely outside spectators and reporters, and was independent of any particular locality.

In that case, Matthew 24:29 "the sun shall be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken" denotes the complete darkness which came...

1. Thus were the miserable people persuaded by these deceivers, and such as belied God himself; while they did not attend nor give credit to the signs that were so evident, and did so plainly foretell their future desolation, but, like men infatuated, without either eyes to see or minds to consider, did not regard the denunciations that God made to them. Thus there was a star resembling a sword, which stood over the city, and a comet, that continued a whole year. Thus also before the Jews' rebellion, and before those commotions which preceded the war, when the people were come in great crowds to the feast of unleavened bread, on the eighth day of the month Xanthicus, [Nisan,] and at the ninth hour of the night, so great a light shone round the altar and the holy house, that it appeared to be bright day time; which lasted for half an hour. This light seemed to be a good sign to the unskillful, but was so interpreted by the sacred scribes, as to portend those events that followed immediately upon it. At the same festival also, a heifer, as she was led by the high priest to be sacrificed, brought forth a lamb in the midst of the temple. Moreover, the eastern gate of the inner (22) [court of the] temple, which was of brass, and vastly heavy, and had been with difficulty shut by twenty men, and rested upon a basis armed with iron, and had bolts fastened very deep into the firm floor, which was there made of one entire stone, was seen to be opened of its own accord about the sixth hour of the night. Now those that kept watch in the temple came hereupon running to the captain of the temple, and told him of it; who then came up thither, and not without great difficulty was able to shut the gate again. This also appeared to the vulgar to be a very happy prodigy, as if God did thereby open them the gate of happiness. But the men of learning understood it, that the security of their holy house was dissolved of its own accord, and that the gate was opened for the advantage of their enemies. So these publicly declared that the signal foreshowed the desolation that was coming upon them. Besides these, a few days after that feast, on the one and twentieth day of the month Artemisius, [Jyar,] a certain prodigious and incredible phenomenon appeared: I suppose the account of it would seem to be a fable, were it not related by those that saw it, and were not the events that followed it of so considerable a nature as to deserve such signals; for, before sun-setting, chariots and troops of soldiers in their armour were seen running about among the clouds, and surrounding of cities.
over these persons, In the moment of death, as the result of the closing up of all their ordinary, earthly senses. Verse 30, on the other hand, describes the opening of their spiritual eyes to behold the Lord when He then came. Compare Mark 13:24, 25.

As they were dying, but before their spirits were actually parted from their bodies, the faith of His people gave place to sight, and His enemies also saw Him. The interpretation, now suggested, of verse 29, appears to be the more feasible because it is equally applicable to the parallel predictions in Isaiah 13:10,13; 34:4; passages which describe the overthrow of the inhabitants of Babylon and Edom in the utter darkness of death.

In issuing this edition of *The Christ Has Come*, the author asks the reader’s special attention to Chapter 8 where a chapter has been inserted, dealing with the question of why all knowledge of the past Second Advent has hitherto been hidden from the vast majority of mankind. Chapter 4. is also an entirely new one, and is made up of quotations from three writers who express in vigorous and eloquent language conclusions which for the most part are identical with those arrived at in the present volume.

E. H. C.

October 1904.
This book has been issued as a humble contribution to the cause of truth and of social and practical Christianity. Two thousand copies are already in circulation. The demand for a second edition is gratifying as an indication of the deep and wide spread interest which is being awakened in the great subject of the past Second Advent. The author tenders his thanks to the many critics who have reviewed the book in the newspaper press and elsewhere. He also avails himself of the present opportunity briefly to restate certain points in the argument, and to endeavour to answer certain objections.

The Christ Has Come is an appeal on the one hand to undoubted facts, and on the other hand to a reasonable Christian faith. The Gospels and Epistles of the New Testament are not poetry, but plain, practical prose. Commonsense, therefore, requires that their language should be interpreted not indeed literally, but in accordance with the usages of everyday life. Not a few of the unhappy divisions of Christendom may be directly traced to the neglect of this principle.

For endless diversity of religious opinion has arisen, because, by processes of 'allegorising' and 'spiritualising,' men have found it possible to explain away whatever ran counter to their own beliefs, and to read into Scripture almost any meaning which fancy or prejudice may have suggested. Systems of 'double' interpretation, and of 'partial' and 'complete' fulfilments, have been at once the delight and the shame of traditional theology. It is surely time for such systems to be renounced, as being utterly foreign to the real meaning and intention of the original speakers or writers.

'Far be it from us to make God speak with two tongues, or to attach a variety of senses to His word, in which we ought rather to behold the simplicity of its divine author reflected as in a clear mirror.' ¹ History, of course, is constantly repeating itself, and great events may present a striking analogy to one another. Yet, although the illustrations of a passage of scripture may be many, the meaning intended to be conveyed by it is in every case direct and simple.

'The judgment of Babylon, or Nineveh, or Jerusalem, may be a type of every other similar judgment, and is a warning to all nations and ages. But this is very different from saying that the language in which that judgment was predicted was fulfilled only partially when Babylon, or Nineveh, or Jerusalem fell, and is yet awaiting its complete fulfilment.' ²

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¹ Maresius.Terry,  ² Biblical Hermeneutics, p. 385.
Scripture, like other books, has one meaning - [that] which it had to the mind of the prophet or evangelist who first uttered or wrote it to the hearers or readers who first received it. [This meaning] is to be gathered from [the Scripture] itself without reference to the adaptations of fathers or divines, and without regard to a priori notions about its nature and origin. The office of the interpreter is not to add another [signification], but to recover the original one: the meaning, that is, of the words as they struck on the ears, or flashed before the eyes, of those, who first heard and read them.  

Now, unless words do not mean what they say, it is certain that not only in the Apocalypse and the Epistles, but also in the Gospels, the Second Coming of Jesus had very narrow limits of time assigned to it. These coincide unmistakably with the winding up of the Jewish age, at the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 A.D. The New Testament writers were entirely of one mind as to the speedy advent of the heavenly King and the heavenly kingdom. In the four gospels Christ's own predictions on the subject are numerous and emphatic, and are expressed in great variety of language. The words attributed to Him are free from all ambiguity. To deny (as some do) that His utterances are correctly reported is to strike a fatal blow at the integrity of the Gospel records, and to make it uncertain what His real teaching on any subject was.

Therefore, to begin with, the following pages call attention to the undoubted fact that throughout the New Testament the Second Advent is represented as an event which 1860 years ago was near at hand. If the New Testament records are trustworthy it is certain that this was the teaching not only of the apostles but also of Jesus Christ. On such lofty and unimpeachable authority we may reasonably believe that the event took place within the time previously specified for its accomplishment.

This faith does not rest merely on the divinity of Jesus. What appears to be a just and rational view of the great eschatological discourse recorded in Matt 24., Mark 13., Luke 21., may be illustrated as follows. Suppose that thirty or forty years ago a man claiming to be a teacher sent by God had predicted a series of events which were to happen about the present time in some country remote from our own, and with which we have few means of communication.

The news now comes to us that very many of his predictions have been strikingly realised. This would at once establish the fact of his superhuman foresight. But when we ask whether on a certain occasion he himself was present and was seen, the country is so remote from our own, and our means of communication are so few, that the sources of our information fail us, we cannot obtain any sort of an answer to our enquiry.

3. Jowett Interpretation of Scripture, 1.3,4.
Under such circumstances the fact that very many of the predictions had been realised would make it an act of perfectly reasonable faith to believe that they had all been realised.

**The Silence of History.** In Chapter 4, certain facts are emphasised which throw light upon the absence of historical proof of the past Second Advent. Stupendous as is the admitted character of the event, there is much in the New Testament to indicate its secrecy and its restriction to a limited number of persons on whom alone were bestowed the faculties competent to take cognisance of it. It is in the highest degree unlikely that men ever have gazed, or ever will gaze, with ordinary mortal eyes upon the unveiled glory of the risen Jesus. As Saul, the persecutor, journeyed to Damascus the light which shone upon him from heaven blinded him. It had a brightness above that of the noon-day sun and be could not see for the glory of that light Acts 9:8; 22:2; 24:13.

"Faint indeed would be the splendour of Christ's divine appearance, and dim the lustre of His glorious advent, were it a splendour of which the perception could be borne - or a lustre of which a glimpse could be caught by any terrestrial eye! An appeal to the [ordinary] senses, or to history founded on information through them, would be an appeal to evidence perfectly incompetent."  

And even if it were otherwise, to disbelieve in the past Parousia because of the lack of historical proof would not be as reasonable as at first sight it might appear to be. Dr. Stuart Russell, who believed that the "rapture" or translation to Heaven of the saints in 70 A.D. involved the physical miracle of the removal and exemption from death of their earthly bodies, speaking of the event more particularly as it concerned the land of Palestine, has said:

"We have to consider the peculiar circumstances of the time, of the country, and of the people as they then existed. We are apt to measure things by the standard of our own time, and of our own experience, and to suppose that the same rule will apply to all times and circumstances. We naturally enough say, were such an event as the sudden and simultaneous disappearance of a number of prominent persons from our town, or village, or neighbourhood, to take place, what a sensation it would cause, what alarm and consternation. It would be reported all over the land, it would be the topic of conversation in every company. Very true; but suppose all this occurred when the country was in the occupation of a foreign army, when the invaders were marching through the land, leaving devastation and ruin everywhere in their track. Suppose the metropolis in a state of siege, captured, burnt to the ground; fire, famine and slaughter raging, in every quarter; all social order convulsed amid the agonies of an expiring nation.

What sensation would the disappearance of some, of the members of a despised sect excite in such circumstances? Would they be missed? Or if missed would it be thought unaccountable? Amidst the fearful signs and portents of that tremendous crisis the disappearance of the Christians might pass without notice."

Outside of Palestine the early Christian Church was an obscure group consisting mainly of women, and of slaves, and of the poor. In the sight of God these were of priceless worth, bid if, amid the terrific confusions and convulsions of the almost uninterrupted wars which characterised that age, the most saintly of them suddenly died, we may be sure that their passing away was little regarded or mourned by the world.

Yet in the mysterious hiatus of 70 A.D. to 150 A.D. it has left an indelible mark upon the records of the Church.

In some cases the demand for historical proof of the past Second Advent proceeds from a misconception of the real nature of history, and is based on the unwarrantable assumption that, from the creation onwards, God in His providence has appointed means for the systematic chronicling of all great events, and for the careful preservation of the records.

In reality, very much of the world's story has never been written; innumerable records of human affairs have accidentally perished by fire and from other causes; innumerable records have been intentionally destroyed through the folly or bigotry of the persons into whose hands they fell. All history, indeed, and especially ancient history, is more or less accidental in origin, and extremely fragmentary in character. See Appendix D, page 135. Often it has been penned with a partisan object in view, and for this and other reasons is strongly biased. In any case it embodies a mere selection of events strung together at the fancy or caprice of the individual writers. As Macaulay (Quoted by Bagehot, Literary Studies, vol. ii. p.242.) has naively remarked,

"By judicious selection, rejection and arrangement [a perfect historian] gives to truth those attractions which have been usurped by fiction . . . In [a perfect historians] narrative a due subordination is observed - some transactions are pro - others retire."

Certain it is that few historians have been content to tell the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth, even to the extent to which it has lain in their power so to do. In considering the question of the coming of Jesus in AD 70. we have to remember that Josephus was a writer who was far from being pre-disposed to favour Christianity.

Instead of demanding, as some do, that the solemn event (if it occurred then) should have been recorded in his history, we ought rather to marvel that, in spite of his bias against his own nation and against the Christian...
Church, his pages afford such striking evidence of the historical verification of many of the predictions contained in the Apocalypse and the Gospels.

**The Millennium.** It is commonly supposed that the "Millennium" or Kingdom of God is still entirely future, and will be visible and earthly in character. The belief contended for in the following pages that it is an unseen and (as the name "Kingdom of heaven" implies) heavenly sovereignty which has been in existence ever since AD 70, is repugnant to many Christians. Yet, as has been well said by an able writer:

"Let us not forget that once in the Church's history it was the common belief that John's 1000 years were gone. Dorner bears witness that the Church up to Constantine understood by Antichrist chiefly the heathen state, and to some extent unbelieving Judaism System. Victorinus, a bishop martyred in 303, reckoned the 1000 years from the birth of Christ.

Augustine wrote his magnum opus 'the City of God' with a sort of dim perception of the identity of the Christian Church with the new Jerusalem. Indeed we know that the 1000 years were held to be running by the generations previous to that date, and so intense was their faith that the universal Church was in a ferment of excitement about and shortly after 1000 A.D. in expectation of the outbreak of Satanic influence.

Wickliff, the reformer, believed that Satan bad been unbound at the end of the 1000 years, and was intensely active in his day. That this period in Church history is past, or now runs its course, has been the belief of a roll of eminent men too long to be chronicled on our pages of Augustine, Luther, Bossuet, Cocceius, Grotius, Hammond, Hengstenberg, Keil, Moses Stuart, Philippi, Maurice."¹

The fact is that bad as the world still is, yet morally it is a vastly better world than it was when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea. It is said for example that at the present time there are not anywhere on the earth outside of Christendom ten square miles where the life of a man or the honour of a woman is safe. But this, which is now true of only part of the world, was probably true 1,860 years ago, of the whole world.

**Few people in these days have any adequate conception of the misery and degradation which were then the common lot of almost all mankind,** owing to the monstrous wickedness of the times, to continual war, and to the cruelties of political despotism, and of the everywhere-prevailing slavery.

In Rom 1:26-32, the Apostle Paul gives a terrible picture of the condition of things which prevailed throughout the Roman empire. Secular history fully

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¹. Alexander Brown, Great Day of the Lord, p. 216.
bears out his statements, and proves that that empire Perished from sheer vice! Life on this earth was then, to the great mass of humanity, the unspeakably sad and hopeless thing which today, happily, it is to only an ever decreasing, number of people.

Perceiv'st thou not the change of day?
   Ah, carry back thy ken!
What, some two thousand years!
Survey The world as it was then!

Like ours it look'd in outward air.
   Its head was clear and true,
Sumptuous its clothing, rich its fare,
   No pause its action knew.

Stout was its arm, each threw and bone.
   Seemed puissant and alive
But, ah, its, heart, its heart was stone,
   And so it could not thrive!

On that hard Pagan world disgust.
   And secret loathing fell.
Deep weariness and sated lust
   Made human life a hell."

Oh, if only we lived for a decade under those old heathen heavens of Persia, Greece or Rome, peopled with their wicked, quarrelsome, licentious deities, until we felt the curse of them aright; and were then brought from under their gloomy terrors into the bright and happy sky of Christian faith, we should know whether or not a new heaven has been created. Does the reader know what sort of earth was that old Roman world in which the Apostles shed their blood? Conceive of an empire in which there were 60,000,000 slaves, where infanticide was practised even by wealthy families, where human sacrifices were offered to the gods, where emperors were deified, where suicide was counted virtuous, where fornication and adultery were religious rites, where men were kept to fight with swords, and prisoners were thrown to lions for public sport, where the poor man had no rights nor charities, where almost all the rich were dissolute and princes almost all oppressive!

We say, look upon that world and then - 'How soon a smile from God can change the world!' look at the world which Christianity has created, and with all its shortcomings acknowledged, tell us if, thank God, we are not living in a new earth today. We are so accustomed to magnify the evil in the world that we forget to give God thanks for the evils which His Gospel has extirpated. One may well exclaim in the eloquent language of Farrar:- 'What need to tell you again how it purified a society which was rotten through and through with lust and hate, how it rescued the gladiator, how it emancipated the slave, how it elevated manhood, how it flung over childhood the aegis of

1. Matthew Arnold, Obermann once more.
2. Quoted by Alexander Brown, Great Day of the Lord. pp. 217,231.)
its protection, how it converted the wild, fierce tribes from the icy steppes and broad rivers of the North, how it built from the shattered fragments of the Roman Empire a new-created world, how it saved learning, how it baptized and recreated art, how it inspired music, how it placed the poor and sick under the angel-wings of mercy and entrusted to the two great archangels of reason and conscience the guidance of the young! "

"High cause had they at Bethlehem, that night.
To lift the curtain of Hope's hidden light,
To break decree of silence with Love's cry,
Foreseeing how this babe, born lowly,
Should-past dispute, since now achieved is this
Bring Earth great gifts of blessing and of bliss,
Date, from that crib, the Dynasty of Love;
Strip his misused thunderbolts from Jove;
Bend to their knees Rome's Caesars;
break the chain From the slave's neck;
set sick hearts free again,
Bitterly bound by priests, and scribes, and scrolls
And heal, with balm of pardon, sinking souls;
Should Mercy to her vacant throne restore,
Teach Right to Kings, and Patience to the Poor
Should by His sweet name all names overthrow,
And by His lovely words, the quick seeds sow
Of golden equities, and brotherhood,
Of Pity, Peace, and gentle praise of good
Of knightly honour, holding life in trust
For God, and Lord, and all things pure and just;
Lowly to Woman; for Maid Mary's sake
Lifting our sister from the dust, to take
In homes her equal place, the household's Queen,
Crowned and august, who sport and thrall had been!
Of arts adorning life, of Charities
Gracious and wide, because the impartial skies
Roof one race in; and poor, weak, mean, oppressed,
Are children of one bounteous Mother's breast,
One Father's care: emancipating man,
Should, from that bearing cave, outside the Khan,
Amid the kneeling cattle, rise and be
Light of all lands, and splendour of each sea,
The Sun-burst of a new Morn come to Earth,
Not yet, alas! broad Day, but Day's white birth
Which promiseth; and blesseth, promising."  

This earth of ours is a new world compared with what it was two thousand years ago. Let anyone who doubts it read C. L. Brace's Gesta Christi, or Dr. R. S. Storrs' Divine Origin of Christianity indicated by its historical effects. Whence has come the change for the better? There can be no reasonable doubt that it is largely due to the fact that the supreme spiritual influence which has been at work in men's hearts and lives during that long period has been the influence of the Lord Jesus Christ.

The New Testament plainly teaches that His resurrection from the dead carried with it a great victory for humanity over evil, and introduced into the world a new moral and spiritual force Phil 3:10; Rom 8:2. One reason why the Son of God had clothed Himself with flesh and blood was that, through death, He might bring to nought him that had the power of death, that is, the devil Heb 2:14.

"For to this end Christ died and lived again, that He might be Lord of both the dead and the living"

Rom 14:9. Accordingly, at His ascension He sat down at the right hand of God Eph 1:20-22, all authority in heaven and over the earth having then been given to Him Matt 28:18. In AD 70, the heavenly Kingdom was fully established over the earth. For it was then that the ringleader of evil was cast into the abyss, and the saints began to reign with Christ.

A recent author, speaking of the power which the glorified saints of God exert over the world, has said,

"Little as we think it, the world's best work is done, in the main, by these unseen workers. They who seem to do it, the visible agents, are but the channels of unsuspected influences. It is the Christ and those who bear Him company who really regulate the events of Time. To us, in the midst of the tumult and the struggle it may seem as though all depended upon ourselves. So, too, to the soldier, in the confusion of the battle, it may seem as though the victory were dependent on his courage. But here, as elsewhere, the appearance is deceptive. It is the commander who secures success. The aides-de-camp who bear his orders from post to post, through the fluctuating conflict, these are they who know the secret it is these who are the commander's best auxiliaries. So, too, Christ's aides-de-camp in His age long warfare-unseen, perhaps unnoticed by the troops whom they direct-yet inspire the leaders and prepare the victory. Each soldier has his own attendants-the armies of earth have their counterpart in heaven. No individual is left alone; for each there are those told off to help him. Each, in so far as lie fights God's battle, is upheld and encouraged by these Unseen friends." ¹

The people who are alive on the earth at any given time, form only the thin outer rind, or husk of humanity.

4. C. A. Goodhart, Our Lord's Promise to Nathaniel, page 21
The great majority of the human race are in the unseen world. Our contention is that the "Millennium," or Kingdom Of God, denotes the now-existing sovereignty of Christ and His saints not merely over the earth, but also over all mankind who are in the unseen world; and that there the patience of immortal love out-wearying human sin is, by means of this sovereignty, causing the victory of good over evil to proceed pari passu with the same slow, but sure, victory in this world.

The term Millennium itself is derived exclusively from the "thousand years" of Rev 20. There is absolutely no scriptural foundation for the popular fancy which identifies it with a time of perfect earthly peace, innocence and bliss. Nowhere do the Scriptures teach that when the Christ should become King all sin and sorrow would immediately cease. On the contrary, the very purpose for which His Kingdom exists is the gradual diminution and extinction of evil.

He must reign until God has put all His enemies under His feet. And as soon as this is accomplished the raison d'etre of His Kingdom ceases, and He surrenders the sovereignty to God even the Father. I Cor 15:24, 25.

Why should it be deemed incredible or absurd that the "Millennium" or "thousand years" of Rev 20 denotes a constantly-improving condition of things, rather than a state of realised earthly perfection? All Christians believe in the good time that is yet to be. Most speak of this good time as the Millennium, and expect it to be inaugurated by the Lord's Second Advent. But with far better scriptural warrant, we may call it "the new heaven and the new earth" (Rev 21:1), and may believe that it will be inaugurated by Christ's Third Advent, when, all His foes being at last under His feet, He will surrender the now existing - Kingdom to God even the Father; that God may be all in all. If this view be correct, human history is simply a step further advanced than is commonly supposed. In that case the gain is great.

"The Blessed Hope," - The suggestion urged by many, that if the Second Advent took place in AD 70, the best and brightest hope of the Christian Church vanishes, is an entirely mistaken suggestion. The hope of the Church in every age has been to attain to the beatific vision of God-transformation into the perfect likeness of Christ and deliverance from all evil, and a share in the Redeemer sovereignty over the whole human race, both here and in the unseen world. What difficulty or danger is there in believing that this hope has been destined to be realised by different portions of the Church at different times and in successive stages? The Old Testament saints and the saints of the primitive Church entered the heavenly kingdom at the coming of the King in AD 70. Then, for the first time in the history of the world, the spirits of just men were made perfect,
and the fully-prepared home in heaven was thrown open to all truly Christ-like sons of earth. A peculiar blessedness has belonged to those who have died in the Lord from that time onward (Rev 14:13). In their case there has been no delay. At death they have been delivered from all evil, and have attained at once to the beatific vision of God, and to a share in Christ's universal sovereignty.

The past Second Advent destructive of "the blessed hope"? No suggestion can be more false or misleading. In reality the belief contended for in the following pages strengthens the blessed hope and brings it nearer and causes it to burn more brightly. If the second coming of the Son of man is still future, then of all earth's sin-stricken, sorrowing myriads, not a single individual has yet attained to the rest and the inheritance which belong to the people of God. In that case it will be vain to resist the inevitable conclusion that the promises of the Lord Jesus were not fulfilled within the very narrow limits of time which He Himself had expressly assigned to them. At this the true believer cannot fail to be filled with distress and misgiving. For some inscrutably mysterious reason the redemption of prophets, saints and martyrs which Jesus and the apostles long ages ago declared to be then near at hand has already tarried for nearly two thousand years. In that case, for aught we know to the contrary, it may tarry for two thousand years longer.

But if, as we confidently believe, the Second Advent really took place within the narrow limits of time assigned to it by Christ Himself, then, in AD 70, the Old Testament saints and the saints of the primitive Church entered into the joy of their Lord and shared to the utmost in the twofold victory which He, as man and on man's behalf, bad, at His resurrection, gained over the grave and over all the powers of evil. In every succeeding age His faithful people have attained at death to the same great joy and the same perfect deliverance.

And if, when the summons comes to us, we are found to be living prayerful and consecrated lives, we also shall go at once to share His glory and to have bestowed on us a crown of life and of gladness. This may happen at any moment. In any case there is no possibility of a long delay, for the past Second Advent has brought that glory and that crown very near to us. Heaven is now ready for all who at death are ready for heaven!

The Scriptures.- It has sometimes been asserted that if the Second Advent is past, it deprives us of our share in the Bible and in the promises of God. The statement is based on a curious misconception of the facts of the case. Is fulfilled prophecy worthless?
such has it not deep and eternal significance? Or is history mere waste paper simply because it relates to the past and not to the future? In reality the record which the Scriptures embody of God's dealings with His ancient people the Jews from the call of Abraham down to their destruction as a settled nation constitutes a stupendous object lesson for all succeeding generations. It reveals a God who in His severity towards sin, His compassion to the sinner, and His mercy to the penitent, is the same yesterday, today and for ever.

To the end of time it makes sure to the humblest believer the living presence and the undying sympathy and love of the risen and triumphant Christ. Need any man be spiritually poor and destitute, who by personal experiment can find out for himself the truth of this? Surely not.

The Bible did not come only yesterday straight from heaven, but like other ancient books it has had a history, and originated at periods of time and under circumstances far remote from our own. With effects disastrous to the intelligibility and credibility of the book this simple and obvious fact has been persistently ignored by Christian people. It will not be a loss but an immeasurable gain when for the supposed unchangeable book we substitute the real unchangeable God.

Each ancient promise will then be recognised as part of a revelation of God's heart and character. In applying the promise to ourselves we shall need to make allowances for differences of time and circumstances as we already do in the case of many Old Testament promises. But since God is still God and we are human beings, and the promise was part of a revelation of God's disposition towards His creature, man, the spirit of the promise will for ever hold good, and will avail for our comfort and encouragement.

July 1895. E. H. C.
PREFACE TO THE FIRST EDITION

The belief that the second coming of the Son of man is still future cannot be reconciled with any reasonable interpretation of the New Testament as a divinely-inspired message and record. The error is none the less in error because for centuries it has remained undetected. The truth which must sooner or later supersede it formed part of the most ancient, faith of the Christian church.

The most ancient faith of the Christian church associated together the destruction of Jerusalem, the winding up of the Jewish dispensation, and a personal return of Christ to the earth, as events which were certain to happen at one and the same time. Jesus and His apostles believed and taught that the Second Advent would take place in the lifetime of some who had been His earthly contemporaries. Confident that the founders of Christianity were neither deceived nor mistaken we joyfully accept on their authority the fact that the Christ has already come the second time.

Throughout the following pages the author is under the deepest obligations to Dr. Stuart Russell's "The Parousia." He also owes much, to the "The Berean" by John Humphrey Noyes, and to the works of Henry Dunn, the author of "The Destiny of the Human Race."

February 1891. E. H.C.
The Christ Has Come

By Earnest Hampden-Cook

CHAPTER 1.

INTRODUCTION.

Revelation has been progressive.- In the present day, the novelty of a scientific theory does not prevent its acceptance; for everyone now recognises the slowness with which the secrets of the world of nature have been unveiled to men's eyes. Electricity, for example, although a modern discovery, has been a fact ever since the creation. Equally gradual has been God's revelation of Himself, culminating in that full manifestation of His self-sacrificing love, which came through His Son Jesus Christ.

The Bible is the record of that gradual revelation. In Old Testament times, men lived in much spiritual darkness, and the thoughts which they cherished as to the great Creator are now seen to have been imperfect. Even prophets and psalmists apparently had but a rudimentary knowledge of many truths which were afterwards brought to the full light of day by Jesus and His apostles such, for instance as that of a future life. Our Lord told His disciples:

"Blessed are the eyes which see the things which ye see; for I say unto you that many prophets and kings desired to see the things which ye see, and saw them not; and to hear the things which ye hear, and heard them not." Luke 10:23, 24.

He bought life and immortality to light 2 Tim 1:10, and uttered things kept secret from the foundation of the world Matt 13:35. And the apostle Paul repeatedly speaks of certain great truths ("mysteries," he calls them), now clearly revealed, which had previously been hidden, and unknown from the beginning of human history.¹

Man's understanding of the Bible progressive also. And not only was God's revelation of Himself of which the Scriptures are a record a gradual and progressive one, but man's understanding of the record and the

1. *mystery which hath been kept in silence through times eternal, but now is manifested*" Rom 16:25; "the mystery which in other generations was not made known unto the sons of man, as it hath now been revealed unto His holy apostles and prophets in the Spirit" Eph 3:5. "the mystery which hath been hid from all ages and generations, but now hath it been manifested to His saints” Col 1:26. Compare I Cor 2:7-9, 4:1 15: 51.
revelation has been gradual and progressive also. No one generation can claim to have mastered the varied and complex contents of the Bible, or to have fully ascertained and understood its meaning. Theological doctrines are efforts to harmonise and explain the multitudinous facts of Scripture, just as scientific theories are efforts to harmonise and explain the multitudinous facts of the world of nature. Unfortunately, however, alike in science and in religion, men's conceptions of truth often differ from the truth itself.

Few, if any, theological doctrines or scientific theories can be accepted as absolutely final, for, it, any moment, fresh discoveries bearing on the subject may be made, or some better explanation of the facts concerned be forthcoming. The disinterested love of truth therefore demands that theological doctrines, being, as they are for the most part, merely human and uninspired inferences from the inspired statements of Scripture, should always be open to revision and correction equally with the theories of science.

It, need not, therefore, be doomed incredible if, on re-examination, it should prove true that, the doctrine of Christ's Second Advent, has for ages - been usually held, is nevertheless one that stands today in urgent need of revision and radical correction.¹ The fact that, popular anticipations as to certain prophecies are unrealised is not always an indicated that, the prophecies themselves remain unfulfilled For example, popular anticipations as to the second Elijah were disappointed, for we have divine authority for asserting that John the Baptist was he. "This is he," said Jesus, "this is Elijah which was for to come." "Elijah is come already" Matt 11:10,14; 17:12; Luke 7:27. Yet his contemporaries did not recognise the truth of the matter. "They knew him not, but did unto him whatsoever they listed." And our Lord Himself, when He came to suffer and to die for sins not His own, grievously disappointed the anticipations of His countrymen, learned and unlearned alike; so that the Jews, in that and every subsequent age, have been terribly mistaken in regarding the first advent of God's Messiah as an event which has not yet been realised, but is beyond all question still future." Unto this day, whenever Moses is read, a veil lieth upon their heart "2 Cor 3:15.

A candid consideration of the evidence will convince many that, for ages, a similar misconception has prevailed within the Christian Church as to the Second Coming of the Messiah; a veil having lain upon men's hearts whenever the New Testament is read, which has caused them to regard this event as one which has not yet been realised, but is beyond all question still in the future.

¹. See also Chapter 8.
The following pages constitute an appeal from human tradition to the clear teaching of Jesus and His inspired apostles. The result, of that appeal, however unwelcome to some, will be found to involve the belief that our Lord's Second Coming is now not future but past; that unknown to the world at, large and contrary to the popular ideas that have been current on the subject ever since, He personally returned to the earth immediately after the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 A.D., being actually seen, not only in Palestine but also in swift succession throughout the world,¹ Matt. 3:2; 4:17; 10:7 by all on whom had been bestowed the senses needful for the perception of His resurrection-body and of the spiritual world; that, as King of the Jews, He then judged the nation that had rejected and murdered Him, and had cruelly persecuted His innocent followers; that He then took back with Him to their heavenly home to the place which He had been preparing for them in the Father's house of many mansions those of His disciples whom, in eager anticipation of His return, He found them living really saintly and consecrated lives, this "rapture" or translation of their spirits not involving a physical miracle in the removal of their bodies from the earth but presenting to those left behind the appearance of sudden death; and that at the same period the first Resurrection took place, the best and noblest of His people who had already left the earth, being then taken from the intermediate state of Paradise to the full glory of Heaven.

If these events took place, then it follows that the Mosaic dispensation which had been introduced amid the thunders of Sinai ² was terminated in a scene of yet more awful grandeur and solemnity; that the judgment of the human race, instead of coming in one great transaction at the end of all things, has been divided into at least two parts; and that God's ancient people, the Jewish nation, being ripe for judgment at least 1800 years before the rest of the world, were judged before the rest of the world, in exact accordance with the teaching of the apostle Paul that reward and retribution would come to the Jew first, and afterwards to the Greek - i.e., the Gentile Rom 2:9,10. We know from Matt. 24 that our Lord's visible appearing was not to be restricted to one place. There was to be no need,

1. We know from Matt 24 that Lord's visible appearance was not to be restricted to one place. There was to be no need, in that day for any one to travel to some other locality, in order that to see him, for he Himself declared that “as the light-ening cometh from the east even unto the west” so should the coming of the Son of man be (verse 27) ere that generation passed away (verse 34)

2. So terrible was the sight that even Moses said, I exceedingly fear and quake Heb 12, 21. whose voice then shook the earth, but now now He hath promised, saying, “Yet once more will I make to tremble not the earth only, but also the heaven” Heb 12:26.
in that day, for any one to travel to some other locality, in order to see Him, for He Himself declared that "as the lightning cometh from the east, and is seen even unto the west," so should the coming of the Son of man be (verse 27), ere that generation passed away (verse 34).

It also follows that the Kingdom of God predicted by prophets and psalmists, and 1860 years ago confidently declared by John the Baptist, Jesus, and the apostles, to be already at hand, Matt 3:2, 4:17,10:7 was established in Heaven over the earth in 70 A.D., the devil being then bound, and no longer permitted to be "the prince (or, ruler) of this world." It is, therefore, of importance to endeavour to obtain a clear and scriptural conception of the meaning of the phrase "THE KINGDOM or God" Acts 1.3.

The Kingdom of God.- To begin with, be it remembered that the Jewish commonwealth was, from first to last, a theocracy. It is true that, in response to the entreaty of the people, visible rulers were granted to them in the persons of Saul and David and their successors. Yet Jehovah Himself was still their only real king, and these human governors were merely His representatives, ruling as viceroy in His name. But the majority of Jewish and Israelitish sovereigns proved very unworthy representatives of the Divine Monarch, losing sight, as they did, of their solemn duties and responsibilities; exerting their power cruelly and selfishly; and leading the people entrusted to their charge into all manner of idolatry and wickedness. This deplorable state of things was not to be permitted to continue for ever.

The writings of Old Testament psalmists and prophets abound in predictions that one day a son should be born to the family of David who should prove all ideal ruler, and, as a perfect representative of the Divine and Invisible King, reign in righteousness over the whole human race. And to the Jews the Messiah's exaltation over the world carried with it the idea of their own exaltation as an elect nation. Instead of being merely subjects and citizens in the Kingdom of God, they believed that, in simple virtue of their descent, they would share in the throne of God's Anointed, and form His court and aristocracy. But when John the Baptist appeared proclaiming that the long-looked-for Kingdom was now in the near future about to be set up, the qualifications which lie solemnly announced as essential to admission thereto proved intensely mortifying to the national pride of his countrymen.

To have Abraham's blood running in their veins availed them nothing, He declared, for the enjoyment of these glorious privileges and the attainment of this high destiny. The outward baptism of water which he administered pointed forward to, and indicated the absolute necessity of, an inward and spiritual cleansing for none, but the penitent, the pardoned, and the spiritually cleansed need ever hope to be associated with the coming
Messiah in His exaltation over the human race, or to share in the glory and blessedness of His Kingdom.

This view of the matter gives the key to a great variety of passages of Scripture, and enables us more clearly to understand the statement of Paul 2 Tim 2:20 that within the church as within a great house "there are not only vessels of gold and of silver, but, also of wood and of earth, and some unto honour and some unto dishonour." The gospel of the Kingdom sets before its as the goal of our prayers and our efforts something more than mere salvation, or mere forgiveness and freedom from sin and its punishment. In the Christian warfare there is a "prize" I Cor 9:24; Phil 3:14 and a "crown" Rev 2:10; I Peter 5:4; James 1:2 kingly or otherwise—which we may either win, or (without necessarily ceasing to be Christians) miss and lose.

Many and emphatic are the statements of Scripture which involve the conclusion that truly saintly and consecrated believers are not merely to occupy the position of subjects and citizens in the Kingdom of heaven. Having been made one with Jesus Christ in the conflict with evil here on earth, and become dead with Him to the world and to all manner of selfishness and sin, they will assuredly also be made one with Him in His Divine Kingship, and share hereafter in His glorious exaltation over the human race. God appointed His Son to be heir of all things Heb 1:2, and promised to give Him the nations for His inheritance and the uttermost parts of the earth for His possession Ps 2:8. But it is also true that if, in the highest possible sense, we also are children of God, then we are Joint-heirs with Christ Rom 8:17, for he that overcometh shall inherit all things Rev 21:7. If we suffer with Him we shall also reign with Him 2 Tim 2:12. The faithful and diligent servant is placed in apposition of influence over the inhabitants of ten or five cities Luke 19:17 and has granted to him authority over the nations Rev 2:26, being set over all that the Saviour Himself has Luke 12:44.

It is certain that in the Kingdom of heaven the sovereignty belongs not only to the Lord Jesus, but also to His people; for as the result of their having been closely associated with their Master amid temptation and trial, He has appointed to the apostles, Luke 22:29; John 17:22 and to all believers of the first rank, a Kingdom in the same sense that God has appointed a Kingdom to Him. In His love the Father calls us to share His own Kingdom and glory I Thess 2:12. It was predicted that the real saints of the Most High should "receive the Kingdom and possess the Kingdom for ever, even for ever and ever" Dan 7:18. He that overcometh," said the Saviour, "I will give to him to sit DOWN WITH ME ON MY THRONE, as I also overcame, and sat down with My Father on His throne" Rev 3. 91.
The spiritual nature of Christ's Kingdom.- In this connection, it is of vital importance, to remember the spiritual nature of Christ's Kingdom. We can only secure the crown of glory hereafter, by here and now joyfully accepting His cross, as that whereon, in very deed, the world was crucified unto us, and we unto the world Gal 6:14. He who would be first in the Kingdom of heaven, must be willing like Jesus Himself to be last and least on earth; the greatest man in the sight of God being the servant of all Mark 9:35. The discipline for this special blessedness often involves us in more than an ordinary share of affliction. Heb 12:5,6,8; 2 Thess 1:5

To some it has been granted on the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on Him, but also to suffer on His behalf Phil 1:29. Hence it is that they have to drink the same cup of sorrow which the Saviour Himself drank, and be baptised with the same baptism of sorrow as that wherewith He was baptised Mark 10:38; for it is through much tribulation that we enter the Kingdom Acts 14:22. Utter self-renunciation is also needed to qualify us for the full glory of Heaven. It means parting with the right hand or the right eye rather than continuing in any known sin Matt 5:29,30. The "Kingdom" is the one pearl of great price, to secure which a righteousness exceeding that of the Scribes and Pharisees is indispensable Matt 5:20; and for which no profession of religion, apart from the obedience to the will of God, will avail Matt 7:21.

It is an unspeakable glory, for the sake of which a man must not merely be content to carry a nominal cross and make conventional sacrifices, but, in utter literalness, be willing (if need be) at, the call of Christ to part with all that he hath Matt 13:46; and, in comparison, reckon all earthly things as dung Phil 3:8. Great humility is also essential. The Kingdom belongs only to those who in heart resemble little children Mark 10:14; and unless a man stoops to humble himself as a little child he shall in no wise enter therein Luke 18:17. We thus come to understand the rare earnestness and concentration of purpose involved in the statements that the Kingdom is to be the foremost object of our desires Matt 6:33 that it suffers violence, and that "men of violence" are alone able to take it by force Matt 11:12 and that no man having put his hand to the plough and looking back is fit, for the Kingdom Luke 9:62. Here also we have the probable reason why comparatively few of earth's millions will ever attain to the special blessedness of being associated with the Saviour in His glory. The gate that leads to the Kingdom is narrow Luke 13:24; and, in every age, they that overcome all obstacles and press through it are "a little flock" Luke 12:32. "Know ye not that they which run in a race, run all, but, one obtaineth the prize? " 1 Cor 9: 24

Yet the great reward is placed within the reach of each one or us; and if, as individuals, we do not obtain it, the fault will be altogether our own.
Every man to whom the gospel of the Kingdom is proclaimed is called by God, both here and hereafter, to a position of spiritual pre-eminence over those to whom the gospel has not yet been preached. By His supernatural grace we may form part of a spiritual aristocracy, not necessarily indeed preeminent in ways that the world as yet recognises or cares for yet, now and ever, grand glorious and heroic in the sight of God by reason of our humility, our calm patience and endurance, our nobility of character, our self-renouncing love and all-inclusive charity, and our absolute devotion to the will of God and to the welfare of our fellow men. It is qualities such as these, built up on repentance and faith, that, in the boundless and unmerited kindness of God our Father, will ensure our admission to the Kingdom of heaven; and cause us to be associated with the Lord Jesus in serving and saving, in teaching and ruling, the great mass of humanity. No Christian would ever covet for himself an earthly sovereignty except for the sake of the power it would give him of doing good the wide scope it would afford for the exercise of wisdom and benevolence.

So also Christ's Kingdom in which His people have the high honour of sharing, is not of this world John 18:36. It is absolutely dissociated from all mere self aggrandisement. The one object for which it exists is to destroy all sin and sorrow, and thus promote the glory of God and the welfare of His creatures. His sovereignty also differs from earthly sovereignties in that He appeals far more to love than to fear and rules men by the sweet reasonableness of His commands, and by the beauty and perfection of His own life and character. His Kingship is not merely a thing of the future, but has been a fact for more than eighteen hundred years. At His ascension, having previously offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, He sat down at the right hand of God Mark 16:19; Heb 1:3; 10:12; 12:2; Acts 2:33; 7:55; Phil. 2:9 -11, all authority and power being committed to Him in Heaven and over the earth Matt 28:18. But the **KINGDOM OF** God means not only the Kingship of Christ over men, but the Kingship of **CHRIST AND HIS SAINTS**; and, throughout the New Testament, the commencement of this Kingdom is associated with the Lord's Second Advent - a personal and visible return to the earth. The purpose of these pages is to briefly set forth the evidence that exists for believing that the Second Advent took place at the time of the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 A.D., and was accompanied by a spiritual judgment of the Jews; a resurrection from Hades (the intermediate state) to a higher sphere, of departed saints; and by the

1. God “raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places, *Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come: And hath put all things under his feet,”* Eph 1:20,22; Jesus Christ “*is on the right hand of God; angels and authorities and powers being made subject unto him.*” 1 Peter 3:22
translation to Heaven of the spirits of all Christians of the first rank, who had not already been called away from the, earth; that the prince of darkness was then imprisoned in the abyss, and the Kingdom of God (meaning by those words, the Kingship of Christ and His saints) established; and that the saints are at this moment reigning with the Lord Jesus in heaven, not, on but, (as the Greek word may equally well be rendered) over all the earth, and doubtless also over the whole of humanity in the unseen world of spirits.

A world-wide judgment yet to come.- In the New Testament, there are also clear and definite announcements of a world-wide resurrection and a world-wide judgment still future. When the thousand years are finished.

...I saw a great white throne, and Him that sat upon it ... And I saw the dead. the great and the small, standing before the throne and books were opened and the dead were judged out, of the things which were written in the books, according to their works " Rev 20:7:11-13. "The hour cometh when all that are in the tombs shall hear His voice, and shall come forth ; they that have done good unto the resurrection of life, and they that have practised ill unto the resurrection of judgment " John 5:29.

The personal presence of the Lord Jesus is implied by the fact, that He will be seen sitting on the great white throne; and that, it, is In response to His voice that all who are then dead will rise from their graves. But in any case belief in a Third Advent is not in any way inconsistent with the fact that the Second Advent took place, 1800 years ago. Yet truth forbids us to apply to the first-named event details which belonged only to the last-named; and which have therefore, been realised once for all.

NOTE.- The world in which we live has for long ages been the scene of a mighty conflict between the antagonistic powers of good and evil contending for the possession of the human race. In the nature of the case it is unlikely that this conflict is destined never to be brought to a decisive issue. Accordingly the history of the world is found to be a record of a slow but sure overcoming of evil by good, and there are many statements in Scripture which point to a consummation of all things earth", and to a final victory of good over evil. Thus the prayer "Thy will be done, as in heaven, so on earth" Matt 6:10, being divinely taught, contains in itself a prophecy and a promise of its own fulfilment A new heaven and a new earth are yet to be Rev. 21:1. "The times of the Gentiles" are to run their appointed course and have an end Luke 21:24; Eph 1:10. Christ's Millennial Kingdom in which we are now living is not to last for ever. To Him every knee shall bow, and every tongue shall own that He is Lord Phil 2:10,11, and then, having put all His enemies under His feet, He will surrender the Kingdom to the Father that God may be all in all 1 Cor 15: 28.

4 Compare Matt. 28:18: "All authority in heaven and on (or over) the earth."
CHAPTER II.

THE EVIDENCE FROM THE EPISTLES.

It does not require very minute study to discover that the writings of the apostles are saturated, through and through, with the thought of the certainty of the Lord's immediate and sudden return to the earth in what was then (but in the nature of the case is now no longer) the near future, to judge and punish His enemies, and to bring perfect salvation and rest to those of His disciples who in anticipation of His coming, were living earnest, and prayerful lives. The object of this chapter is to examine the Epistles, as far as possible in the order in which they were written, and briefly pass in review the chief statement and implications which they contain as to what was then the near approach of Christ's Second Advent.

1st Thessalonians.- The coming of the Lord is a theme on which Paul dwells in his first letter to the Thessalonians 52 A.D. It was an event already sufficiently near at hand for these primitive Christians to live in expectation of it^1 - and one indeed which would be sure to occur within the lifetime of some of them^2 whilst they were still in the body.^3

2nd Thessalonians.- In this letter, addressed to the members of the same church a few months later, Paul comforted them amid the terrible sufferings which they were enduring for Christ's sake with the thought that it was only for a little time.

Their prosecutors were to be punished and destroyed, and they themselves to find deliverance and rest, not at death but, at the revelation of the Lord Jesus from heaven (1.7). Paul also spoke of their unto Christ on this solemn occasion (2.1), thus implying "gathering together" that some of his readers would be among the living saints who were then to be gathered by the angels from the four quarters of heaven Matt 24.31.

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1. "Ye turned unto God from idols, to serve a living and true God and to wait for His Son from heaven" (1.10).
2. "The dead in Christ shall rise first: then we that are alive that are left, shall together with them be caught up in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air" (4.17).
3. "May your spirit and soul and body be preserved entire, without blame, at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ" (5.23).
But, the event was not as yet so near as these Thessalonians misjudging what the apostle had said in his former letter, had concluded. Our authorised English Version gives all rendering of (2.2). That "the day of the Lord" was truly "at hand" in the near future was an inevitable inference from the apostle's previous utterances on the subject, and Paul does not here contradict and stultify himself by suggesting otherwise.

But the Thessalonians had failed to see that the language employed in the first epistle admitted of a possible delay of months or even years, and the false idea therefore which the apostle strenuously seeks to correct is that "the day of the Lord" had now actually arrived ("is now present," Revised Bible).

Christ's advent was to take place in the near future, but as the apostle had repeatedly told his readers in private whilst still with them (verse 5), there were two other events that had not yet taken place which must precede it a great "falling away" and the revelation of the "man of sin". We know from John's first epistle, written in the "last hour" of the Mosaic dispensation (2.18), that before the destruction of Jerusalem the first event had happened (2.19; 4.3). John asserts that he and his readers knew with certainty that the end was now immediately at hand, for by that time a great defection from the faith had taken place, and not merely one Antichrist but many Antichrists had appeared, "Little children, it is the last hour and as ye heard that Antichrist cometh, even now have there arisen many Antichrists, whereby we, know that it is the last hour," 1 John 2.18.

On the other hand, in 2 Thess 2., Paul writing nearly twenty years before the destruction of Jerusalem, implies that the Thessalonians ought to have known that the day of the Lord was not as yet immediately at hand, for it must have been clear to all that certain events which they had been plainly taught were to precede it the great apostasy and the manifestation of the man of sin had not yet been realised The name of "the man of sin," whose evil influence was already beginning to be felt; and whose true character and awful wickedness would ere long be manifest to the world; the apostle, to avoid needlessly compromising himself and his readers, does not mention; but it was apparently well known to them, for he had repeatedly spoken to them in private.

"Remember ye not that when I was yet with you, I kept telling you these things?" (2.5). We may rightly cease to identify "the man of sin" with the, Papacy, and may well believe him to have been one and the same with the monster Nero, the vilest and most brutal of men, the murderer of his own wife and mother, and the fiendish persecutor of the Christian Church.

4. The verb is in the imperfect tense.
Thus, in agreement with Paul's description of "the man of sin," we know that,

(1) Nero was an individual holding an exalted position in the world.  
(2) He claimed divine honours.\(^5\)  
(3) He was a monster of wickedness and lawlessness.  
(4) He was one from whom, humanly speaking, Paul and the Thessalonians had, personally, much to fear.  
(5) He was doomed to perish.  

The person who at the time the apostle wrote proved a hindrance to the full manifestation of Nero's character \(^6\) may either have been his stepfather, the Emperor Claudius, whom he was soon to succeed on the throne of Rome, or his tutor the noble Seneca, whom, later on, he caused to be murdered. fit the fact that Nero died in June, A.D. 68, two years before the capture and destruction of Jerusalem, we have a possible explanation of the statement that the Lord Jesus would bring to nought "the man of sin" by the "manifestation (or first glimmerings) of His coming;" or we may regard Nero as having been consumed in the spiritual world, after death, when Christ personally returned to the earth, a year or two later.

1st Corinthians.- In this epistle (58 A.D.), Paul thanks God that these Christians were living in constant expectation of the Lord's reappearing - "waiting for" it (1.7). "The time is shortened," he declares (7.29).

Unlike modern believers who, reasoning by analogy, may rightly celebrate the Lord's Supper until death terminates their earthly probation, and introduces them to (or for ever excludes them from) the Kingdom of God now already in existence in heaven, these primitive Christians were to observe it not until death, but "until He came" (11.26) to inaugurate that kingdom. Addressing the members of the then existing Corinthian church, Paul distinctly implies that some, at least, of them would remain on earth until the period of the Second Advent and first resurrection "We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed." Ch 15.51.

Finally, the Aramaic phrase, Maranatha, which occurs at the conclusion of

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5. "The image of the Emperor was at that time the object of religious reverence: he was a deity on earth (Dis aequa potestas, Juv. 4.71); and the worship paid to him was a real worship. It is a striking thought, that in those times (setting aside effete forms of religion) the only two genuine worships in the civilized world were, the worship of a Tiberius or a Nero on the one hand, and the worship of Christ on the other."CONYBEARE & HOWSON, St. Paul, chap 1.

6. "The mystery of lawlessness doth already work: only there is one that restraineth now, until he be taken out of the way" 2 Thess 2.7.
the epistle means, as may be seen from the margin of the Revised Bible, “our Lord is coming.” Into this brief watchword the apostle's ceaseless and emphatic declarations on the subject were concentrated.

Unless the Second Advent took place in the lifetime of some of the Corinthians to whom this letter was written, Paul's prediction was falsified, for then it is not true that they shewed forth the Lord's death till He came. In any case, since it is only possible for one generation of men to be alive at the time, of the Second Advent, and all other Christians must observe the ordinance until death or until a third advent. It is as reasonable and easy to believe that the first Christians celebrated the Lord's supper until He came, and that the rest of the Church are to observe it until death, as to believe that the mass of the Church have been celebrating the ordinance until death, and that a small minority - those who are alive at a future advent-will alone be able to literally fulfil the words of the Apostle "ye do show the Lord's death until He come"

Romans.- The original Greek shows that Paul taught that at the period this epistle was written (59 A.D.), Christ's glory was soon to be revealed (8.18). The apostle asserts that it was high time for his readers to awake out of sleep, for salvation was now nearer to them than when they first believed. The night was far spent, and the day already at hand (13.11, 12). The God of peace would shortly bruise Satan under their feet (16.20).

Philippians.- This letter (62 A.D.) has several references to "the day of Jesus Christ." The apostle announces afresh that "the Lord is at hand" (4.5) and represents himself and his readers as living in constant expectation of His reappearing (3.20).

The Pastoral Epistles.- The Epiphany was to take place within the lifetime of Timothy, for it is this event and not death that Paul speaks of as terminating the period of his friend's earthly obedience (1 Tim 6.14). If the Advent has not yet been realised, Paul asked an impossibility from Timothy when he thus bade him "Keep the commandment until the appearing of Jesus Christ." In 2 Tim. 4.1, the original Greek also shows that the apostle declared not merely that Jesus Christ would one day judge the living and the dead, but that at the time this epistle was written He was about to do so.

1st Peter.- In this letter we have a precisely similar statement (4.5). Writing (66 A.D.) as a Jew and mainly to Jews, on the very eve of the dissolution of the Mosaic economy, Peter also announced that “the end of all things was at hand” (4.7); that Christ's glory was about to be revealed (5.1); and that the time had now come "for judgment to begin" (4.17).

2nd Peter.- The authenticity of this epistle has been continually called in question. It is probable that all of it but the first chapter was written in the post-apostolic age.
Among the reasons for this conclusion, it may be pointed out that the persons addressed were apparently no longer exposed to persecution as the readers of the first epistle had been, and the resemblances between the last two chapters and the epistle of Jude are so many and so striking as to suggest that portions have been directly copied there from. Further, a sufficient time is seen to have elapsed for Paul's letters to have become so widely known as already to be the subject of many varied interpretations (3.16), and for them to have taken rank side by side with the ancient Hebrew Scriptures.

Still more significant and more fatal to the authenticity of the two latter chapters of the 2nd epistle of Peter is the fact, that unlike any other New Testament writer, the author associates the passing away of the present system of things and the promise of new heavens and a new earth with Christ's advent to inaugurate His millennial kingdom (ch. 3.10), instead of connecting the consummation of all things with the second (universal) resurrection and judgment destined to take place at the termination of that millennial kingdom "a Thousand years" later Rev 20.11, 21.1.

James.- The first readers of this epistle were involved in great affliction. The event destined to bring them deliverance and rest, and which the apostle therefore speaks of as that " until " which they had need of patience and endurance was not death, but as in the case of other Christians 2 Thess 1.7 the reappearing of the Saviour Himself. ("Be patient therefore, brethren, until the coming of the Lord;" (5.7). Once again we have the declaration that the coming of the Lord was at hand (v. 8). And, indeed, at the time James wrote this epistle the Advent was so near that it could already be truly said - " The Judge standeth before the doors " (5.9).

1st John.- This letter, written at the extreme end of the Jewish dispensation ("It is the last hour" chap 2.18, Revised Bible), is exceedingly valuable in the consideration of the question under discussion.

For it proves 7 that already, before the destruction of Jerusalem, there had occurred a great falling away from the faith, similar to that predicted as destined to precede the Lord's Second Advent. 8

7. "As, ye have heard that Antichrist cometh, even now have there arisen many Antichrists, whereby we know that it is the last hour. They went Out from us but they were not of us, for if they had been of us they would have continued with us " 1 John 2.18,19.
8. "Because iniquity shall be multiplied, the love of the many shall wax cold" Matt 24. 12. - It shall not be (or that day shall not come) except the falling away come first " 2 Thess 2.3.
Christ's personal reappearing and not, admission to heaven at death was regarded by John as the goal and centre of the hopes cherished by the Christians to whom the epistle is addressed. And, in fact, so near was the event in question that at the moment, the apostle wrote it could be truly said "The darkness is passing away, and the true light already shineth" (ch. 2. 8, Revised Bible).

Hebrews.- This epistle, written in the last days of the Jewish dispensation (ch 1.2; 9.26), whilst the temple was still standing (9.8), represents the day of Christ as being so near at hand that the Christians then living were within sight, of it they could actually "see it," approaching (10.25). The brief time that must Intervene before its arrival might be measured by days rather than by years "Exhort one another day by day, so long as it is called to-day" (ch. 3.13). "Yet a very little while, and He that cometh shall come, and shall not tarry" (10.37). The immediateness of the Lord's Second Advent is implied in this epistle in other profoundly interesting ways. The author argues that the rest and inheritance promised by God to the patriarchs had been only partially realised in the gift of the earthly Canaan. This had been proved by the renewal of the promise in the time of David, long after the children of Israel had come into the possession of Palestine under Joshua.

The predicted inheritance could only find its full accomplishment when the people of God reached "a better country, that is a heavenly," of which the earthly Canaan had been but, the dim shadow (11.16). Into this heavenly Canaan, Christ had been the first to enter, resting from His work of redemption as God in the beginning did from His work of creation (4.10). Up to the hour when the epistle to the Hebrews was written, the promise of a Sabbath rest to the people of God still remained unfulfilled in its entirety to any human being but the Saviour Himself.

But the Christians of that day are spoken of as living at an epoch of tremendous importance (for Which Old Testament believers had had to wait long in a condition of imperfect happiness and perhaps imperfect sanctification (11.40), when, by the inauguration of the Kingdom of God and the heavenly Jerusalem, the promise was at length about to receive a full and exhaustive realisation.

Faithful Christians are represented as being on the very point of entering on their heavenly rest and inheritance (4.3), and the, fact that by unbelief and disobedience the Israelitish generation which had come out from

9. "And now my little children, abide in Him; that if (or when) He shall be manifested, we may have boldness and not be ashamed before Him at His coming." "We know that if (or when) He shall be manifested, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him even as He is" 1 John 2, 28;3.2.
Egypt under Moses had excluded themselves from the earthly Canaan, is recalled as a solemn warning; the primitive Christians being entreated to be intensely in earnest, lest through the hardening of their hearts they also should fall short of the grace of God (4.1), and forfeit the still greater blessing of the heavenly Canaan which lay immediately before them; for only by faith and patience could they inherit the promises (6.12).

The same facts are represented over again under a somewhat different aspect. Many other things besides the earthly Canaan were "copies of the things in the heavens" Heb 9.23. The Jewish Sabbath was a temporary shadow of which the rest that remained for the people of God is the abiding reality. The Jerusalem that once was, typified the Jerusalem that is above Gal 4.25,26. The Jewish commonwealth which constituted the earthly Kingdom of God foreshadowed His perfect heavenly Kingdom, which was immediately to succeed it. And so also, in the epistle to the Hebrews the earthly temple at Jerusalem is represented as being but a copy of the heavenly temple - of that true tabernacle which the Lord pitched, not man (8.2).

In the heavenly temple, as in the earthly one, there is not only a holy place, but also an innermost sanctuary - the Holy of holies, where alone the immediate presence of the Father is manifested. Up to the time of the destruction of Jerusalem, neither David nor any other mere man had ascended to this the highest heaven, the way into this holy place not having been made manifest so long as the Jewish temple stood (Hebrews 9.8). Christ, however, had now penetrated through the veil (6.19), and as our great High Priest had passed through the heavens and been made higher than the heavens (7.26).

He had entered in once for all into the holy place, there to appear before the face of God on man's behalf (9.24). And in penetrating to this innermost sanctuary of heaven He, had only done. so as the forerunner of His faithful people - in anticipation of the time then near at hand, when He should welcome them into the Kingdom (12.28) and introduce them also into the immediate presence of His God and Father. "These are they which follow the Lamb whethersoever He goeth!" Rev. 14.4

So near to the heavenly Jerusalem did the first readers of the epistle to the Hebrews stand that, the writer discerns a striking analogy between the inauguration and the consummation of the Jewish dispensation - a parallel, or rather a contrast, between the position of the Israelites as they

10. "David is not ascended into the heavens" said Peter speaking in 33 AD. Acts 2.34. "No man hath ascended into heaven" said our Lord a year or two before, "but He that descended out of heaven" John 3.13.
11. A forerunner goes before at no great distance
stood in the wilderness before Mount Sinai and that of the primitive Christians before Mount Zion Hebrews 12.22, the description of which is an indication of the author having been familiar, at the time he wrote, with the account of it given in Rev 14 which must therefore bear an earlier date than this epistle.

The inference to be drawn.- This brief review of the Epistles leaves but little doubt that the apostles believed, and continually taught their converts, that the Lord's return to the earth would take place in what was then the near future. It is true that, Christians of later ages, fancying that the frank admission of the fact must result in dangerous consequences, have resisted the conclusion that, this was really the belief and teaching of the apostles. Forgetting that the glad tidings with which the first preachers of Christianity were entrusted were emphatically "the glad tidings of the Kingdom," and that our Lord Himself had bidden them proclaim as a main part of their message the blessed fact that the Kingdom was then at hand Matt 10.7, it has been repeatedly urged that the apostles did not attach the ordinary everyday meaning to such words as "shortly," but used them in a sense that admitted of an indefinite lapse of time intervening. In support of this contention a passage from the 2nd Epistle of Peter 3.8 is constantly quoted to prove that God's way of reckoning time is not the same as man's. Nay, more, it is confidently asserted that in one particular instance at least 2 Thess. 2.2 we have direct evidence that the utterances of the apostles on the subject did not admit of the meaning we should otherwise have regarded as necessarily belonging thereto.

To each of these objections there is an answer, shewing that the wicked servant did not speak the truth when he said "My Lord delayeth His coming" Luke 12.45. As a matter of fact, we know from Jer 27.16, that the use of the word "shortly" is incompatible with a lapse of 70 years, much more with one of 1800 years. The vessels of the temple were brought back to Jerusalem when after 70 years the children of Israel returned from captivity Ezra 1.11.

Yet when, at the beginning of the captivity, certain prophets predicted that this would happen shortly, God Himself by the month of Jeremiah characterised those men as liars. "Thus saith the Lord, hearken not to the words of your prophets that prophesy unto you, saying, Behold the vessels of the LORD'S house shall now shortly be brought again from Babylon: for they prophesy a lie unto you."

"After the lapse of perhaps hundreds of years" may be the exact opposite of "shortly," and if the language used admits of this delay having really occurred, then it must have conveyed a false impression to those to whom it was originally addressed. Moreover all certainty in religion ceases, for
words have no longer any fixed signification, and we can never be sure, for example, that in the apostolic vocabulary "good" does not mean "evil," and "evil" "good." Further, a little consideration will at once show that 2 Peter 3.8 does not justify the inference that if God has said that a certain event, will happen in one days, time.

it is possible that, after all, it may not happen for a thousand years, or that, something which He has declared will take place a thousand years hence may take us by surprise by occurring tomorrow. In reality this verse is evidence in exactly the opposite direction to that in which it is usually quoted, for the writer is there arguing for the punctuality with which God keeps His promises when they fall due; it, matters not whether the time previously specified for their fulfilment be exceedingly short, one day, or exceedingly long, a thousand years!

With regard to 2 Thessalonians 2.2, reference has been already made to the fact that. Paul does not, contradict his previous utterances, by admitting that, after all, Christ's return to the earth may prove to be an event of the distant, future. But, writing about 52 A.D., nearly 20 years before the destruction of Jerusalem, he corrects the erroneous idea that the day of the Lord had now actually arrived ("is now present" - Revised Bible).

When once the fact is realised that the apostles not only believed, but also continually taught, that Christ was to return to judgment in the near future, one of two results inevitably follows. Either the coming of the Lord to judge His enemies and to set up His heavenly Kingdom took place shortly after the New Testament epistles were written, or else the apostles were altogether mistaken when they so confidently predicted that such would be the case. Partly from not fully apprehending the resulting consequences, the latter supposition is that which has usually prevailed. In explanation, it has been plausibly urged that it is a small thing for the apostles to have been mistaken in their perspective, and that previously to His ascension Jesus Himself had reminded them that it was not for them to know times, and seasons Acts 1.7.

But to argue thus is to ignore the fact that, like John the Baptist, they had been specially sent out into the world to herald the immediate coming of the heavenly Kingdom, and that although at Christ's ascension much that concerned their ministry and their message may have remained hidden from them, this can no longer have been the case after the day of Pentecost (Acts 2).

12. "As ye go, preach, saying, The Kingdom of Heaven is at hand" Matt. 10.7. "Even the dust from the city, that cleaveth to our feet, we do wipe off against you: howbeit, know this that the Kingdom of God is come nigh" Luke 10.11.
They were then filled with the Holy Spirit that spirit of truth which the Lord Jesus had promised should certify them from error and guide them into all the truth so far as their mission and message to the world were concerned, and especially enlighten them as to the things which were soon to happen.

"The Comforter, even the Holy Spirit., whom the Father will I send in My name, He shall teach you all things" John 14.26.

When He, the Spirit of truth is come, He shall guide you into all the truth .... He shall declare unto you the things that are to come" John 16.13.

“Ye have an anointing from the Holy One, and ye know all things” 1 John 2.20.

To admit that, the apostles were, one and all, mistaken in teaching the immediateness of the Lord's advent is to inflict a grievous wound upon what, has always been regarded as the Divine authority and inspiration with which they spoke and wrote, and greatly to weaken respect for their utterances on other Subjects.

Happily, however, we are not shut up to the painful conclusion that the apostles and the whole primitive church were thus the victims of a strong delusion, and that all their confident, expectations as to the immediateness of the Lord's return ended in a fiasco. A candid examination of the Gospel narratives renders it abundantly clear that these expectations cannot, have been falsified, since they rested on the plain, emphatic, and constantly repeated declarations of One who is the embodiment of all truth, the Son of God Himself.

Therefore, in further elucidation of the matter, we next proceed to an examination of such of our Lord's own words as limit the time within which He would personally come back to the earth.
The Christ Has Come

By Earnest Hampden-Cook

CHAPTER III.

THE EVIDENCE FROM THE GOSPELS.

Matt. 24., Mark 13., Luke 21.- In Matthew 24.3, we find the apostles, doubtless as the result of their Master’s previous teaching, associating together three events as likely to happen at one and the same time, the destruction of the temple, a return of Christ to judgment, and not the end of the world, but (as may be seen from the margin of the Revised Bible) the end of the age, that is, of the Jewish dispensation. (See Appendix B, on "The End of the Age," page 192.)

As He sat on the mount of Olives) the disciples came unto Him privately, saying, Tell us, when shall these things be? and what shall be the sign of Thy coming? and of the consummation of the age? ?

That the three questions contained in this verse were practically but one, is clearly shewn by the fact that our Lord responds not with three answers, but with only one. In the long discourse that, follows there is not the faintest hint of the need of any "double interpretation".

Jesus says not a word about the end of the world, but simply describes beforehand events that were to precede and accompany the siege and destruction of Jerusalem. He also declared that not merely a part but the whole of the things of which He spoke would receive an exhaustive fulfilment within the lifetime of His earthly contemporaries.

For the truth of the greater part of these predictions we have independent historical evidence. Josephus and others record the occurrence, in the last days of the Jewish dispensation, of wars and famines, of earthquakes and physical convulsions, of cruel persecutions and terrible suffering.

That the predictions concerning a great falling away from the faith,¹ the rise of antichrists, and the universal diffusion of the gospel throughout the then known world, were realised before the destruction of Jerusalem, we have proofs within the New Testament itself.

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¹ In the parable of the Sower Matt 13, our Lord taught that only a small minority of His disciples would bring forth fruit to perfection.

Compare Luke 18.8:11 "When the Son of man cometh, shall He find faith on the earth" ?
The 1st epistle of John, written in the 'last hour' of the Jewish dispensation (ch. 2.18 Revised Bible) announces the appearance of many antichrists, speaks of a great apostasy from the faith (2.19), and declares that already many false prophets have gone out into the world (4.1). This also exactly agrees with the account given in Rev 2 and 3, of the degenerate condition of the seven churches of Asia,² afflicted as they were by evil practices and pernicious teaching.

With regard to the wide diffusion of the gospel, predicted in Matt. 24.14, as one of the signs that would accompany 'the end,' it is to be remembered that before the discovery of America and Australia the word "world" had a far narrower meaning than at present, and that 1800 years ago it, meant, simply the Roman Empire. It was only in this sense, for example, that the emperor Augustus could cause a census of "all the world" to be taken Luke 2.1. We have also evidence that this was the meaning belonging to the word in New Testament times from the fact that in the lifetime of the apostles the gospel had already penetrated through the whole world,

"had. been preached in all creation under heaven" Col. 1.6,23), and made known to all nations Rom. 16. 26. Christ had Said to them:

"Ye Shall be my witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all, Judea and Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth" Acts 1.8.

"And they went forth and preached everywhere" Mark 16.20.

"Their sound went out into all the earth, and their words unto the ends of the world " Rom 10.18.

We know from Luke 21.11,25 that our Lord foretold that there would be "terrors and great signs from heaven" at this time, and "signs in sun and moon and stars." These predictions were fulfilled in the marvels recorded by Josephus as having been seen in the sky at the time of the destruction of Jerusalem.

"The miserable people did not attend nor give credit to the signs which were so evident, and did so plainly foretell their future desolation; but like men infatuated, without either eyes to see or minds to consider, did not regard the denunciations that God made to them. Thus there was a star resembling a sword which stood over the city, and a comet, that continued a whole year. Thus also before the Jews' rebellion, when the people were come in great crowds to the feast of unleavened bread, on the eighth day of the month Nisan, and at the ninth hour of the night, so great a light shone round about the altar and the holy house, that it appeared to be bright day time; which

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². The Apocalypse, as we know from internal evidence “Behold He cometh,”1.7; “Behold I come quickly,” 3.11 and 22.7,12; “Behold I come as a thief,”16.15; “Surely I come quickly,” 22.20) was written at a time (probably 67 A.D.) when the Lord's coming was immediately at hand.
light lasted half an hour. A few days after that feast, a certain prodigious and incredible phenomenon appeared. I suppose the account of it would seem to be a fable, were it not related by those that saw it, and were not the events that followed it of so considerable a nature as to deserve such signals. For, before sun-setting, chariots and troops of soldiers in their armour were seen running about among the clouds " (Wars vi. 5. 2).

The prophet Joel also had said that in "the last days" of the Jewish dispensation Acts 2.17, before the day of the Lord came, that great and notable day, God would show wonders in the heaven above Joel 2.30. The prediction contained in Matt. 24.29, Mark 13.24,25, is somewhat different, implying, as it does, a total cessation of light and the coming of dense darkness either upon the whole earth or (what to those immediately concerned would be practically the same thing) to the consciousness of individual men. Striking parallels to these verses are found in Isaiah 13. 10, 13; 24.4; where the prophet foretells the overthrow of the people of Babylon and Edom in the utter darkness of death,

"For the stars of heaven shall not give their light, the sun shall be darkened, and the moon shall not cause her light to shine "All the host of heaven shall be dissolved, and the heavens shall be rolled together as a scroll."

It is a historic fact that in the closing years of the Jewish age vast numbers both of Christians and of unbelieving Jews perished throughout the world. And if at the coming of the Lord in 70 A.D. all the most saintly of His followers that still survived, and all His worst enemies, suddenly died, Matt. 24.29 will then describe the dense darkness which came on them in the moment of death through the closing up of their ordinary senses and powers of perception. That thirty years beforehand, Christ was cognisant of the events that would precede and accompany the siege and destruction of Jerusalem is proved by the historical evidence previously referred to.

So closely indeed do His predictions correspond to the actual course of events, that some critics maintain that the discourse recorded in Matt. 24., Mark 13., Luke 21. is not prophecy at all, but must have been written after 70 A.D.

This is an utterly untenable position. If the words of Matt. 24.30

("then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven........and they shall see the Son of man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory ")

were not really uttered by Jesus, but by writers of a later age, who did not know that the Second Advent had taken place, they would not have gratuitously attributed to Him a prediction which had apparently been falsified. But if we examine this eschatological discourse with care and
candour, we shall find that our Lord's supernatural foreknowledge and the absolute trust worthiness of His statements on the subject may be firmly established to the reasonable satisfaction even of those who to begin with, may be sceptical as to His divinity.

The known fulfillment of the mass of the predictions is a sure guarantee for the fulfillment of the whole. It is that we here contend for, and not for the belief that, apart from independent historical evidence of its accomplishment, every prediction recorded in the Bible, having reference to a time that is now past, was necessarily a true prediction.

The testimony of history demonstrates that the Lord Jesus clearly foresaw the events which would precede and accompany the siege and destruction of Jerusalem in 70 A.D. But His account of these events, given beforehand, is in at least one important respect fuller than any which we have elsewhere. Among the things which would then be certain to take place, He solemnly announces the appearing of the sign of the Son of man in the sky, and His own personal and visible coming on the clouds (Matt. 24. 30). Moreover He Illustrates the certainly of His Advent following at once the signs He had named, by reference to a common phenomenon, the budding of the fig tree, which always indicated that summer was immediately at hand.

The marks of time throughout the chapter are clear and unmistakable "When ye" (some at least of those to whom He was speaking - The pronouns you and your cannot be used to the exclusion of the individuals immediately addressed.) "see the abomination of desolation" (v.15). "Then shall be great tribulation" (v. 21). "immediately after the tribulation of those days" (v. 29). "then shall appear the Sign of the Son of man in heaven, and then shall all the tribes of the earth (or land) mourn, and they Shall see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory" (v. 30).

"Even so, ye" (some at least of those to whom He was speaking) also, when ye see all these things, know ye that He is nigh, even at the doors" (v. 33). In verses 34 and 35, our Lord makes assurance doubly sure by adding

"verily I say unto you this generation shall not pass away till all these things be accomplished. Heaven, and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away." This was Christ's answer to a question as to time: "When shall these things be"?

He solemnly assured His apostles that the whole would be realised in the lifetime of some of them. The announcement must have been received with surprise, and perhaps with a measure of incredulity, even by those to whom it was originally addressed.
At that time there was apparently as little prospect, of the destruction of Jerusalem, and the appearing of the Son of man "on the clouds of heaven," as there now is of the total destruction of London, and of the winding up of the world's history. But, by the words which He uses, Christ brings prominence the fact it is He Himself who is speaking; and thereby He anticipates, and answers beforehand, the difficulty that some would find in believing the statement, and the ceaseless attempts that would be made, in subsequent ages, to evade and explain away the natural and common-sense meaning of His words.¹ We have no need to search in some remote corner of the dictionary for the signification of the phrase 'this generation' The meaning which Jesus Himself, and the evangelist Matthew who here reports what He said, attached to the words, may be readily gathered from Matt. 11.16: "Whereunto shall I liken this generation?" 12.41: "The men of Nineveh shall stand up in the judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it" (Compare 12. 42). 12 45: “Even so shall it be also unto this evil generation." 23.36: "Verily I say unto you, all these things (ie. all the righteous blood shed from Abel to Zechariah) shall come upon this generation"

In each of these instances, the words in question denote our Lord's earthly contemporaries. The conviction that this is also the meaning to be attached to the phrase in Matt 24.34, is strength -

(1) by the fact that elsewhere Christ seldom (if indeed ever) mentioned His Second Advent without assigning to it a very narrow limit of time; and

(2) that, in this very discourse by the use of the words ye, you, your, then, immediately after, then, He had already limited the event to the lifetime of the apostles. To suggest that in Matt 24.34, the words 'this generation' mean 'the Jewish race,' or 'the Christian dispensation,' is to rob the passage of the urgency which it undoubtedly expresses; and to make it, as devoid of significance as if a prophet predicting the destruction of London and the burning of St. Paul's Cathedral were to add with great emphasis: " The Anglo-Saxon race shall not pass out of existence until all this is accomplished!"

The exhortation given in Matt 24.42,44, to the first believers, that they were to be earnest and prayerful in anticipation of their Master's return, derived its urgency, from the certainty of that return taking place in the

1. In like manner in at least one passage, Paul, when teaching that the second advent would take place in the lifetime of some of his readers, insists that the statement rests on divine authority-the fact had been expressly revealed to him by God. "This we say unto you by the word of the Lord: that we that are alive, that are left unto the coming of the Lord, shall in no wise precede them that are fallen asleep" 1 Thess.4. 14.
lifetime of some of them, coupled with the uncertainty or the exact date. That generation was not, to pass till all those things were accomplished. Yet the precise day and the precise hour no one knew; not even the angels of heaven, neither the Son, but the Father only (vv. 34, 36).

That Jesus Christ, whilst declaring His own ignorance of the exact day and hour when He would come back to judgment yet, repeatedly taught that, His return would be an event of the near future, and would take place at the close of the Jewish dispensation, and in the lifetime of some at least of His contemporaries, is also an inevitable inference from much that is recorded in other parts of the gospel narratives.

"At hand."- Mark 1.15, implies that the heavenly Kingdom, the coming of which is spoken of later on in Rev. 11.15² and Rev. 12.10,³ as having been realised, had not been set up at the Messiah's birth and first entry into the world, but would follow at no very distant date. Like the Baptist and the apostles, Jesus began His public ministry by by declaring not that, the Kingdom of God" had now come, but that the time was fulfilled, and the Kingdom already at hand!

Says F.D.Maurice, in the preface to his work on the Apocalypse: "I can never be thankful enough for having arrived at the conviction that the words 'the Kingdom of heaven is at hand' are used by the evangelists in their strictest sense."

John a herald of speedy judgment.-

The Baptist, was emphatically a preacher of judgment, the forerunner of Jesus the King and Judge, even more than of Jesus the suffering Lamb of God. He predicted the gathering of the rain into the granary, and the burning up of the chaff with unquenchable fire. He solemnly announced that, at the time He spoke, the kingdom of heaven was at hand; the axe was already lying at the root of the trees; and the wrath was soon to come (Greek: mello [strongs 3195]), Matt 3.2,7,10,12.

Our Lord afterwards declared Matt. 11.10,14,15⁴ that in the person of John there had already appeared the Elijah spoken of by Malachi (4.5),⁵ whose

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² "The Kingdom of the world is become the Kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ, and He shall reign for ever and ever."
³ "Now is come the salvation and the power and the kingdom of our God, and the authority of His Christ."
⁴ "This is he of whom it is written, Behold I send my messenger before thy face, who shall prepare thy way before thee." "If ye are willing to receive it this is Elijah, which is (or was for) to come."
⁵ "Behold I will send you Elijah the prophet before the great and terrible day of the Lord come."
coming had been predicted as certain to precede (apparently at no distant date) and herald the Second Advent of the Messiah that advent to judgment which was to prove to the Jews the great and dreadful day of the Lord.6

And because Jesus knew that, the importance and full significance of John and the second Elijah being one, and the same person, would be in danger of being lost sight of, He drew special attention to the fact by adding "He that hath ears to hear let him hear."

Before their ministry ended.- The natural meaning of Matt. 10.23, is that Christ's apostles would barely have time to proclaim throughout Palestine the glad tidings that the Kingdom of heaven was at, hand (verse 7) before He Himself returned to set tip that Kingdom. "When they persecute you in this city flee into the next; for verily I say unto you, ye shall not have gone through the cities of Israel till the Son of man be come."

To suggest that the verse means that, our Lord would closely follow His disciples, and overtake them, is to rob the statement of all point. His presence would not hinder their continuing to preach and it is hard to see how it could provide a motive for urgency and haste. Moreover, His instructions on this occasion reached forward to a time after His ascension, when, for His sake, they would he brought before governors and kings (Verse 18).

Until the end of the Jewish age.- That the ministry of the apostles, as whole, was to terminate at, the destruction of Jerusalem, is further evidence by the fact that their Master's promise to be with them, in a special and peculiar sense, whilst they fulfilled their commission, extended only to the close of the Jewish dispensation.

"Go ye therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy spirit: teaching them to observe whatsoever I commanded you; and lo, I AM with you, all the days, even unto the end of the age" Matt. 28. 20. "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to the whole creation" Mark 16. 15.

That, the phrases "all the nations," "the whole creation," did not include more than the world as known to the apostles, is proved by the fact that even in the lifetime of, Paul the apostles had accomplished the work thus committed to them; the gospel having been made known to all nations

6. "These are days of vengeance," said Jesus (Luke 21. 22, 23) referring to the last days of the Jewish dispensation. "that all things that are written may be fulfilled. . . . There shall be great distress upon the land, wrath unto this people."

7. See Appendix A, page 133.
Indeed the limited range of the phrases in question is shown by the words with which Mark's gospel closes: "And they went forth, and preached everywhere, the Lord working with them, and confirming the word by the Signs that followed" (16. 20).

At the end of the Jewish age.- "He that soweth the good seed is the Son of man, and the harvest is the consummation of the age" Matt. 13. 37, Revised Bible. Here, be it observed, a harvest was to be gathered in at the close of the Jewish dispensation, and was perhaps thought of (is destined to be specially the result of Christ's own personal ministry. From this parable of the wheat and the tares, it is certain that the distinction in time which some make between the Epiphany (Christ's coming to take away His people), and the Parousia (Christ's coining with His people to judge the world), is groundless. "Let both grow together until the harvest; and in the time of the harvest, I will say to the reapers, Gather up first the tares, and bind them in bundles to burn them, but gather the wheat into My barn" Matt. 13. 30.

"White already to harvest."- In John 4. 35 - 38, our Lord taught that the spiritual harvest of the Jewish nation was near at hand. He also represented His apostles as being harvest laborers, reapers; not sowers of the seed! "Say ye not, There are yet four months, and then cometh the harvest? Behold, I say unto you, Lift up your eyes, and look upon the fields, that they are white already to harvest he that, reapeth, receiveth wages, and gathereth fruit unto life eternal; that he that soweth and he that reapeth may rejoice together For herein is the saying true, one soweth and another reapeth. I sent, you to reap that, whereon ye have not laboured: others have laboured and ye have entered into their labour." So also in Luke 10.2 "The harvest is plenteous, but the labourers are few; pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest that He send forth labourers unto His harvest ", the use of a verb in the present tense (is) denotes the nearness of the harvest, and explains why a necessity existed not for sowers of the word, but for reapers!

Within the lifetime of some who listened.- "Whosoever shall be ashamed of Me and My words in this adulterous and sinful generation, the Son of man shall be ashamed of him, when He cometh In the glory of His Father with the holy angels" Mark 8.38 "For the Son of man is soon to come (Greek: mello [strongs 3195 er’khom’ahee [strongs 2064] ) In the glory of His Father with His angles, and then shall He render unto every man according to his deeds.

8. Exactly the same words occur in the exposition of the parable of the Drag-net (Matt. 13. 49) "So shall it be in the consummation of the age."

9. Similarly the term "first-fruits of His creatures" was applied to the primitive Christians (James i. 18).
"Verily I say unto you, there be some of them that stand here, which shall in no wise taste of death till they see the Son of man coming in His kingdom"
Matt. 16.27, 28.

From these verses, we infer three things as to the judgment of which they speak:

(1) that it, specially concerned our Lord's earthly contemporaries;

(2) that, it was near at hand; and

(3) that it would take place within the lifetime of some who heard our Lord speak. To make these words apply to the Transfiguration scene which followed after an interval of seven or eight days, is to reduce the solemn prediction of Matt 16.28 to the common place remark that some of His audience would be alive in a week's time to witness that scene!

The Transfiguration prefigured the glories of the Second Advent, and Peter 2 Pet.1.16-19 recalls the fact that he and his companions had been eve-witnesses of Christ's majesty on the Mount, as a proof that, they were not, following cunningly-devised fables when they proclaimed His speedy return to the earth in glory. But, in itself, the Transfiguration was in no sense a coming of Christ or of Christ's Kingdom. He had first to go away, before He could return! The two verses quoted above Matt. 16.27,28, when taken together prove unmistakable that our Lord predicted an actual advent to Judgment within the lifetime of some who were then listening to Him.

"Speedily."- Jesus knew beforehand the awful sufferings that, would fall on His followers in the last days of the Jewish dispensation. In the parable of the unjust judge (Luke 10.18), He associated the avenging of God's elect with His own second coming, and declared that their deliverance from their enemies would take place, not after a long delay, but, speedily. If there had been the possibility of a considerable lapse of time, this word "speedily" would not have been required; and, if used, would have conveyed a false impression to those to whom the parable was originally addressed.

Within the lifetime of some of the Apostles.- When Christ's disciples were saddened by the announcement that, He was soon going to leave them, He comforted them by speaking of the Father's house of many mansions and with the information that a time was coming when He would manifest (that is, make visible) Himself unto them but not unto the world John 14.2,3,19,22. One purpose, He declared, of His temporary absence from them was that He might go elsewhere to prepare a home for them. The separation between Him and them would end, not by their following Him into the spirit-world when they died., but by His own return to them;
for He declared that He would come back to fetch away from earth these same sorrowing friends "I will receive you unto Myself in order that where He was they might be also!"

This promise has a significance for us in modern times, reminding us of the heavenly home which has been in existence since 70 A.D., and to which if we are found faithful we shall have an entrance richly and abundantly administered to us at death. But primarily the promise was made, not to believers who might live in remote future ages but, to the men who were at that moment listening to Jesus; and therefore to them it, was assuredly fulfilled centuries ago.

Thus, after the ascension, the expectation and hope of the apostles, so far as their Lord's visible presence was concerned, was naturally and inevitably the very reverse of David's sentiment uttered over his dead child: "I shall go him but he Shall not return to me" 2 Sam 12. 23.

**Within the lifetime, of John.**- The words addressed to Peter John 21. 22: "If I will that he tarry till I come, what, is that to thee?" afforded a strong presumption that the Second Advent would take place in John's lifetime; for it is impossible that Jesus would suggest this idea only to mislead. The apostles erroneously inferred that, if the Lord came so soon, John would be exempted from death.

It is this latter inference that the evangelist hastens to correct by pointing out, that Christ had not promised that he should not die. Accordingly we have great reason from history to believe that John survived the destruction of Jerusalem, and that he died in the beginning of the second century. 10

"The hour cometh and now is."- "Now is a judgment of this world." In John 5.18, we read that the Jews sought to kill Jesus because He called God His own Father, making Himself equal with God in reply, Christ justified the stupendous claim which He had advanced. He asserted (verses 21,22) the right and the power to raise men from the grave and judge them. "For as the Father raiseth the dead and quickeneth them, even so the Son also quickeneth whom He will. For neither doth the Father judge any man, but He hath given all judgment unto the Son, that all may honour the Son even as they honour the Father."

In verse. 29. He predicts the universal resurrection and universal judgment yet to come at the end of the world "The hour cometh in which all that are in the tombs shall hear His voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life, and they that have practised ill unto the resurrection of judgment."

10. See also note on page 84.
But in contrast to this, He mentions in verse 25 with great emphasis and solemnity a period of time which when He spoke was in the near future (the hour cometh and now is), when in response to the voice of the Son of God, a resurrection would take place:

"Verily, verily, I say unto you, the hour cometh and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God, and they that hear (implying that all would not hear) shall live."

The full force of this statement has been evaded by the passage being spiritualised and explained as referring to the communication of spiritual life to those who are dead in sin. Yet surely one and the same principle of interpretation should be applied to verse 25 and verse 29. Either both must be taken literally, or both be spiritualised!

The same phrase "the hour cometh and now is" occurs in John 4.23, where it is applied to that abolition of all distinctions of race and place in the sight of God which took place, like the first resurrection, at the destruction of Jerusalem. Our Lord's statement (John 15.31, margin Revised Bible) should also be borne in mind in this connection,

"Now is a judgment of this world, now shall the prince of this world be cast out."

The use of the future tense shows that the event was yet to come, whilst the word "now" proves that it was nevertheless near at hand.

"Weep for yourselves and for your children."- In His address to the women of Jerusalem, when on His way to crucifixion, Jesus implied that, within the lifetime of themselves and their children a great day of wrath would come, when men would call on the mountains and rocks to fall on them, and hide them from the face of the Judge.

"Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not, for Me, but weep for yourselves and for your children. For the days are coming in which they shall say: 'Blessed are the barren.'....... Then shall they begin to say to the mountains, Fall on us, and to the hills, Cover us " Luke 23. 28-30.

With this, Rev. 6.15,16, should be compared, and the fact, remembered that, the author of the Apocalypse (writing in spirit and truth; for such doth the Father seek to be His worshippers probably about 67 A.D.) repeatedly asserted that he was describing events which were to happen in what it, as then the near future Rev 1.1,3,19; 22.6,10.

Within the lifetime of His judges.- Jesus, when on trial before the High Priest, told His judges that, later on, the relative positions of Himself and

11. "The hour cometh and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and truth,"

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them would be reversed. Having been placed on His oath He most solemnly declared to them: “Hereafter (or henceforth) ye shall see the Son of man sitting at the right hand of power and coming on the clouds of heaven” Matt. 26.64.

The fact that these men were to see Christ coming (i.e., as He came) is an indication that the event must have happened during their lifetime. According to 1 Thess.4.16,12 no resurrection of the dead was to take place until after the Lord Himself had descended from heaven; and therefore none of the dead could see Him in His previous act of coming.

This inference is confirmed by the meaning of the Greek phrase (ap-ar' tee [strongs 534]) here rendered "hereafter " or “henceforth." When applied not to a continuous state of things, but to an act or event which is to take place once for all in the future, the word denotes the proximity of the event, and can only be adequately translated by some such phrase as "in the near future," "ere long."

"In the near future."- The passage (Matt 26. 64) just referred to throws light on another verse (John 1.51), where the same word (ap-ar' tee [strongs 534] occurs in some ancient manuscripts. It suggests the probability or that verse also being a description of something that happened at the destruction of Jerusalem Christ informs Nataniel that, hereafter " (i.e., in the near future) he and others13 would see the heavens opened and the, angels of God ascending, and I descending on the Son of man. The omission there, in certain ancient manuscripts, of the word (ap-ar’ tee [strongs 534] ), confirms the likelihood that this is the real meaning of the passage. The scribe was not aware that the Second Advent had occured, and did not know of any event that, had taken place "in the near future" to which the prediction could refer. Not understanding the appropriateness of the word (ap-ar’ tee [strongs 534] ) he omitted it.

Corroborative statements.- Some other sayings of Jesus Christ throw light, upon. the time of His second coming.

(1) He taught the, nearness of judgement by comparing, those who listened to Him, to offenders who were already on their way to appear before the magistrate and to receive sentence. He charged upon His earthly contemporaries their consummate folly in that they were so wise in interpreting the signs of the weather, but did not recognize the, signs of the momentous epoch at which they themselves were living.

12. “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 that are alive, that are left, shall together with them be caught up in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air.”

13. Ye is plural.
"Ye hypocrites, ye know how to interpret, the face of the earth and the
heavens but how is it that ye know not how to interpret this time? And why,
even of yourselves, judge ye not, what is right? For as thou art going with
thine adversary before the magistrate, on the way give diligence to be quit of
him; lest haply he hale thee unto the judge, and the judge shall I deliver thee
to the officer, and the officer shall cast thee into prison. I say unto thee, thou
shalt by no means come out thence till thou have paid the very last mite"
thou art with him in the way.

(2) The fiery judgment which was one purpose of our Lord's incarnation is
spoken of in another passage as being well-nigh kindled. "I came to cast
fire upon the land (or earth) and what will I, if it is already kindled ?" Luke
12.49.

(3) In the parable of the great supper Luke 14.16-24, it is noticeable that
no long interval separated the call to the guests and the commencement
of the feast. The host sent forth his servants at supper-time to say to them
that were bidden:

“Come, for all things are now ready” (verse 17).

(4) The use of the word first in Luke 17.25, does not, seem to admit of a
delay of 1800 years: "So shall the Son of man be in His day . But first must
He suffer many things and be rejected of this generation."

That only a brief interval is implied will be seen by comparing such
passages as Luke 9. 59,61; and 21.9: "Suffer me first to go and bury my
father." "I will follow thee, Lord, but first suffer me to bid farewell to them
that are at my house." "When ye shall hear of wars and tumults, be not
terrified : for these things must, needs come to pass first; but the end is not
immediately."

The inference to be drawn.- We know that it had been revealed to the
aged Simeon that he should not, see death until he had seen the first
advent of the Messiah Luke 2.26. A candid consideration of the passages
now quoted from the gospel narratives enables us to declare with equal
certainly that 1800 years ago it was revealed on divine authority to our
Lord's earthly contemporaries that, some of them should in no wise taste
of death until they had witnessed His Second Advent.

We may conclude with reasonable certainty that Christ's words have been
correctly reported. It is admitted that belief in the immediateness of His
return began to grow obsolete at the end of the first century; and it is
clear that men of a subsequent generation who knew nothing of the event
having been realised at the destruction of Jerusalem would not have gratuitously attributed to Jesus predictions which had apparently been
falsified.
These predictions cannot therefore have been the invention of later ages; for they run counter to the ideas that have prevailed on the subject ever since the destruction of Jerusalem.

Thus the natural and inevitable inference is that Jesus taught not only that He would surely come back to judgment, but that He would do so within certain definite limits of time which coincide unmistakably with the destruction of Jerusalem and the end of the Jewish dispensation. The many times which His predictions on the subject are repeated and the varied forms which they assume, make it certain from the point of view of historical science that such was His teaching.

On no subject are the words attributed to Him clearer or more emphatic. Let anyone who denies that the signification now contended for as attaching to those words is their natural and common sense signification, state in what plainer language and more varied ways this meaning could have been conveyed had it been really intended. The belief that Christ's Second Advent, with its accompaniments of a resurrection and a judgment, took place at the time of the destruction of Jerusalem rests on precisely the same basis as the expectation of these event ever taking place; namely, on the plain, emphatic, and continually repeated statements of our Lord and His apostles given beforehand, and unsupported as yet by any human record after the event.

Matters or fact are in question. The silence of history proves nothing either way, it being equally impossible to prove from history that Jesus was not seen on the clouds of heaven in 70 A.D., and that a resurrection, a judgment, and the translation of living saints did not accompany His advent. He Himself predicted that these events would take place at the close of the Jewish dispensation. To Christian believers this affords the strongest possible presumption that they did take place, for to Christian believers His predictions are history anticipated! The burden of proof in the argument rests not on those who assert, but on those who deny, the past advent. An earnest study of the life of Jesus is calculated to beget such supreme confidence in Him that the fact that He often predicted His own resurrection Matt 16.21;17.23;20.19;John 2.19 becomes to many a certain proof that He did rise from the grave.

A similar consideration fixes the time or the Second Advent; for, as with the case of the dying robber's entrance into Paradise on the very day of the crucifixion "Verily I say unto thee, today shalt thou be with Me in Paradise," Luke 23. 43, an event of the past of which we have not the faintest historical evidence, our one all sufficient source of information on the subject is the plain testimony of the Lord Jesus, given beforehand.
This constitutes evidence of the surest, kind; and with Christians, at any rate, should put an end to all doubt and all controversy on the matter. IPSE DIXIT. Heaven and earth shall pass away, but His words shall not pass away Matt. 24. 35.

To regard with suspicion His words or the record of His words is to destroy belief in a Second Advent at all. To deny the truth of His predictions because We are unable historically to verify a certain portion of them Is simply to make manifest the shallowness of our faith in Him. To disprove the truth of those predictions would be to shake the Christian religion to its very foundations. Let God and God's Son be true, and, if need be, every mere man a liar!

There are comparatively few things In life as to which we can attain to what is known as "mathematical certainty." No one can logically "prove" the good faith of even his dearest friend. Supremely reasonable as belief in it may be, it is (after all) a mere assumption! High probabilities and "moral" certainties are thus the very guides of life. It is also a fact that many judges attach more value to circumstantial, than to direct evidence. For neither honesty nor good sense necessarily makes a man a competent observer, and most human beings find it a matter of the utmost difficulty to remember exactly what they have seen or heard, and accurately reproduce it. In religion too, the very existence of God and of an unseen world is, at first, a matter not of absolute knowledge, but of a supremely reasonable faith. And in our search for the truth as to Christ's Second Advent a similar wise, sane attitude of heart and mind should lead us to exclaim with a certain ancient saint, "Whatever the The Son of God has said, I believe." For the words which our Saviour uttered, the same shall judge us on the last day John 12.48.
"The world as yet knows nothing of this unwritten event; the great Ecclesiasticisms are in total ignorance that it occurred. Let all those who wish to decide positively in their own minds whether it is true or not read for themselves, in the Revised Bible, Matthew 24., Mark 13., Luke 21., and John 14., carefully noting the renderings given in the margin. The four Evangelists stand like four solid pillars bearing witness to its truth. No impartial readers who study these four records of the words uttered by our Lord Jesus Christ, concerning the approaching destruction of Jerusalem and its splendid temple, and His own immediate coming after that awful event, can fail to see the truth for themselves of this new light thrown upon that terrible time, and of this immense importance to us that that time is past, and not still to come. They will only be surprised that this truth, notwithstanding all the sarcasms of the opponents of Christianity, has not been discovered in the centuries that have since passed. According to the words of St. Paul, 'blindness in part' must have happened to Israel until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in Rom 11.25.

"The Gentiles shall come to His light, and kings to the brightness of His rising" Isaiah 9.3.

Come they must, as the wheels of time carry them forward to blessing or condemnation, whether they know it or not, whether they believe it or not. That day will come to the nations in the midst of teeming masses of men who rule in the insolence of power and the pride of wealth, or suffer in the bonds of oppression and the pangs of poverty. Thus will the God of Jesus and of Moses appear to judge the Gentiles, as once before to judge the Jews.

"The last day" of the Jewish age was signalised by the most wonderful and terrible events conceivable to mortal mind. A few, the saints, the chosen ones of the Lord, were made immortal. On that day all the parables of Jesus were accomplished. 1 The waiting and wise Virgins were saved Matt. 25.1-13. The labourers received every man his penny (Matt. 20.1-16). The wheat was gathered into the garner and the tares were burnt up Matt 3.12;13.24-30,36-43.

1. But since that date they have also come true in the experience
The good fish in the net were carried home, the bad were cast out Matt 13.47-50. The vineyard was taken from the wicked husbandman and given to others; and the wretches of individuals at death.

See, however, Note, page 71. E. H. C. who had said 'This is the heir. Come, let us kill him!' miserably perished Matt 21.33-45.

The marriage supper of the Kin was spread Matt. 22.1-14, and Jesus and His bride (the Ecclesia) were united, never to be other than One again Rev 21.2,9. The time which elapsed between the departure of Jesus and His return for the deliverance of the faithful was brief. It was 'a little while,' as He Himself had said John 14.19;16.16-19.

The Twelve had not gone through the cities of Israel with their inviting message or warning proclamation, ere their Deliverer again appeared Matt 10.23. The Second Advent occurred before the generation of that day had disappeared. Some who had listened to Jesus before the Crucifixion were still struggling with adversity when His feet again rested on the Mount of Olives. His friends and foes were brought by angelic power to meet Him. The sheep and the goats were parted Matt 25.32. At the word of the Lord, persecuted and persecutors, all stood in His presence to hear His words of approval or of condemnation Matt. 25.34, 41.

"The events of the 'last day' of the Jewish age most probably occurred without the presence of any merely outside spectators. Some who were participators therein disappeared from the world in order to be admitted to the celestial habitations prepared for their reception, and these faithful ones are the saints who are to be with Jesus at His Third Advent. Others were doomed to the second death, where darkness reigns and from whence no tales can be told to the living. The rest were condemned to wander over the face of the earth without king or country. The scene at Olivet at that time was one of solitude and desolation. Jerusalem, hard by, was but a heap of stones, and the Temple a pile of ashes. Pharisees and Scribes, lawyers and doctors, Rabbis and the congregation of the synagogue, had all been killed or carried away captive and sold into slavery among the nations. Who, then, was left to tell the world of the wonderful event, and that the promises of the Lord to His Twelve had been fulfilled to the letter? Listen to these words of the Christ: 'Verily, I say unto you, This generation shall not pass away till all these things be accomplished. Heaven and earth shall pass away, but My words shall not pass away' Matt. 24.34,35.

And this declaration is repeated in Mark 13.30, and Luke 21.32, and is emphasized in John 14.28,29: "I go away and come again unto you. And now I have told you before it come to pass, that When it is come to pass, ye may believe." The late Lady Caithness, 1894. (With slight verbal changes.)
"The series of trumpet blasts commencing with the Jewish war, and wonderfully indicating the events which marked its progress, having reached a termination the series of thunder claps, breaking forth with the siege of Jerusalem and strictly in unison with its leading occurrences, having come to a conclusion the series of sealed envelopes all entirely unfolded and the series of vials all previously exhausted - the seventh thunder rolled away with the crash of the temple, and the seventh trumpet ushered in the consummations of prophecy and the presence of Messiah. Wrapt in clouds over Zion during the siege of Jerusalem, transcendent glory flashes forth with the final blast. Shaking earth and heaven, with a shout paralleled only by that on the cross, Messiah with His presence occupies all His conquest.

That the fall of Jerusalem formed a perfect demonstration of Christ's veracity and an awful display of His indefeasible sovereignty that it left nothing wanting in the proof of His Messiahship and completed the evidence of His being the Coming One and the Come will be admitted with conviction proportioned to attention. Grand in itself, the fall of Jerusalem was infinitely more so in reference to concurrent but invisible facts. A curtain dropping and covering at its base the shattered fragments of Satanic enterprise, its development veiled a burst of glory such as mortal vision was incapable of sustaining.

But invisible as was the Theocrat at both the commencement and the conclusion of the legal economy, at both the commencement and the conclusion the Theocrat Himself was there. Disparaging is every idea of Messiah's descent which does not suppose Him to have alike descended to the upper world and the under world, and in an instant to have filled all things with His presence and glory. The transcendently grand event of His descent occurring, no part of space was left in which the glory of Messiah may not be perceived by competent faculties." J. A. Stephenson. The Christology Of The Old And New Testaments. 1838.

"IMMEDIATELY after the tribulation of those days." Is it conceivable that Jesus intended to speak of an event which was to happen at least eighteen hundred years after it? Some inconsiderate people say, "A thousand years with the Lord are but as a day."

Yes, but He was speaking to men, and used words which would obviously have been altogether misleading, if when He said immediately He meant a couple of thousand years. And as if to remove all doubt He adds with great solemnity: 'I Verily I say unto you, This generation shall not pass away, till all these things be accomplished. Heaven and earth shall pass away, but My words shall not pass away.'

It looks as if our Lord bad anticipated the manner in which these words would be dealt with by devout Christian people in later times, who have said these things did not happen before that generation passed away.

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2. i.e. to the ordinary eyesight. E.H.C.
As if to rebuke them by anticipation, He made this solemn affirmation, so rarely occurring in connection with His statements: *Heaven and earth shall pass away, but My words shall not pass away.*

The precise hour, the precise day, at which He was to come was not to be revealed; but all that He, had said was to be accomplished within the lifetime of men to whom He was speaking. It is sheer evasion of His words to say that *this generation* means the Jewish race, and that the Jewish race would be kept in existence until these things were fulfilled. It cannot mean that. That is only an attempt to escape from the difficulties which beset the interpretation of Christ's words. The outward and visible signs which were immediately to precede the appearing of the Son of man in heaven have been enumerated in the preceding verses. All these signs have long ago been accomplished.

The vultures - the ministers of Divine anger - gathered together, and the Jewish state was destroyed by the armies of Rome. The sacred city was laid desolate; the temple was consumed by fire; the altars were ruined; the priests, elect of God and consecrated to His service for fifteen centuries, were driven as fugitives into distant lands; the sacrifices ceased.

All these things, with the horrors that accompanied them had their place in the external history of the world, and they are known to us through contemporary historians. What happened in the invisible and eternal world immediately after the tribulation of those days is made known to us through these words of Christ, as far as can be made known under earthly symbols.

The Son of man, who had been crucified, who had risen from the dead and ascended to God asserted in some new form His august sovereignty. There was given to Him, according to the words of Daniel, I dominion and glory and a kingdom that all the peoples, nations mid languages should serve Him.* Or to use His own words, He came *on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.* Why this glory did not immediately succeed His ascension to the Father is a question to which only speculative answers can be given. But His own words make it clear that there was to be an interval of delay; when that interval was passed, that which was to lie within the earthly life of persons who listened to His prophecy, would happen. He came to rule and to judge the world. And all the tribes of the earth must see Him, not the men of one generation alone, but of every generation; not a solitary soul can escape that awful glorious vision.

Death has but to draw aside the veil from the eyes of men, and they discover at once the invisible world which environs them; and those who asked, *Where is the promise of His coming?* find that He has already come; and the vision will fill them with sorrow and with fear.
"But He saves men as well as judges them. He sends forth His angels, His ministers, with the great sound of a trumpet, and they are gathering together His elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other. Through age after age, in land after land, the ministers of His grace are gathering into His blessed and eternal kingdom all that will listen to His voice. They are His elect-all that receive His redemption. In the invisible world there is judgment; in the visible world there is salvation. We who are here may still be gathered into the great company of the saved. The Unseen King of men is near, and nearer than we know; and if we listen to the voice of those that call us to His feet, the vision of Christ when it suddenly comes at a moment we look not for it-Christ, King and Judge, sitting on the clouds of heaven with power and with great glory will occasion no mourning to us. It will be the fulfilment, of all our most passionate hopes and the beginning of our eternal blessedness." - The late R.W. Dale, D.D., 1878.

NOTE.- It may well be, as Dr. Dale has said, that

"death has but to draw aside the veil from the eyes of men, and they discover at once the invisible world which environs them."

But from this it by no means follows that at death a vision of the Lord Jesus Christ Himself comes to all men. At the time of the Second Advent in 70 A.D. only a certain number of persons then alive upon the earth looked upon their Redeemer and King. To believers who were living prayerful and consecrated lives that glorious sight brought complete sanctification and fullness of blessing. They saw Him even as He is, and so they were changed into His perfect likeness I John 3.2. And to hardened unbelievers the vision of their Redeemer and King brought final condemnation and unutterable woe Matt. 25.41.

But unless possessing real holiness of character no one within the Christian Church saw the Lord at that tremendous epoch Heb 9.28;12.14. And we have every reason to believe that outside the Christian Church He was then seen only by His actual enemies, men whom He came to judge and punish Luke 19.27; Phil 3.18; 2 Thess 1.9; Heb 10.27. If, as seems almost certain, death bears to us the same relation as the Second Advent did to the generation of men contemporary with it, then at death the Lord Jesus Christ is seen only by consecrated believers and hardened unbelievers; the sight of their Redeemer and King being withheld from all the rest of mankind until, at the final judgment, in obedience to His voice they come forth from the Intermediate state John 5.29; Rev 20. 12.
The Christ Has Come
By Earnest Hampden-Cook

CHAPTER V.

THE SILENCE OF HISTORY

The hiatus: 70-150 A.D.- Why has no record of the past Second Advent come down to us in history? We have first to remember the very remarkable and significant hiatus that occurs in early church history. The gospel of Mark was apparently left unfinished by the author; the last twelve verses having to be added by another hand.

The narrative of the Acts of the Apostles ends abruptly, leaving us uncertain as to the fate of Paul and other prominent Christian workers. And indeed the annals of the Church, for nearly a century after the destruction of Jerusalem, are almost a blank.

In the introduction to his "History of the Eastern Church," Dean Stanley thus characterises the transition from the Christianity of the New Testament, to that of the Apostolic Fathers:

"No other change equally momentous has ever since affected its fortunes, yet none has ever been so silent and secret. The stream, in that most critical moment of its passage from the everlasting hills to the plain below, is lost to our view at the very point where we are most anxious to watch it. We may hear its struggles under the over-arching rocks; we may catch its spray on the boughs that over-lap its course; but the torrent itself we see not, or see only by imperfect glimpses. It is not so much a period for ecclesiastical history as for there; romances of unknown authorship; a handful of letters of which the genuineness of every portion is contested inch by inch; the summary examination of a Roman magistrate; the pleadings of two or three Christian apologists; custom and opinions in the very act of change; last but not least, the faded paintings, the broken Sculptures, the rude epitaphs in the darkness of the catacombs; these are the scanty, though attractive materials out of which the likeness of the early church must be reproduced, as it was working it’s way, in the literal sense of the word, ‘underground’, under camp and palace, under senate and forum. This chasm once cleared, we find ourselves approaching the point where the story of the Church once more becomes history."

In his book "The Conquering Cross" (p. 41), Mr. Haweis, speaking of the period that immediately followed Nero's persecution of the Christians (64-68 A.D.), says:

"When the mist of blood and fire cleared from the spaces now occupied by
St. Peter's and the Vatican, the two great apostles Peter and Paul have disappeared.......During the Neronian persecution Timothy has also vanished, and Barnabas the son of consolation no longer remains to write conciliatory homiletics for Jewish and Gentile Christians."

The following passage from a review of Renan's "St. Paul" in the "Edinburgh Review," April 1870, also emphasises the exceedingly fragmentary character of early Church History:

"This volume 'The Life of St. Paul,' takes us through the whole period of what we may call the ministry of the great apostle, embracing those all important fifteen or sixteen years (45-61 A.D.) during which his three missionary journeys were undertaken, and the infant Church, with four bold strides, advanced from Jerusalem to Antioch, from Antioch to Ephesus, from Ephesus to Corinth, and from Corinth to Rome. Once arrived there, once securely planted in that central and commanding position, strange to say, the church with all its dramatic persons suddenly vanishes from our view. The densest clouds of obscurity immediately gather round its history, which our eager curiosity in vain attempts to penetrate. It is gone, amid a wreath of smoke, as completely as when a train plunges into a tunnel. The arrival of St. Paul at Rome marks for the history of the origin of Christianity the commencement of a profound night, illuminated only by the lurid fire of Nero's horrible festivities, and by the lightning flash of the Apocalypse. The history of St. Paul's life, and the history of the apostolic age, together abruptly end. Black darkness falls upon the scene; and a grim and brooding silence-like the silence of impending storm, holds, in hushed expectation of the 'day of the Lord,' the awestruck breathless church."

The cause of the hiatus.- Whence comes this remarkable gap in early Church history? It is natural to suppose that at the Lord's Advent the sudden and simultaneous passing away, throughout the world, of believers of the first rank would make a profound impression upon the Christians of a lower rank, who because of their unwatchful ness were left behind. There are those who maintain that this would at once have found a record in the annals of the Church. This is not quite certain, owing to the disturbed state of things that prevailed, and to the sudden withdrawal of the apostles. But granting that it was so, the fact remains that we have no church literature bearing date immediately after 70 A.D. If such literature ever existed, did it perish accidentally, or was it intentionally destroyed?

Various considerations render possible the latter alternative. Church literature bearing date immediately after 70 A.D. may have been still in existence in the second and third centuries or even later. In it may have been recorded the profound impression made upon the surviving church by the death of so many Christians in 70 A.D.

In that case, knowing as we do the unworthy deeds of which, at various periods of the Christian era, priests and ecclesiastics have not infrequently
proved themselves capable, it is no breach of charity to suppose that in the interests of priest craft and ecclesiasticism the documents may have been suppressed by the dominant party in the church.

**The predicted secrecy of the event.** Beyond all question, there are also various indications to be found in the New Testament which prove that the Advent was to be an occurrence of a more private and restricted character than is generally supposed. Christ plainly told His sorrowing disciples that a period was coming, after He had ascended to the Father John 16.17 when He would make Himself visible to them, **but not to the world at large** John 14.19,21. According to the parable of the Ten virgins Matt. 25.1-13, the Lord's Advent was to have the secrecy of an Eastern wedding. The Bridegroom was to come not at midday, but at midnight, and not only the world at large but even the foolish virgins (that is, unwatchful and imperfectly sanctified believers) also were to miss the sight of Him. It was only to those believers who waited for Him that He was to appear a second time without sin unto Salvation.1 Without holiness (that is, entire sanctification) no man within the Christian church2 should see the Lord Heb 12.14. Christ was to come like a thief in the night,3 whose arrival is sudden and unlooked for, and perhaps unknown and unsuspected until after he has gone away again, carrying with him, it may be, a few most precious jewels,4 Further, the words of the angels when they told the disciples that the Lord's return and descent from heaven was to resemble His departure and ascension Acts 1.11 suggest that His second coming would not only be personal and visible, but also private and restricted to a limited number of individuals; even although within the circle of those personally concerned the prediction was realised that "**every eye**" should see Him Rev 1.7.

The Transfiguration scene Matt 17; Mark 9; Luke 9; which prefigured the glories of the Second Advent, was hidden not only from the world, but also from the mass of Christ's disciples; being vouchsafed only to Peter, James 1. Heb 9. 28.

2. Like all the New Testament epistles, the epistle to the Hebrews was addressed exclusively to believers.

3. "**Behold I come as a thief. Blessed is he that watcheth**" Rev 16. 15. "If therefore thou shalt not watch, I will come as a thief, and thou shalt not know what hour I will come upon thee" Rev 3.3 "For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night" 1 Thess 5.2. "If the master of the house had known in what watch the thief was coming, he would have watched, and would not have suffered his house to be broken through" Matt 24.43; Luke 12.38.

4 A thief who accomplishes his work with perfect success - the ideal thief - does it also with complete secrecy.
and John, the elect among the elect. Elijah's translation, between which and the translation of the saints an analogy might be anticipated, was secret and hidden from all but Elisha, although afterwards recorded 2Kings 2. Taking the evidence as a whole, we need not be surprised if it should prove true that the Kingdom of God came not with observation" 5 Luke 17. 20. Thus when the Lord returned to fetch home to heaven His faithful servants, and to call to judgment the Jewish nation (that portion of humanity which was ripe for judgment), only those personally interested were cognisant of the occurrence. **No one was permitted to be a mere outside spectator** and reporter of that solemn and august interview between the Creator 6 and His creatures.

**The necessary powers of perception.**- The credibility of the event having taken place, in spite of the silence of the historian, may be illustrated as follows:- Man's ordinary powers of perception do not exhaust the possibilities of the universe, nor even reveal to him all the realities immediately around him. At the time of death, for example, persons sometimes see unearthly sights and hear unearthly sounds. They thus for the first time become cognisant of certain objective realities around them, of which ordinary mortals have no discernment, and of which even surviving friends who are present at the moment have no direct personal knowledge. And in everyday life, also, some men from exceptional natural endowment or from superior training of their senses, see and hear much that entirely escapes the notice of others. The microscope, too, has revealed quite close at hand a world of marvels the existence of which was unsuspected before.

But, further, there is no reason, in the nature of things, why we should not have had six or more senses, instead of only five. These would have given us a vastly increased knowledge of the universe. As the case now stands, there are many persons who have altogether exceptional powers of perception. It was specially granted to the Old Testament prophets to be cognisant of things around them which were real, and really present, and yet were unperceived by others. This wonderful power, the gift of seership, was perhaps part of the 'spirit' of Elijah, of which Elisha craved for himself a double portion as a legacy.7 His master could not say, for certain,

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5. The verb [paratereo-strongs 3906] from which the noun [parateresis-strongs 3906] here translated "observation" is derived, means to stand by and watch as an onlooker. Thus in Luke 6.7,14.1, the meaning obviously is that the enemies of Jesus stood watching Him.

6. *"All things were made by Him, and without Him was not anything made which hath been made"* John 1.8. Compare Col 1.16: *"All things have been created through Him."*

7. 2 Kings 2.9.
whether the request would be granted, but only knew that if Elisha could see his changed body when he went away from earth, this of itself would be an indication that he had what he desired. Accordingly, when the king of Syria sent soldiers to Dothan to seize Elisha, the prophet did not share in the alarm of his servant. He could see something which his servant could not see until the moment came when in answer to Elisha's prayer "The Lord opened the eyes of the young man, and he saw; and behold the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire round about Elisha" 2 Kings 6.17. [See Appendix C, page 193.]

Coming to New Testament times, we find that at our Lord's baptism, Jesus saw Matt 3.16; Mark 1.10, and John saw John 1.32, the sky rent asunder, and the Holy Spirit descending, in a bodily form, like a dove. Yet apparently there were people standing around who knew nothing of the marvellous occurrence Luke 3.21. And when the great persecutor was suddenly brought to a standstill on the way to Damascus Acts 9.3, the risen Christ was real and objectively present.

Saul saw Him and understood His words, and later on definitely based his apostolic authority on the fact that as truly as the rest of the apostles he had seen Jesus alive after His resurrection, and had received directly from Him his commission to the world. But Saul's companions who travelled with him on that occasion, although they heard certain sounds, yet not being immediately or personally concerned in the Lord's appearance, did not see Christ and did not know that He was present.

This clearly proves that Christ's resurrection-body could not be perceived with the ordinary eyesight.

The narrow scope of the Advent.- It is a fact of great significance that in the New Testament the Second Advent has a far narrower scope

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8. It is natural to suppose that, at the moment of Elijah's translation, a change came over his body similar to that which Paul spoke of as destined to come over the bodies of the living saints at the time of the first resurrection "we shall all be changed" said the apostle, 1 Cor. 15.51).

9. 2 Kings 2.10.

10. "Am I not an apostle? Have I not seen Jesus our Lord?" I Cor 9.1. "Paul, an apostle, not from men, neither through man, but through Jesus Christ, and God who raised Him from the dead." "The gospel which was preached by me is not after man. For neither did I receive it from man, nor was I taught it but it came to me through revelation of Jesus Christ" Gal 1.11,12.

11. So, also, when Stephen, at his martyrdom, saw Jesus standing at the right hand of God, there is every reason to believe that, whilst the sight was thus granted to the one man whom it was intended to comfort, it was withheld from the eyes of the unbelieving Jews whom it did not concern.
assigned to it, than is usually supposed. Not the whole world, but only some believers, and only some unbelievers, are described as destined to be primarily, and, at, once, affected by the event. Within the Christian church, it was only to those who looked for Him that He was to appear a second time without, sin unto salvation Heb 9.28. And whilst. all the impenitent are one day to have their exact deserts rendered to them, it was the pronounced enemies of Jesus, and the cruel persecutors of His people, against whom eternal destruction was threatened at His second coming 2 Thess 1.9. It was also adversaries whom the fiery indignation would devour Heb 10.27, and the open and avowed enemies of the cross of Christ, of whom we are told that their end is destruction Phil.3.18.

Three sections of humanity.- In Palestine in 70 A.D. there were three classes of men:

(1) The pronounced friends of Jesus - Christians of the first, rank. In obedience to His instructions, they had made their escape from the city at the first approach of the Roman army. They saw the Lord at His coming, for in that He came for the express purpose of giving them deliverance and rest they were immediately concerned in His appearing. But they were caught up to meet Him, and were taken away, to their heavenly home, and therefore could not record the event in any earthly history.

(2) The great mass of unbelieving Jews "all the tribes of the land," Matt. 24.30, and Rev 1.7 and especially His judges Matt 25.64 and those who pierced Him Rev 1.7. The unbelieving Jews were the open and avowed enemies of Jesus., and the cruel persecutors of His people. They saw the Lord at His coming, for in that He came for the express purpose of calling them to judgment they were immediately concerned in His appearing. But they perished and therefore did not live to tell the story.

(3) A section of humanity consisting of the Roman army and a minority of Jews who (being perhaps less guilty than the rest of their countrymen) were allowed to escape the general slaughter and go into captivity. Possibly also some Christians of the second rank (foolish virgins), who because of their unwatchfulness were left behind when their companions were caught up to meet the Lord at His coming. It is doubtful whether there were any such at Jerusalem itself.

Yet let it be granted that some believers, contrary to the Lord's express command Luke 21.20, may have stayed in the city after the first appearance of the Roman army.

If, in that case, amid the horrors of the war, which lasted for three years and a half, they still retained faith in God, they must at the end have

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become saints of a high order. At any rate, the very fact that, the third set of individuals remained on earth proves that they were neither among the pronounced friends of Jesus Christ whom He came to fetch home to heaven, nor among His avowed enemies whom He came to judge and destroy. Hence arguing by the analogy of Acts 9.7, and 7.55, we may reasonably infer that not being immediately or personally concerned in His appearing, they were not cognisant of His presence. It, is worthy of special note that between His resurrection and ascension Jesus never made Himself visible to the world at large, and that even His disciples only saw Him at intervals.

Hence many Christians believe that although His appearances between His resurrection and ascension were of course real and objective, yet a subjective qualification - the addition, so to speak, of an exceptional mental faculty, the opening of a special spiritual sense granted to some men but withheld from the rest of the world - was also essential to the perception of His resurrection body. If this be so, it is highly probable that a similar subjective qualification and the quickening of a similar spiritual sense was essential to the perception of His resurrection body at the Second Advent, and that, as before, this subjective qualification was granted to a portion of mankind, but denied to the remainder. In that case it is difficult to discover any source from whence a record of Christ's Second Advent could find its way into human history.

**The fact itself is certain.**- Even if no explanation of the silence of history were forthcoming, no event of the past can be more sure to the Christian than the fact that our Lord personally returned to the earth at the close of the Jewish dispensation. Our knowledge of it rests not on ordinary human testimony, but on the clear, emphatic, and continually repeated predictions of Jesus, that, such would be the case. We cannot reasonably question the authenticity of these predictions when we remember

(1) the number of times they are repeated in the records;
(2) the great variety of language by which the same meaning is conveyed;
(3) the certainty that writers of the second century would not have gratuitously attributed to Jesus words which had seemingly been falsified.

**Note Peter Bluer:**- This means because the writers of the second century believed that the Second coming had not taken place - then they would not have concocted sentences in the New Testament to give the impression that the Second coming had taken place at the destruction of Jerusalem. The existence of these sentences saying that the Second coming is soon to happen - in the generation of the Apostles - also proves that the New Testament was written before AD 70 and not after AD 70.
CHAPTER VI.

HOW THE EVENTS AFFECTED COUNTRIES OUTSIDE OF PALESTINE

At His first coming the Lord Jesus Christ confined His ministry to Jerusalem and the land of Palestine. In an important sense it, was then true that He, was "not sent, save unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel." At His second advent He was to come once again, apparently mainly as King of the Jews. Yet His visible presence was not to be limited to one country, but was to resemble the lightning which is seen in swift succession first in one place and then in another.

"If, therefore, they shall say unto you, Behold, He is in the wilderness; go not forth: Behold He is in the inner chambers; believe it not. For as the lightning cometh forth from the cast and is seen even unto the west, so shall be the coming of the Son of man" Matt 24.26, 27.

Indeed, throughout the Now Testament we are taught that others besides the inhabitants of Palestine were vitally interested in His return to the earth. In all parts of the world the event was to bring judgment and destruction to the enemies of the Christian faith, and deliverance and rest to those believers who, in anticipation of the occurrence, should be found living consecrated and watchful lives. How is this to be reconciled with the belief that the Second Advent was realised by our Lord's personal appearing 'on the clouds of heaven' in 70 A.D. ?

The answer is partly found in the fact that, throughout the world, the bitterest enemies of Christianity were the Jews; and Josephus records that the outbreak of the war under Vespasian was the signal for the massacre, and almost the extermination, of the Jews in foreign cities.²

Thus literally was Christ's prediction verified, that before the generation of men to whom He spoke passed away, wheresoever the Jewish carcass was, there would the Roman vultures be gathered together Matt 24.28,34. But further, when Jesus came in 70 A.D, how did His advent affect the Christian church throughout the world? Relying on the predictions of Matt 24.31,34 we reply that in the lifetime of some who had been His earthly

2. Josephus, Wars, 2.18.
contemporaries, the Son of man sent forth His angels and gathered His elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other. The 'wise virgins' who in ceaseless anticipation of His return had been living prayerful and consecrated lives were translated, passing in a moment from their earthly homes and work.

For to them, as to all in after ages who have resembled them in faith and character, death meant instant translation to eternal life and blessedness. Two men were busy that day in the field; one was taken, to heaven, and one was left behind. Two women were grinding at a mill; one was taken, and one was left. Matt 24.41. And even if their bodies, like that of Elijah, had mysteriously disappeared, no clue would ever have been obtained as to what had become of those bodies. But it was their spirits that passed away, whilst their physical organisms perished, and were doubtless burnt or buried, like those of other people. The annals of the Church for nearly a century afterwards are almost a blank. And it is easy to see why even the sudden and simultaneous passing away of so many persons in those tumultuous times has found no record in secular history.

These were not days of newspapers and printed books, and even the ability to write was rare. And in any case, the world's historians have been wont to hold everyday humanity very cheap, and to concern themselves exclusively with the doings and fortunes of the great and renowned among men. The primitive Christians were a despised and hated sect. They occupied humble and obscure positions in society, being drawn mainly from the ranks of the poor, of women, and of slaves. "Not many wise after the flesh, not many mighty, not many, noble were called" I Cor 1.26. God chose them that were poor as to the world to be rich in faith and heirs of the Kingdom which He promised to them that love Him James 2.5.

And only of the believers, and these few in number, would be found to be wise virgins:

Christians of the first rank, watchful, prayerful, earnest and enduring to the end. Jesus Himself had declared that ere that generation passed away the love of the many (ie., of the mass of His disciples) would wax cold (Matt. 24.12,34). In connection with the parable of the importunate widow, He had asked the question: "Nevertheless, when the Son of Man cometh, shall He find faith on the earth?" Luke 18.8. In explaining the parable of the sower, He had clearly foretold that only a small minority of His followers would bring forth fruit to perfection Matt. 13.23; Luke 8.15. The sad degeneracy that was to come over the apostolic church in the 'last days' of the Jewish dispensation was repeatedly predicted in the epistles of the

3. Compare the word used in recording the translation of Enoch: "He was not, for God took him" (Gen 5.24).
New Testament; and in some of the epistles is represented as having already taken place. The same state of things is revealed by the letters addressed by our Lord Himself (through John) to the churches of Roman Asia, at the time when His Advent lay in the immediate future.

In every subsequent age, really saintly and approximately Christ like believers have formed but a small minority of the Christian church; and from the facts mentioned above we know that this must also have been so in 70 A.D.

It need not, therefore, excite surprise if, in those tumultuous times, the sudden and simultaneous passing away from the earth of these Christians, mostly poor and despised, was unrecorded by the secular historian. The foolish virgins were left behind; and perhaps only discovered later on when death introduced them also to the invisible world of spirits, that by their unwatchful ness they had sold their birthright as God's first-born children; had forfeited their crown of glory; and had passed upon themselves sentence not necessarily of eternal perdition, but certainly of eternal exclusion from the Kingdom or God. 4

4. Popular theology loses sight of the distinction which may be clearly traced in the New Testament between the two classes of Christian believers - spiritual and carnal-wise virgins and foolish virgins-between those who are sons of God and those who are but servants of God. Hence without scriptural warrant it is commonly held that however much or however little a man may struggle against evil and avail himself of the Supernatural resources which God puts within his reach in this life, yet if he be a real Christian, the death of his body will work a miracle upon him and will for ever set him free from all defects of character and from all temptation. However true this may be of Christians of the first rank, there is no reason to suppose it to be true of those who have utterly failed to avail themselves of the supernatural resources that God has put within their reach in this life. Just as the Israelitish generation that came out from Egypt were for their unfaithfulness shut out from Canaan and compelled to wander afresh in the wilderness for forty years (an ordinary lifetime), so it may be that the ‘foolish virgins’ of 70 A.D. and of every subsequent age, besides being for ever shut out from the Kingdom of heaven and the marriage supper of the Lamb, have been obliged in another world to continue the conflict with evil. [ See also Appendix F on "The Kingdom of God," page 195 ].
HOW CHRISTIANITY WAS PERPETUATED.

The unwatchful Christians.- Christianity was perpetuated by means of believers of the second rank. They, when the Bridegroom came to fetch the 'wise virgins' home to heaven, were left behind on earth, and were forever shut out from all share in the glory and blessedness of the Kingdom, because its advent found them, as death now finds many true Christians, lacking in earnestness and watchfulness.

The apostle John.- Although, speaking in a general way, it is here maintained that in 70 A.D., the best and noblest of the believers then alive were withdrawn from earth to heaven, yet universal statements admit of individual exceptions. It thus becomes possible and probable that the Apostle John, although perfectly qualified by his character to share at once in the glory and blessedness of Christ's kingdom, was yet specially exempted, and left behind on earth, for a time, in order to be to the world a spiritual guide and a fountain of pure Christian teaching. That John lived until the time of the Advent in 70 A.D., and yet survived it, is rendered fairly certain

(1) by the traditions which state that he died in Asia Minor at the beginning of the second century;

(2) by the evidence which identifies him with the author of the fourth gospel, and dates that book after the destruction of Jerusalem. It is also the only adequate explanation of a certain perplexing passage contained in the fourth gospel (21.20-23).

The other apostles rightly inferred from our Lord's words "If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee?" that John was likely to remain on earth until Christ's return; and they naturally imagined that if such should prove to be the case, it would exempt him from death. "This saying therefore went forth among the brethren that that disciple should not die." as a matter of fact, there was no real incompatibility between his living until the Second Advent and subsequently dying. The word until does not always imply an absolute limit of time. Often it simply omits all reference to what is beyond; that being left an open question! It says "thus far," but it does not necessarily mean "no further." For instance, the fact that John
the Baptist was in the deserts till the day of his showing unto Israel Luke 1.80 is quite consistent with his having also lived there afterwards. Paul's injunction to Timothy " Till I come, give heed to reading, to exhortation, to teaching " I Tim. iv. 13 by no means implied that, on the apostle's arrival, Timothy was to cease to give attention to these matters!

In the fourth gospel, the beloved disciple corrects the hasty and erroneous inference of his fellow-apostles. " Jesus said not unto him that he should not die; but if I will that he tarry till I come what is that to thee"?

If, when he wrote the fourth gospel, the author knew that the Second Advent had already taken place, then a divine restraint prevented him from recording the fact. There have been other instances of such enforced silence. Lazarus, on his return from the unseen world John 11, if he remembered anything of his experiences there, apparently did not reveal them. Before the crucifixion, the disciples were repeatedly forbidden to proclaim Jesus as the Messiah.

Of the Transfiguration scene Matt 17., Mark 9., Luke 9., which prefigured the glories of the Second Advent, we know that, in obedience to a divine restraint put upon them, the three Apostles, on descending, from the Mount, held their peace; and told no man (not even their fellow disciples) in those days any of the things which they had seen, until after He had risen from the dead.

God has His own time for truth to become known, and thus it may often happen that facts of vast interest and importance which have been hidden from men for ages and generations, are at last proclaimed. This is further illustrated by the gradual process of scientific discovery. The study of nature is constantly revealing to men, seemingly for the first time, much that has existed since the Creation. If, in these days, the fact that the Second Advent has occurred is now for the first time made sure to the Christian church, it may be that we by reason of our great, nearness to the final judgment are more interested in the matter than the intervening generations have been.

The New Testament.- The knowledge of Christianity was maintained by the continued existence of the gospels and epistles of the New Testament. As an analogous fact, it is to be remembered that in modern times and in heathen countries Christianity has been known by means of the printed Bible to spread through districts in which there were no living missionaries. Madagascar, New Zealand, and Tahiti are highly interesting illustrations of this, mentioned in Canton's Story of The Bible Society, Chapter 17.

1. See also note on page 84.
2. See also page 1, chapter 8.,
A FURTHER NOTE ON JOHN 21.21-23.- It is possible to see in this passage a suggestion that the "rapture" or "translation" of the saints at the coming of the Lord would not exempt their earthly bodies from death, but would mean the ascension of their spirits, their real and innermost selves, to Heaven in new and glorified bodies, resembling that in which the Lord Jesus ascended Mark 16.19; Luke 24.51; Acts 1.9; 1 Cor 15.51,52. In that case if John lived until the Parousia, and the possibility of his doing so is hinted at here by our Lord, and instead of remaining longer in this world, shared at once the glory and blessedness of the event, this would not necessarily mean that he escaped death, but that, through his union with the Saviour, death became to him the gate of eternal life.
The Christ Has Come

By Earnest Hampden-Cook

CHAPTER VIII.

THE HIDING OF THE TRUTH.

It is probable that, in every subsequent age, at least a few Christians in different parts of the world have had the truth that the Lord Jesus came the second time in 70 A.D. made absolutely certain to their faith. But many in the present day who would otherwise readily accept the belief find an insurmountable difficulty in the fact that all knowledge of the event has hitherto been hidden from the great majority of mankind.

Such persons deem it utterly incredible that a scene so stupendous should have been enacted, and the world for nearly two thousand years afterwards know nothing of it! And yet an adequate reason for this protracted veiling of the truth is found in the fact that if men had all along had a clear and certain knowledge of the event, this would have afforded such indisputable evidence for Christianity that either the smallest unbelief would have been wholly unpardonable, or at least the guilt of the multitudes who in every age have neglected Christ's salvation would have been vastly greater than it has been.

It is only at certain stages in their moral and spiritual education that men welcome truth and are able to profit by it. Selfishness and self-will are so deeply rooted in human nature that few make a full personal surrender of themselves to the Lord Jesus until a long acquaintance with the bitter results of sin has taught them their infinite need of Him. In the same way, a long and weary experience of the unsatisfying character of illusion and error seems to be in most cases necessary before men are found willing to welcome the highest truths.

When God partially hides Himself, or partially hides truth, from us, He does so in mercy as well as in justice. For, when we sin, the degree of our guilt is always measured by the amount of light and privilege, against which we sin. If we were entirely ignorant of what is right and good, we could be under no obligation to choose it and do it sin would be impossible to us! On the other hand, if in all their exquisite beauty, majesty and tenderness, God and truth and duty continually stood clearly and certainly revealed to us, the slightest offence against them would be unpardonable.
Sinning, like Lucifer, with our eyes wide open, like him also we should fall from the highest heights of heaven to the lowest depths of hell. Childlike faith and obedience are, therefore, of infinitely greater importance than mere knowledge.

When a man is scrupulously true to such knowledge of God as lie may already possess, he shows that he has within him a right spirit, and he is rewarded by an increase of light. But when he is not true to the knowledge he already possesses, he proves that he has within him an imperfect and disobedient spirit For God to continue to such a one the same clearness of vision, and the same sensitiveness of conscience, as before, or to make his vision clearer and his conscience more sensitive, whilst the spirit within the man remained unsoftened and unrenewed, would merely enhance the man’s guilt.

And, therefore, God, in His great mercy, adopts a precisely opposite plan. In order, for a time, to lessen the man's responsibility, He darkens his mind and hardens his heart; and then subjects him to a course of discipline and pain the one object of which appears to be to expel from within him the imperfect and disobedient spirit, and to make him willing at last to admit into his heart a new spirit of faith and love.

The man, although perhaps he knew it not, stood at first on the borders of a promised land of added peace and joy. But by his disobedience he proved himself unfit to enter. And therefore out of regard to his own highest welfare he was shut out for a time, and was compelled to wander afresh in the desert. But God's revelation of Himself, and of truth, is a gradual and progressive one, not only to the individual, but also to the world at large. He has yet many things to say unto us, but we cannot bear them now (John 16.12).

A protracted acquaintance with sin and sorrow was needed to prepare mankind for the Saviour's incarnation. Centuries intervened between the creation and the "fulness of the time" (Gal 4.4) when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea. In the same way, it may be that a further and protracted acquaintance with the baneful effects of religious error has been, and still is, necessary, before the truth concerning His past Second Advent will meet with worldwide recognition and acceptance.
CHAPTER IX.
OTHER DIFFICULTIES.

Old Testament prophecies.- We freely admit that belief in the past Second Advent is inconsistent with some traditional explanations of the predictions of Daniel and other Old Testament prophets. This does not in the least shake our position. We dare not twist and torture the plain teaching of the Master Himself in order to bring it into agreement with traditional explanations of the Old Testament.

If there is an apparent contradiction between the two, Christ must be to us the interpreter of Daniel, not Daniel the interpreter of Christ! For example, we cannot tell for certain what the abomination of desolation was, although in all probability it was something connected with the Roman army which besieged Jerusalem.

Yet we do know that it must have come in the lifetime of the individuals whom Christ addressed. He did not say When they see the abomination of desolation, which was spoken of by Daniel the prophet nor "When the abomination of desolation is seen," but He said: "When ye see the abomination of desolation." The pronoun 'you' or 'ye' cannot, be used to the exclusion of the individuals immediately addressed.

Therefore we know that the abomination of desolation is not future, but past. In like manner, since in the nature of the case there cannot be two seasons of unparalleled suffering, it is absolutely certain that the time of awful distress predicted by Daniel 12.1 came at the close of the Jewish dispensation. In Matt 24.21, Jesus associated it with the abomination of desolation which those who listened to Him were to live to see (verse 15). It was something which would be surely realised ere that generation passed away (verse 34).

It was amongst the signs by which they would know that He Himself was nigh, even at the doors (verse 33). By definitely connecting the abomination of desolation and the season of unparalleled distress with the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 A.D., our Lord has for ever settled for us the date of the end of the 'seventy weeks' mentioned in Daniel 9.24.

Owing to obscurities of language, and for other reasons, some parts of the Old Testament are exceedingly difficult to understand. But happily no such uncertainty attaches to the teaching of Jesus Christ which is our only standard of infallible truth.
If by any possibility a real contradiction could be proved to exist between the Old and the New Testaments we should not need to doubt or hesitate as to our position with regard to them. The utterances of Old Testament saints and seers have exceeding value for men in every age.

But the teaching of our divine Master is of yet more priceless worth. The former may be compared to a gold mine; the latter to the pure, unalloyed metal itself. Any theological doctrine or any interpretation of a passage of Scripture stands utterly condemned if it contradicts the simple and natural meaning of the language used by our Lord Himself.

**Luke 21.24** - The report which the evangelist Matthew gives of our Lord's eschatological discourse (chapter 24.) seems to have been drawn up with the precision of a legal document to limit the fulfilment of the whole to the lifetime of Christ's earthly contemporaries and preclude the possibility of a double interpretation.

It has been too readily assumed that Luke's narrative on the other hand expressly project, Christ's personal and visible reappearing into a more distant future.

"There shall be great distress upon the land, and wrath unto this people. And they shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be led captive into all the nations and Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled. And there shall be signs in sun and moon and stars........ for the powers of the heavens shall be shaken. And then shall they see the Son of man coming in a cloud with power and great glory" (Luke 21.23-27).

In *The Parousia* (page 428), Dr. Russell maintains that the treading down of Jerusalem by the Gentiles predicted in verse 24, found an exhaustive fulfilment in the fact that, throughout the whole duration of the war, three years and a half, the holy city was tyrannized over by an armed mob of Zealots and Edomites (Josephus, Wars, iv. 5).

In favour of this supposition it may be urged that it can scarcely be doubted that these are the people referred to in Rev 9.2: "*The holy city shall they tread under foot forty and two mouths.*" Yet striking as is the suggestion, it is by no means clear that Luke 21.24 is to be explained in the same way.

(1) the treading down of Jerusalem predicted our Lord cannot have gone on contemporaneously with the siege. It was to follow the slaughter of the Jews and their being led captive into all the nations!

(2) It surely requires more than three years and a half for The Times Of The Gentiles to be fulfilled.
Yet by the repeated use of the pronouns ye, you, your, and by the solemn statements of verses 32, 33 "Verily I say unto you: This generation shall not pass away till all things be accomplished. Heaven and earth shall pass away, but My words shall not pass away" the narrative in Luke, just as certainly and emphatically as in Matthew and Mark, teaches that the second advent was to take place in the lifetime of our Lord's earthly contemporaries. In the light of these facts it is reasonable and easy to believe that the words "Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled" are to be regarded as being in a parenthesis.

Jesus was a Jew speaking to Jews concerning events in which as individuals and as a nation, they were intimately concerned. In verse 24 He casts a single glance forward beyond the time of the destruction of Jerusalem to the end of the Gentile dispensation in which we are now living. But in verse 25 He takes up again the thread of the discourse thus momentarily interrupted.

Some apparently contradictory statements.-

(1) "Every eye shall see Him" - "Behold He cometh with the clouds, and every eye shall see Him, and they which pierced Him, and all the tribes of the land (or earth) shall mourn over Him" (Rev 1.7). This prediction is supposed by many to teach that the whole world without exception would see Christ at His second coming. If this be the real meaning of the verse, it conflicts with many passages in the New Testament already quoted, which teach that the event was to be of a more private and restricted character. But the language of the Bible is to be interpreted according to the usages of

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1. "Take heed that ye be not led astray. Go ye, not after them. . . When ye shall hear of wars and tumults, be not terrified. . . . They shall lay their hands on you, and shall persecute you, delivering you up to the synagogues and prisons, bringing you before kings and governors for My name's sake. It shall turn unto you for a testimony. Settle it therefore in your hearts, not to meditate beforehand how to answer; for I will give you a mouth and wisdom which all Your adversaries shall not be able to withstand or to gainsay. But ye shall be delivered up even by parents, and some of You shall they cause to be put to death. And ye shall be hated of all men for My name's sake. And not a hair of your head shall perish. In your patience ye shall will your lives. But when ye see Jerusalem compassed with armies. . . . When these things begin to come to pass, look up and lift up your heads, because your redemption draweth nigh. . . . Even so ye also, when ye see these things coming to pass, know ye that the Kingdom of God is nigh . . . . Take heed to yourselves lest aly your hearts be overcharged . . . and that day come on you suddenly as a snare; for so shall it come upon all them that dwell on the face of all the land (or earth). Put watch ye at every season, making supplication that ye may prevail to escape all these things that shall (Greek: Shall Soon) come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man."
everyday life in ordinary speech such words as all and every are continually used in a sense short of absolute totality.

They usually denote the whole within certain well understood and well defined limits. the blind man, on having his sight restored saw all things clearly Mark 8.25. After the interview at. Jacob's well, the woman of Samaria declared concerning Jesus: "He told me all things that ever I did" John 4.39. The apostles preached everywhere ! Mark 16.20.

The restricted sense in which the words "all" and "every" are continually used in every day life, render it at least possible that in Rev 1.7 the meaning is that Christ would be seen by all whom His coming concerned personally. At any rate, by the use of the emphatic words "Behold He cometh," John taught that the advent in question would occur in what was then the near future.

(2) The Restoration Of All Things.- " Repent ye therefore, and turn again, that your sins may be blotted out, that so there may come seasons of refreshing from the presence of the Lord; and that He may send the Christ who hath been appointed for you, even Jesus; whom the heaven must receive until the time of the restoration of all things where of God spake by the mouth of His holy prophets which have been since the world began" Acts 2.19-21.

It is supposed by some that in these verses Peter taught that the Second Advent would not take place until the end of the world. Yet when we. carefully examine his words, we notice that the return of the Messiah and the coming of seasons of refreshing were for the individuals addressed !

(1) It may be that the 'restoration of all things' is only another name for the 'new heavens' and the 'new earth' which are to come at the end of the now-existing Millennium Rev 21. In that case the words "whom the heaven must receive until the time of the restoration of all things " find their fulfilment in the reign of Christ in heaven over the earth during the period that intervenes between His second and third advents.

(2) More probably the reference is to the establishment of the Kingdom of God, in 70 A.D. This was the goal to which the prophets had looked forward. This was the period when all things that had been written in the Old Testament found at last an exhaustive realisation Luke 21.22 Our Lord Himself spoke of the partial reformation wrought, among the Jews by the preaching of John the Baptist as a restoration of all things.2

With still greater force the words apply to that wondrous epoch, when the

2. "Elijah indeed cometh first said restoreth all things. But I say unto you that Elijah is come, and they have also done unto him whatsoever they listed" Mark 9.12,13.
types and shadows of the Old Testament vanished, and were succeeded by permanent heavenly realities. In 70 A.D. believing Jews recovered more than had been lost before. The earthly Canaan, the earthly Jerusalem, the earthly temple, gave place to the heavenly. The throne of David was more than restored in the establishment of the heavenly Kingdom of David's greater Son.

(3) "Blessed Is He That Cometh." "Behold your house is left unto you desolate. For I say unto you, Ye shall not see Me henceforth till ye shall say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord" Matt 23.38,39.

In these verses Christ seems to predict that at His Second Advent the Jews who were now rejecting Him, would welcome and accept Him. A multitude of other passages however point in the opposite direction. We therefore venture to suggest that here the words mean that on His return His enemies would be compelled against their will to admit that He who had come to them in the name of the Lord was indeed the Blessed One. The use of the pronouns 'you' and 'ye' seems to indicate a special reference to the individuals to whom the words were immediately addressed.
CHAPTER X.

THE PARABLE OF JUDGMENT.

MATTHEW 25  By a process of reasoning the astronomer Adams discovered the planet Neptune before it had been seen by human eyes. He knew that there must be such a planet, because its existence was essential for the explanation of other undoubted facts. In the same way, although it cannot be proved from history that the Lord Jesus personally and visibly returned to the earth at the time of the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 A. D., yet relying on His solemn teaching we may be morally certain that He did so return. The past Second Advent is the key to the understanding of the whole New Testament. In the light of this one event a world of mystery vanishes and a new world of truth stands revealed.

For instance, there is the vexed question of Future retribution. In this case the past Second Advent goes far towards solving a problem which many thoughtful Christians have reckoned not capable of being solved. In Matt. 25.31-46, we have a detailed account of the judgment previously referred to in Matt 16. 27, 28, which was to take place when the Son of man came in glory with His holy angels to render to every man according to his deeds. Our Lord had solemnly declared that some of those who listened to Him during His earthly ministry would live to see Him thus coming in His Kingdom. The parable of the Sheep and the Goats must therefore refer not to the world wide judgment, still future but to the spiritual Judgment of the Jews, which followed the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 A.D.¹ This may seem irreconcilable with the use of the words "all nations" or "all the nations" (Matt 25. 32).

Yet exactly the same words occur in 2 Tim 4.17, where the meaning obviously is individuals out of every nation. Paul, speaking of His first appearance before Nero, declares: "The Lord stood by me, and strengthened me; that through me the message might be fully proclaimed and that all the Gentiles might hear,"

¹. That His second advent was to be accompanied by a spiritual judgement is declared in various passages, e.g., "Behold I come quickly, and My reward is with Me to render to each, man according as his work is." Rev 22. 12. The parable, of the Tares and of the Dragnet are a further proof that, at the close of the Jewish dispensation, a severance of the, wicked from among the righteous was to take place and a harvest to be reaped. "The harvest is the end of the. age." So shall it be in the end of the age" Matt 13.39,49.
i.e., persons of various nationalities then present in Rome. Certain it is that the phrase conveyed a narrower signification to the Jews who first heard it, than that, which we have been accustomed to attach to it. It, may have meant "all the tribes of Palestine," for Josephus uses the same word when He speaks of the "nation" of the Galileans and the "nation" of the Samaritans. It is also worthy of remark that although our Lord bade His apostles make disciples of "all the nations" Peter did not, know until several years afterwards that it was right and obligatory to preach the gospel to the Gentiles Acts 10.14. When found fault with for so preaching he did not reply as otherwise we should certainly have expected him to do:

"These are the very people to whom the Lord Jesus, in His parting words, commanded us to Preach!" An examination of the parable itself in the light of these facts will clear away various difficulties which are unanswered by any other interpretation, and will deepen the conviction that we have here an account of the spiritual judgment which took place at Christ's Second Advent in 70 A.D.

The division into two classes.- The separation of men, spiritually and morally, into two and only two classes is not true to human nature as we ordinarily find it. Human nature as we ordinarily find it is a strange admixture of good and evil. Little as theologians have recognized this truth, the mass of men are neither saints nor devils! Often the bad man is not so bad as he seems, and the good man is not so good. Some of our best hopes for the world are based on the fact that, in countries where the gospel has been preached, human society as generally constituted may be divided morally and spiritually into four classes.

(1) Christians (a, small minority) who are living really saintly and approximately Christlike lives - sons of God with out, rebuke - the light of the world and the salt of the earth.

(2) Christians (the majority) who are real believers and true servants of God, yet having many faults unconquered, and living, it may be, very inconsistent lives.²

Their experience has been aptly portrayed in Romans 7, but they have not yet attained to the full blessedness and complete liberty described in Romans 8. The good which they would, they do not, and the evil which they would not, that they practise.

They delight in the law of God after the inward man; but they find a mighty principle, of evil still at work within them, warring against the Christ and still enslave them Romans 7.19,22,23.

². See Appendix E, page 136.
(3) Unbelievers (the majority) who, like the young ruler whom Jesus loved, lead outwardly moral lives and have in them exceedingly much that is good.

(4) Hardened unbelievers (a small minority) in whom all goodness is tending to become extinct. They sin out of sheer wickedness and perversity, and are in danger or becoming children of the devil.

We are never at a standstill spiritually and morally. Every experience in life has an influence, perceptible or imperceptible, on our characters; and none, leaves us quite the same men as it found us. The struggle between the principles of good and evil within us cannot cease until one or the other gains a complete victory. Thus each individual must, ultimately, either attain to the perfect image of the Christ, or sink into complete and therefore irrecoverable evil. Then we are ripe for final judgment and final separation. This explains the division of men, according to the parable, into two and only two classes. Suffering either melts a man's heart or hardens it; and the intense unparalleled sufferings which fell on believers and unbelievers alike, in the last days of the Jewish dispensation, must have made their characters develop very quickly, and have gone far to turn at last every individual either into a saint fit to be welcomed to the heavenly Kingdom, the Father's house of many mansions; or into a devil fit only to be burned up and consumed in the quenchless flames of Gehenna.

The test of character.- Their treatment of the Lord's suffering brethren is the standard or criterion by which, in the parable, men are judged and their true characters made manifest. This was a test peculiarly appropriate to the times of fierce persecution which accompanied the last years of the Jewish dispensation. But it is hard to understand its application to the world in general, when we remember the myriads in Africa, India, China, and elsewhere who have lived and died without ever having seen a Christian, or even heard the name of the Saviour.

The severity of the punishment.- In the parable those on the left hand are commanded to depart into the eternal fire. A divine instinct within us revolts against the conclusion that this is to be the indiscriminate destiny of all men, in every period of the world's history, who have died without cherishing faith in the historic Christ. Yet the awful severity of the sentence, and the apparent finality of the doom pronounced, harmonize well with the belief that the parable describes the retribution meted out to that evil generation of the Jews, and with the reception of the

3. "He that is unrighteous, let him do unrighteousness yet more. He that is righteous, let him do righteousness yet more." Rev 22. 11.

Compare:1 Tim 3.13: "Evil men shall wax worse and worse."
Church of the Firstborn into the heavenly Kingdom Heb 12.23.

It is true that wrongdoing of every description carries with it, when unrepented of, its own most bitter curse and suffering. Yet we have to recognize that besides the sin against the Holy Spirit Matt 12.31 involved in the deliberate and persistent rejection of God's Messiah, and constituting a sin unto death I John 5.16 which can never be forgiven, there are also offences, committed in ignorance and frailty, which are not sins unto death. The sharp distinction between the two sorts of punishment that await the impenitent is also seen from our Lord's words in Luke 20.18: "Every one that falleth on that stone shall be broken in pieces, but" - more awful destiny still - "on whomsoever it shall fall, it shall scatter him as dust."

It is quite certain that the most terrible denunciations of woe recorded in the New Testament, denunciations which it has been usual to apply to all unbelievers alike, were in reality directed against a specially guilty and hardened class of sinners. Thus, whilst we are repeatedly taught that God will render to each man according to his deserts, yet we know that it was to be more tolerable for Sodom and Tyre and Sidon in the day of judgment than for Chorazin, Bethsaida and Capernaum Luke 10.13-15.

Of Judas alone, who had come to be a complete incarnation of evil, 4 is it recorded that it would have been well for him if he had not been born Matt 26.24. It was false and hypocritical Scribes and Pharisees who were designated "offspring of vipers Matt 23.33 and "children of the devil" John 8.14, and solemnly warned that they were in danger or falling under the severest form of God's judgement, the judgement of Gehenna. It was the pronounced enemies of Jesus and the cruel persecution of His people against whom eternal destruction was threatened at His Second Advent 2Thess 1.9.

Further, in the parable of the pounds Luke 19.27, those whom the nobleman on His return as King ordered to be slain were men who hated Him and were in definite and insolent rebellion against His authority. It was also adversaries whom the fiery indignation would devour Heb 10.27, and the open and avowed enemies of the cross of Christ of whom we are told that their end is destruction Phil 3.18. And here, in the parable of the sheep and the goats, the exceptional wickedness of the last generation of the Jewish nation explains the awful severity of the sentence pronounced upon them and the apparent finality of their doom. These men did not sin in blind ignorance. If Jesus Himself had not previously come and spoken unto them and done among them works which none other ever did, their sin might not have been of the heinous and unpardonable character that it

4. "And after the sop then entered Satan into him" John 13.27. "Did I not choose you the twelve, and one of you is a devil? " John 6.70
was John 9.41;15.22,24;16.9. But, as things were, they had not the faintest excuse nor palliation for their final rejection of Him. The times of ignorance God in His infinite mercy overlooks Acts 17.30. But this was the judgment, that light came into the world, and men loved the darkness rather than the light, because their works were evil John 3.19. Our Lord's contemporaries had fondly hoped, and passionately desired, that, the Christ at His coming would prove a great earthly King. Cherishing this expectation, it was at first, only natural that they should be shocked and disappointed by the appearance of a Messiah of such a different sort.

Neither God nor man would have, judged them severely merely because at first they were disposed to reject Jesus. But the lives and ministries of Himself and His apostles completely changed the aspect of the matter. Jesus Himself was, as He has been ever since, the one unanswerable proof of His own divine mission. As they listened to Him all bare Him witness and marvelled at the words of grace which proceeded out of His mouth Luke 4.22, and they were compelled to admit: "Never man so spake" John 7.46. The worst taunt which his fellow townsmen at Nazareth could bring against Him, after narrowly watching, His daily life for thirty years, was that He was a poor man a carpenter, and the son of a carpenter Matt 13.55-57. He boldly told His bitterest, enemies that He always did the divine will John 8.29, and He challenged the in in vain to convict, Him of a single sin John 8.46.

Having been gradually made to see the truth concerning Him by the Holy Spirit, within them (Matt 12.31) for them to hate Him (John 15.23) was to hate God and all goodness, and definitely to reject Him was definitely to reject Him that sent Him (Luke 10.16 Revised Bible). They who had seen Him, had seen the Father ! John 14.9. They were thus in open revolt against God's Messiah. Not in ignorance but out of sheer wickedness and perversity they had resisted the evidence furnished them by the life and miracles and teaching of Jesus and His apostles and by the witness of the Holy Spirit in their own souls.

They had deliberately rejected and murdered Him whom many of them in their secret hearts had been compelled to recognize as the embodiment of truth and goodness. They had also cruelly persecuted to the death a multitude of His innocent and saintly followers. The Jewish historian Josephus, writing eighteen hundred years ago, describes the mass of his fellow-countrymen as having been far more ungodly than the people of Sodom. He expresses his conviction that if the Romans had not opportunely come and destroyed them, the earth would have been likely to open and swallow them up, or another deluge might have been expected to sweep them away (Wars. v.10.5;13.6; vii.8.1).
Jesus also in the parable of the Sower (Matt 13) had plainly taught that in the case of the majority of His contemporaries the good impression and moral reformation produced by His teaching would prove temporary. On another occasion He had predicted that, as time went on, their condition would come to resemble that of a man possessed by eight evil spirits Matt 12.45. The parable of judgment thus viewed throws great light on the problem of future punishment, and has solemn significance for humanity in every age.

(1) **It increases the certainty of retribution.** - In John 5.29 "The hour cometh, in which all that are in the tombs shall hear His voice and shall come forth; they that have done good unto the resurrection of life; and they that have practised ill unto the resurrection of judgment and..."

(2) **Some men for ever lost.** - By proving that some men are for ever lost, the parable is fatal to the doctrine of final Universal restoration. These Jews involved themselves not only in fearful suffering but also in irreparable loss and ruin. There is not one of us who may not be guilty of the same mad folly, if, like them, we persistently sin against light and knowledge and quenching within us the witness of the Holy Spirit deliberately harden ourselves in rebellion against God’s Messiah. "Be not high-minded, but fear; for if God spared not the natural branches, neither will He spare thee. Behold then the goodness and severity of God: toward them that fell severity; but toward thee God’s goodness, if thou continue in His goodness otherwise thou also shalt be cut off." Romans 11.21,22.

(3) **Being burnt up as refuse.** - The mention of an eternal (or age-long) fire does not necessitate belief in never ending suffering. The literal Gehenna, or Valley of Hinnom, with its quenchless flames, was a receptacle just outside Jerusalem for what was utterly bad and worthless.

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5. The angel speaking of the destruction of ancient Jerusalem cried with a mighty voice, saying: "Fallen, fallen is Babylon the great, and is become a habitation of demons and a prison of every unclean spirit." Rev 18.2.
Rubbish and refuse were cast therein, not for their own sake to be purified as gold is purified of its dross but in order that by their complete destruction the city as a whole might be rendered clean and sweet. In like manner it is natural to infer from this parable, and from Matt 23.33 "Ye serpents, ye offspring of vipers, how shall ye escape the judgment of Gehenna?" that all goodness and every remnant of a better nature became extinct in the unbelievers of the last generation of the Jewish nation. They had completely silenced within them the Spirit of God, and they thus became as the refuse and offscouring of the world. At, this, the first judgement, they were cast into the fire of the spiritual Gehenna, not for their own sake, nor that they might be perpetually tortured; but in order, without further prolonged delay, to rid the universe of their existence. The name "Valley of Slaughter" given in Jer 7.32, and 19.6, to the Valley or Hinnom, and the use in the New Testament of such phrases as "the furnace of fire," "destruction," "a consuming fire," "the lake of fire," "the Second death," "perishing," also points strongly to probability of fearful anguish, followed by extinction of being, as the doom that awaits impenitent sinners who prove themselves utterly and therefore irretrievably bad.

Yet many other degrees of guilt and punishment.- That, servant which knew his Lord’s will and made not ready nor did according to His will, shall be beaten with many stripes; but, he which knew not and did things worthy of stripes shall be beaten with few stripes. And to whomsoever much is given, of him Shall much be required and to whom they commit much or him will they ask the more" Luke 12.47.

This principle forbids us to regard utter destruction as being necessarily the fate of all who die in unbelief, for all are not so monstrously wicked as that generation of Jews. Lack of sympathy with Christianity as it is

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6. Compare I Kings 14.10: "I will utterly sweep away the house of Jeroboam, (is a man sweepeth away dung, till it be all gone! "
7. "The Son of man shall send forth His angels, and they shall gather out of His Kingdom all things that cause stumbling, and them that do iniquity, and shall cast them into the furnace of fire " Matt 13.41,42. "In flaming fire, rendering vengeance to them that know not God and to them that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus; who shall suffer punishment even eternal destruction from the face of the Lord and from the glory of His might " 2Thess 1.8,9 . " Our God is a consuming fire " Heb 12. 29. Death and Hades were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death, even the lake of fire " Rev 20. 14.
8. That there will be degrees of future retribution exactly corresponding to degrees of guilt, our Lord also taught in Matt 5.22: " I say unto you, that every one who is angry with his brother shall be in danger of the Judgment. And whosoever shall say to his brother, Raca, shall be in danger of the council. And whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of the Gehenna of fire."
humanly presented to us does not in every case amount to deliberate rejection of the Saviour Himself. Unbelief and wrongdoing always involve us in suffering and loss, but God is pitiful and longsuffering towards men who offend mainly in ignorance. He is a consuming fire only towards those whose sins, by being knowingly persisted in, have ceased to have anything of the character of disease and misfortune, and have become heinous by being made the deliberate choice of the individual. The life to come is the exact counterpart of the life that now is. An impenitent sinner reaps just what he has sown. The law of few or many stripes is fatal to the theory of Conditional Immortality which regards utter destruction as the doom which awaits all impenitent sinners alike.

The fact of the past second advent establishes on a firm Scriptural basis the Wider Hope. We may confidently anticipate the final salvation and restoration of the majority of men. Yet comparatively few will share in the full glory and blessedness of the Kingdom of heaven. As in the past, so now, and so in the future, some may resist all that even God Himself, in this or any world, can do for their salvation. We cannot but fear that they who thus prove themselves utterly and irreclaimably bad will be for ever lost, and will pass out of existence. We are therefore compelled to definitely stop short of Universalism.

This world I deem but a beautiful dream Of shadows that are not what they seem, Where visions arise, giving faint surmise Of the things that shall meet our waking eyes.

I gaze aloof on the tissued roof, Where time and space are the warp and woof Which the King of kings, as a curtain flings, O'er the dreadful of eternal things.

But could I see, as in truth they be, The glories of Heaven that encompass me, I should lightly hold the tissued fold Of that marvellous curtain of blue and gold.

Soon the whole, like a parched-up scroll, Shall before my amazed eyes uproll; And, without a screen, at one burst be seen THE PRESENCE wherein I have ever been.

Oh who shall bear the blinding glare Of the Majesty that shall meet us there? What eye may gaze on the unveiled blaze Of the light-girdled throne of THE ANCIENT OF DAYS? CHRIST us aid! HIMSELF be our shade, That in that dread day we be not dismayed!

Thomas Whytehead.
CHAPTER XI.

THE REVELATION.

The date. A difference of opinion exists as to whether the Apocalypse was written before or after the destruction of Jerusalem (70 A.D). Epiphanius ascribes the book to the reign of Claudius (54 A.D). The Syriac version asserts that John was banished to Patmos under Nero (64 to 68 A.D.), and Tertullian synchronizes the banishment of John with the martyrdom of Peter and Paul under Nero. An ancient Latin fragment, quoted in Stuart's Apocalypse, i. 266, implies that the Revelation is of an earlier date than the last of the Pauline epistles. "Paul, following the order of own predecessor John, wrote to only seven churches by name." The testimony of Irenaeus (Heres v. 30, quoted by Eusebius iii. 18 ; v. 7) is as follows:

"We do not venture to affirm anything with certainty respecting the name of the Antichrist. For were it necessary that this name should be clearly announced to the present age, it would have been declared by him who saw the Revelation. For it is not long since he (or it) was seen, but almost within our own generation about the end of Domitian's reign."

The last sentence ambiguous, for there is nothing in the Greek to show whether Irenaeus meant that that which was seen in the reign of Domitian was the Apocalypse, or John himself! Professor Cowles, of Oberlin, has pointed out that the general sense of the passage requires the latter supposition. The argument is that it would not have been wise nor safe to give the name of the Antichrist so as long as Nero lived. But John survived the reign or Domitian, when Nero had been dead for thirty years. If now, in the time of Irenaeus, His name might be proclaimed, without imprudence, the same had been true of the time of Domitian, and John would have proclaimed it himself! He did not do so; for through Nero was dead, yet Rome still lived, a persecuting power. "John was wisely silent," argues Irenaeus, "let us be wisely silent also."

The opinion of Victorinus, Eusebius and Jerome that, John's banishment to Patmos took place in the reign of Domitian (96 A.D.), and that the apostle then wrote the Revelation, does not constitute independent evidence, but rests on what was probably a misunderstanding of the words of Irenaeus. And if the latter really meant to assign this late date to the book, it is easy to over estimate the importance or his testimony on the subject. John may have been exiled to Patmos on more than one
occasion, and it is not unreasonable to suppose that he wrote the Apocalypse whilst suffering a previous banishment thither under Nero. At any rate, what is technically called the internal evidence, that is, the evidence furnished by the contents of the book itself, points conclusively to its having, been penned previously to the destruction of Jerusalem.

**Why written in cipher.**—The symbolic form in which the Revelation was given is a strong argument for the earlier date. More than once, it is implied that the Christians to whom the book was originally addressed were intimately concerned in the events which it describes. A special blessedness also belonged to those of them who diligently made themselves acquainted with its contents, and were willing to be guided by its teachings Rev 1.3; 22.7. It was therefore of great importance for these first readers of the book to obtain a clear understanding of its meaning. Hence, it is certain that, in no case, would the plain language of every every life have been needlessly departed from, nor obscure words or figures or speech needlessly introduced. How then is the symbolic form of the Apocalypse to be explained? If we are obliged to accept the supposed testimony of Irenaeus that it was written in 96 A.D. no full answer to this question seems possible.

But, assuming that the book was written just before the outbreak of the Jewish war in 66 A.D., the parallel presented by Christ's use of parables at once suggests the explanation. One of the reasons why our Lord employed parables in His public teaching was undoubtedly to hide His meaning from certain unworthy persons amongst those who listened to Him,¹ Here is the manifest explanation of the symbolic form in which the contents of the Apocalypse were given to the world.

There is very great likelihood that this was adopted in order to hide the meaning from outsiders. And even if this had not, been the particular form in which the Revelation was divinely communicated to John, it, is a form which, under the circumstances, he might rightly have adopted without, laying himself open to a charge of cowardice. If, in modern times, a prophet, were divinely commissioned to rebuke some tyrannical ruler for his sins, and yet, from dread or the personal consequences to himself, neglected to do so, he would, beyond doubt, be false, to his duty.

But Suppose he were only bidden to describe to his fellow Christians, for their exclusive benefit and guidance, events in the immediate future in which the tyrannical ruler was to act; a leading part. It would then be from no unworthy fear of man, but from a lawful desire to avoid needlessly

¹. "And He said, Unto you it is given to know the mysteries of the Kingdom of God; but to the rest in parables; that seeing they way not see, and hearing they may not understood" - Luke 8. 9, 10.
compromising them and himself with the government of the country and needlessly endangering their lives and his own, if he were to address them in some foreign language unintelligible to the bystanders or were to write his Message in a cipher of which only he and they possessed the key. Now, in spite of the author's repeated statements to the contrary, it is commonly believed that the Revelation describes events which, eighteen hundred years ago, were to come to pass in what was then the remote future. If this were really so, there is no apparent reason why the contents of the book should not have been expressed in the plain language of everyday life. But the Roman empire was at least as absolute a despotism as any that now exists; and Nero was a fearful monster, whose misdeeds cast into the shade the crimes of modern tyrants.

Therefore as a matter of fact, an excellent reason exists for the Revelation having been communicated in the form of visions, and for the book itself having been written in symbolic language. This language was, at the time absolutely unintelligible to the enemies of the Christian faith.

Succeeding generations of men have also been without the key to the of the book. But, in the nature of the case, the primitive Christians, who were more immediately concerned and to whom the book was originally addressed, must have possessed that key.

**The temple still standing.** The city of Jerusalem and the temple are spoken of as being still in existence Rev 11.1,2,8.) It is incredible that if Jerusalem had been a heap of ruins, the apostle, would have received a command to measure the temple, and should represent the holy city as being about to be trodden down under the feet of the Gentiles.

**Parallels to the teaching of Jesus.** There is also a manifest, identity of some events described in the Apocalypse with some that had been predicted by our Lord Himself as destined to occur within certain narrow limits of time

(I) The condition of the seven churches of Asia (chap 2. and 3.) proves that they were exposed to much persecution; false teachers had appeared among them, and the love of very many believers had waxed cold; a state of things exactly corresponding to what Jesus had predicted would happen in the lifetime or His earthly contemporaries. Matt. 24.


(III) Physical convulsions. Rev 6.2; 16.1; Matt 24.29.


(V) The Coming of the millennium, or "Kingdom of God." Rev 11.15; 12.10; 20.3,4; Mark 1.15.
(VI) The time of the dead to be raised. Rev 11.18 - 20.4-6; John 5.25.


(VIII) The marriage supper of the Lamb Rev 19.7,17 is represented in Luke 14. as about to begin.2


(X) Fleeing to the wilderness, Rev 12.6. Fleeing across the mountain, Matt 24.16.


(XII) Here too may be noted the manifest identity of the events described in Rev 20.1-11, and Dan 12. But since there cannot be two periods of unparalleled suffering we know that Jesus predicted that Dan 12. would be realised ere that generation passed away Matt. 24.21, 34.

To be immediately fulfilled.- But further, the writer of the book of Revelation stands committed to the constantly repeated Statement that he is describing events which were to happen in what was then the immediate future (things which must shortly come to pass, Rev 1.1 22.6; the things which shall be or as the original Greek has it, are soon to happen hereafter, Rev 1.19; the time is at hand, Rev 1.3 22.10.3

The book opens with a clear and emphatic declaration of the speedy accomplishment of the, momentous events which it predicts, and it closes in the same way. And chief amongst the events predicted and declared to be then on the eve of taking place, was the Advent of the Lord Jesus Himself, belief in the immediateness of which began to grow obsolete at the end of the first century. (Behold He cometh, 1. 7; Behold I come quickly, 3.11, and 22.7,12; Behold I come as a, thief, 16.15 - Surely I come quickly, 22.20).

These emphatic and reiterated statements of the inspired penman are

2. "At supper time." "Come, for all things are now ready."

3. The predictions of Daniel had to do with the remote future, and did not immediately concern his contemporaries. The meaning was therefore to remain hidden until near the appointed time of fulfillment. "Thou, 0 Daniel, shut up the words and seal the book, even to the time of the end! " On the other hand, the predictions of the Revelation were to be realised in the immediate future and intimately concerned the first readers of the book. The meaning was therefore to be clear to them from the first. "Seal not up the words of the prophecy of this book; for the time is at hand!"
fatal to the date (96 A.D.) commonly accepted (which rests mainly on the supposed authority of Irenaeus).

They show conclusively that unless the book has been woefully falsified by subsequent events, it must have been written before and not after 70 A.D. For the argument stands as follows:- If the earlier date be admitted, the Revelation is seen in its true character as an expansion of Christ's prophetic discourse delivered on the Mount of Olives Matthew 24.,25. Then, up to the beginning of the twentieth chapter, its predictions find an exhaustive fulfillment in the transactions that accompanied and immediately followed the destruction of Jerusalem, and the title of the book might appropriately have been "The Doom of Jerusalem." But, on the other hand, no one supposes that immediately after 96 A.D., Christ visibly returned to the earth; or that the rest of the events, described by John as being at the time be wrote on the point of accomplishment were then realised. If, therefore, trusting to the slender evidence supposed to be furnished by Irenaeus who did not write till a hundred years afterwards, we still adhere to the later date, reason and common sense will then compel us to conclude that the predictions of the Apocalypse have been falsified by time.

Referred to in Hebrews and 1st Peter.- It is likely that at least two other New Testament authors who wrote their epistles in the last days of the Jewish dispensation and before the destruction of the Jewish temple Hebrews 1,2; 9.8; I Peter 4.7 had already seen and read the Revelation. Thus in the mention of the city that hath "the foundations" whose builder and maker is God Hebrews 11.10, Revised Bible, we have a manifest reference to Rev 21.14 : "the wall of the city had twelve foundations." And the account of Mount Zion and the heavenly Jerusalem given in the same epistle Heb 12.22 agrees so minutely with the description thereof in the Revelation 14.1-5 that it is difficult to avoid the conclusion that the former has been directly derived from the latter. Of still greater interest and importance is the parallel between, Rev. 6.9-11 and 1 Peter 4.6.

In the Apocalypse the martyred saints are represented as crying out to the Lord from beneath the altar, and inquiring how long it will be ere their murderers are judged and punished compare Luke 18.7. In reply, they receive white robes as an outward declaration of their own justification and acceptance with God, and are comforted with the information that judgment will now tarry but a short, time, during which they will enjoy rest. It is almost certain that Peter, before writing the first epistle that bears his name, had already become familiar with this passage of the Apocalypse, and that his readers were also acquainted with it. He makes manifest allusion to these martyred saints in the passage (4.6) where he strives to encourage Christians amid their terrible sufferings by referring to certain of
the dead to whom a "gospel" (or glad tidings) had been vouchsafed, assuring them that, though they had been condemned in the flesh by man's judgment, they were to live in the spirit by God's judgment.

It is also probable that the apostle James had read the book of Revelation before he wrote his epistle, for in ch. 1.12 (Blessed is the man that endureth temptation; for when he hath been approved, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord promised to them that love Him) he seems to be alluding to the promise contained in Rev 2.10 “Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee the crown of life.”
The Christ Has Come

By Earnest Hampden-Cook

CHAPTER XII.

THE REVELATION.
(continued)

The plan of the book.- In The Parousia, Dr. Stuart Russell points out that it is a great mistake to regard the Apocalypse as "an intricate maze, without any intelligible plan, ranging through time and space, and forming a chaos of heterogeneous ages, nations, and incidents, when in reality there is no literary composition more methodical in its arrangement and more artistic in its design." He shows that among the remarkable features of the book is the fact that each division ends with a catastrophe representing either an act of judgment or a scene of triumph, and that just as Pharaoh's dream was one, although to make its lesson doubly sure it was repeated and seen under two different forms,¹ so also the several visions of the Apocalypse are not really consecutive, but run as it were parallel to each other, and merely give different aspects and varied representations of the same set of events. In the last section of his most able and fascinating book Dr. Russell gives numerous extracts from the Jewish historian Josephus.

These make it morally certain that, in the transactions that accompanied and immediately followed the siege and destruction of Jerusalem the Apocalypse from the fourth chapter up to the beginning of the 20th chapter received an exhaustive fulfilment; and that much that Josephus afterwards recorded was seen in vision by John, and in the Revelation was described by him in pictorial language before it actually took place. In justification of this belief it is impossible within our present limits to do more than recall some of the remarkable parallels to the Apocalypse which are to be found in Josephus.

It is of course to be remembered that the Revelation describes both heavenly and earthly things, and that so far as history written after the event is concerned we have no independent record of things that then happened in the spiritual world, and only a fragmentary record of what

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¹ "And for that the dream was doubled unto Pharoah twice, it is because the thing is established by God, and God will shortly bring it to pass" Gen 41.32. Compare Joseph's double deram Gen 37, Gideon's double sign Judges 6.36-9, the double vision of Dan 2. and 7, and our Lord's use of more than one parable to illustrate different sides of one and the same truth (as in Luke 15).
happened on earth. It is therefore quite impossible to find in the historian Josephus a counterpart to every incident of the Revelation. The resemblances, however, between the two are so numerous and so striking as to afford the strongest presumptive evidence that they are describing the same series of events.

The seven seals.- At the opening of the first of the seven seals we have probably a symbolic representation of the outbreak of the Jewish war under Vespasian, in the reign of Nero, 66 A.D. The first horse is white, for little or no blood is shed at first; and the rider is armed with a bow, a weapon used at a distance. Yet already the issue of the war is not doubtful.

The Roman warrior "came forth conquering and to conquer." And soon blood begins to be freely shed. The second horse is red. Peace is taken from the land which is the scene of the war, and the whole country is soon in a fierce tumult. The Romans gain an additional advantage, by civil war springing up -the Jews fight among themselves. The "great sword," which had now taken the place of the bow, finds its explanation in the fact that the war soon became a hand-to-hand conflict, and terrible was the slaughter that followed.

With the opening of the third seal a black horse is seen symbolising the horrors of famine which ere long made themselves felt. Josephus (Wars 5. 10.2) records the scarcity and dearness of food, and how fearfully the inhabitants of Jerusalem suffered from hunger.

He also records that John of Gischala, one of the rival leaders of the people, not, only seized the sacred vessels of the temple, but also distributed among his adherents the wine and oil which the priests used for pouring over the sacrifices (Wars 5. 13. 6). Striking is the parallel between these facts and Rev 6.6, especially in the translation preferred by the American revisers, a quart of wheat for a shilling, and three quarts of barley for a shilling "-implying great scarcity the revisers remark- "and the oil and the wine hurt thou not."

In the fourth horse, which was of a pale color, and the name of whose rider was Death Rev 6.8 there is apparently a statement of the intensified horrors of the siege of Jerusalem, as to which we have abundant evidence in Josephus (Wars 5.12.3 and 5.13.7). In the account of what followed the opening of the sixth seal we have, in the language of gorgeous Oriental poetry, a description of physical convulsions similar to that given by our Lord in Matt 24.29, and which (five verses later on) He solemnly declared would take place ere the generation to whom He spoke passed away.
The term "kings of the land (or earth)," Rev 6.15, is applied by Peter to the rulers of the Jews Acts 4.26. The scene that follows finds its explanation in the fact that the limestone hills of Palestine are honeycombed with caverns which from time immemorial have been the dens of robbers and the shelter of fugitives. It is remarkable that Josephus records that these caverns and subterranean passages formed the last refuge and hiding place of vast numbers of the Jews after the capture of the city (Wars 6.7. and 9; and 7.2.2).

And if they sought to hide themselves thus from man, they may well have tried in a similar way to hide themselves from the divine Judge. Certain it is that on His way to crucifixion Jesus had declared to the women of Jerusalem that there were days coming apparently in the lifetime of them and their children when there would be those who would say to the mountains "fall on us," and to the hills "cover us" Luke 23.30.

At this great crisis the catastrophe is represented as interrupted to secure the safety of God's faithful people Rev 7. lit the Revised Bible we read that those arrayed in white robes had not merely come out of "great tribulation," but out of "the." The phrase clearly points to great the cruel persecution of the Christians by the fiendish emperor Nero, and to that time of awful sorrow which Jesus had predicted as certain to precede the destruction of Jerusalem, and which as to its severity lie had spoken of as unparalleled in the history of the world before or after Matt 24.2 Dan. 12.1.

The seven trumpets. - There is a brief Silence separating the vision of the seven seals from that of the seven trumpets a pause intimating that the drama is to be unfolded afresh, and that substantially the same series of events is to be made doubly sure by being rehearsed under a different aspect. In accordance with the Old Testament analogy 2 Sam 8.2, Lam 2.8) the order to measure the temple (which at that time was still in existence) and the altar and the worshippers was a token of their impending desolation and destruction.

The outer court did not need to be measured, for it was desecrated previously, an armed mob of Gentile Idumeans holding possession of the courts of the temple during the whole forty-two months that the war in Palestine, lasted.

Dr. Clement Clemance² gives the following summary of Archdeacon Farrar's explanation of the first six trumpets.³

First trumpet. - Years of burning drought, rains of fire, disastrous

2. Pulpit Commentary (REVELATION: p. 239).
conflagrations and earthquakes as those in Lyons, Rome, Jerusalem and Naples (63 to 68 A.D.).

Second Trumpet. - Great calamities connected with the sea and ships, such as those of which the time of Nero furnishes abundant evidence.

**Third Trumpet.** - The overthrow of Nero, the ominous failure of the Julian line, and the bitterness occasioned thereby.

**Fourth Trumpet.** - Ruler after ruler of the Roman empire and of the Jewish nation died by murder or suicide.

**Fifth Trumpet.** - The star perhaps Nero. The host of locusts denoted demons. *"In the period between Christ's resurrection, and the fall of Jerusalem, the Jewish nation acted as if possessed by seven thousand demons" (Stier).*

**Sixth Trumpet.** - The army of the horsemen denotes the swarms of Orientals who gathered to the destruction of Jerusalem in the train of Titus, and the overwhelming Parthian host which was expected to avenge the ruin of Nero.

"Observe in 9.10, a cryptographic allusion to the Parthian cavalry. The horses are said to be like scorpions, and to have stings in their tails, referring to the famous practice of the Parthian horsemen, who, when pursued after charging, would turn and fly, all the time shooting their arrows behind them." 4

**Seven mystic Figures Ch. 12-14** - In the woman clothed with the sun we have a symbol of the persecuted Jewish-Christian Church of the first century. The man-child seems to typify such of the members of that church as were martyred. The devil in the hope of doing them deadly injury instigated their enemies to murder them. But evil was overruled for good, and death proved the means of introducing them into the presence of the Father.

They were caught up to God and His throne. In that which afterwards befell the woman herself, we have a representation of what happened to the members of the Hebrew Christian Church who survived the malice of their enemies. Our Lord had given an earnest warning to His disciples that when they saw Jerusalem surrounded with armies they were to escape from the city in utmost haste Matt 24.15-18.

Relying on statements of Josephus (Wars 2.20; 3.3.3), it has been generally admitted that the Christians carried out their Master's instructions, and at the outbreak of the Jewish War availed themselves of

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an opportunity to flee across the mountains to the desert of Perea beyond Jordan. This exactly tallies with the statement that the woman symbolising the surviving members of the Hebrew Christian church Church hastily sought refuge in the wilderness, where for the whole duration of the war in Palestine 1260 days or three years and a half she remained, cared for by God.

The total silence history as to what subsequently became of these Jewish Christians finds an adequate explanation in the belief that at the end of the siege they were caught up to meet the Lord in the spiritual world, and were conveyed away from earth to the heavenly home prepared for them, in the Father's house of many mansions (I Thess 4.17). At the Coming of the Lord in 70 A.D., their bodies suddenly died, but they themselves ascended with triumphant joy to the very throne of God.
CHAPTER XIII.

THE REVELATION.
(continued)

The Beast and its number.- The next mystic figure is that of the first Wild Beast (Rev 13.1-10):- the Roman emperor Nero, a man whom Paid speaks of by the similar name of "the Lion" (2 Tim. 17). A minute parallel exists between the description of the beast in Revelation and the character of Nero as depicted in secular history. Says Dr. Farrar (Early Days of Christianity, 5.28.5) Beyond all shadow of doubt or uncertainty, the Wild Beast from the sea is meant as a symbol Of the emperor Nero. Here, at any rate, St. John has neglected no single means by which he could make his meaning clear without deadly peril to himself and the Christian Church. He describes this Wild Beast by no less than sixteen distinctive marks, and then all but tells us in so many words the name of the person whom it is intended to symbolize." Among the most striking proofs of the identification are

(1) Nero's world-wide power and dominion,
(2) his assumptions of the prerogatives of deity,
(3) his cruel persecution of the Christians for 42 months (from the end of 64 A.D. to the middle of 68 A.D.), and
(4) his own violent, death followed by the belief that widely prevailed that he was not, really dead, but, would ere long emerge from some secret, hiding place. It, is also well-known that in the absence of arithmetical figures the Jews attach a numerical value to the letters of the alphabet. Hence it is a fact, full of interest and significance that 666, the number of the wild beast, is the value when added together of the Hebrew letters which go to express the emperor's name. For Nero to have been more plainly spoken of would have been needlessly to compromise the Christian Church.

The harvest and the vintage.- We have here a remarkable parallel to the parable of the wheat and the tares (Matt 13.30) of which Christ had declared the harvest would take place at the end of the age, i.e., at, the end of the Jewish dispensation. Here, however, there is a twofold division, the harvest of the land (or earth) corresponding to the reaping of the wheat and its reception into the garner, whilst the cutting down of the
vine and the gathering of the vintage and the treading of the winepress of
the wrath of God is wholly a work of judgment and destruction,
corresponding to the binding together and burning of the tares. In the 1600
furlongs Rev. 14.20, we have a reference to the geographical length of
Palestine 200 miles from north to South.

Babylon probably Jerusalem.- In a profoundly interesting section of "the
Parousia" Dr. Russell has argued forcibly against the traditional
identification of the Babylon of Rev 17-19 with Rome, pagan or papal. He
has given striking reasons for adopting the remarkable conclusion that
*the great harlot sitting on a scarlet colored beast* and drunken with the
blood of saints and martyrs¹ is the faithless city of Jerusalem, which had
so persistently violated the marriage covenant that existed between
herself and her God. It is to be remembered in this connexion that Peter
(Acts 4.26) applies to the rulers of Palestine the term kings of the land (or
earth)," which occurs in Rev. 17.18.

The binding of Satan.- In Rev 20. the acts of binding the dragon and of
raising the saints must fall within the term 'shortly' by which the
Revelation is repeatedly limited. Then follows an exceedingly long period
of time spoken of as "*a thousand years.*" This in the nature of the case
goes beyond the limits of 'shortly' and extends into the distant, future.
During this period the imprisonment of Satan continues, and the saints in
heaven reign with Christ over the earth, and doubtless also over the
human race in the invisible world of spirits Matt 28.18.

There is no reason why we should not accept the narrative in its entirety,
and the clear statement of Rev 20.3 that for the whole period of "*a
thousand years* " Satan was to be deprived of all ability to deceive the
nations. This is far more. than a declaration that for the term of his
imprisonment the power of the dragon is partially restricted and repressed.
Let us therefore thankfully accept the fact that, at the coming of the
Kingdom of God in 70 A.D.

The devil was dethroned and placed under complete restraint; and that for
the last eighteen hundred years (a part, only of that exceedingly long
period which in accordance with the usages of everyday life is spoken of
in a general way as "*a thousand years* ") he at any rate has been deprived
of all power to tempt and injure the human race. Perplexing as this
statement may appear to some, it becomes intelligible and credible when

¹. "Ye are sons of them that slew the prophets," said Jesus to the Jews Matt
23.31. "Behold I send unto you prophets; some of them shall ye kill and
crucify" verse 34. "0 Jerusalem, Jerusalem, which killeth the prophets and
stoneth them that are sent unto her " verse 37. It cannot be that a prophet
we remember that in Scripture Satan is represented as being only the head and chief of a vast confederacy of rebel spirits. It is not until the end of the Millennial Kingdom (when Christ will surrender the Kingdom to God, even the Father) that God will have put all His enemies under His feet, and have abolished all rule and all authority and power. I Cor 15.24, 25.

If the devil was bound and imprisoned in the abyss at the time of the destruction of Jerusalem, then, ever since that period, his work of tempting and injuring mankind has had to be done for him by subordinate evil spirits. The fact that they have only been able to do it with inferior power and inferior knowledge and skill, and-inferior courage (for now that their ringleader is vanquished they realise that their defeat awaits them also) helps to account for the vast improvement in the moral condition of the world which has undoubtedly taken place since the introduction of Christianity. When the apostles cast out evil spirits Christ saw that the work which they were thus helping to begin would be consummated in the expulsion of the devil himself from heaven Rev 12.10, and in this his subsequent imprisonment in the abyss.

Probably it was to the event of Rev 12.10 that our Lord prophetically referred when He declared that He had seen Satan as lightning fall from heaven Luke 10.18. Possibly also the same transactions were contemplated by Christ as destined to come to pass in the near future, when just before His crucifixion He declared: "now is a judgment of this world, now shall the prince of this World be cast out" John 12.31, margin Revised Bible. Be this as it may, it is at least certain Rom 16.20 that if Paul wrote with divine authority Satan was bruised beneath the feet of the primitive Christians shortly after the epistle to the Romans was written 58 A.D. Our Lord, also, taught that among the first steps to be taken in His work of delivering man from the power of evil must be the casting out of the strong one who for so long had had dominion over the world; and that the expulsion of evil spirits by Himself and His apostles was a sure indication of the near approach of the time when Satan would be dethroned, and the Kingdom of God and of heaven set up over the earth. "How can one enter into the house of the strong man, and spoil his goods, except he first bind the strong man, and then he will spoil his house. If I by the spirit of God cast out demons, then is the Kingdom of God come upon you" Matt 12.29, 28.

The first resurrection.- From Daniel 12.2 "Many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life and some to shame and everlasting contempt " we have reason to believe that a partial resurrection of the wicked (that is of unbelievers who were ripe for judgment) took place at the same time as the resurrection of the saints recorded in Rev 20.4. It is true that neither here nor in John 5.25 have we
any mention of it, but (since mere silence proves nothing one way or the other) the omission is not fatal to the identity of this event with that recorded in Daniel. Nor does the statement even of Rev 20.5 contradict the supposition.

That verse merely teaches that no one else from among those who were dead at that time had any share in a resurrection to eternal life until the exceedingly long period expressed by the term "a thousand years" was finished.

It is clear that we are now living in the midst of the Millennium. At the present moment the ringleader of evil is under complete restraint, and the saints in heaven are reigning with Christ over the whole human race. None of the events described in the Apocalypse after the distinct statement of this long interval of time can be included in the term "shortly," by which all the other contents of the book are expressly limited.

Thus in 20.12 we have a description of a world-wide judgment yet to come (also solemnly predicted by Jesus in John 5.29) when the dead, great and small, shall stand before the throne and be judged according to their works. In the account of the new heavens and the new earth, and of the descent to earth of the holy city new Jerusalem coming down out of heaven from God, we have a prophecy of that blessed consummation of all things, one day to be realised, when all sin and sorrow shall have ceased, and when the will of our righteous and loving God will be done on earth as perfectly as it is now done in heaven.

2. For further discussion of the question of the Millennium, the reader is referred to the preface to the second edition.
CHAPTER XIV.

CONSEQUENCES.

(continued) The light, which the past Second Advent throws upon the problem of Future retribution has already been indicated. Other far reaching consequences result, some which it now remains to suggest and enumerate.

Our relation to political and social movements.- That which lies nearest to the heart of God our Father is the welfare and happiness of the masses of the people in this and every other country. The Almighty Himself is on their side against all selfish privilege and all unjust and iniquitous laws. It must be so, for He hates righteousness, and He sent His Son to be the Saviour not merely of a few individuals but of the whole world.

The poorest, the vilest, the most ignorant of our fellow men are in very deed our brothers for whom Christ tasted the shame and the agony of death. And yet there are thousands of Christian people of undoubted sincerity and earnestness who deliberately and on principle hold aloof from all political and social movements. They declare that the condition of things on this earth is certain to go from bad to worse. It is quite useless, they assert, to attempt to make the world any better. All our hopes for humanity should be centred on a still future Second Advent! Christ Himself, they would have us believe, is coming ere long to take the supreme control into His own hands and establish an earthly Kingdom of God.

And meantime, amid the awful sin and misery and oppression that are around us while strong men and delicate women and innocent children agonize and die by the thousands beneath the crushing weight of evils which wise legislation and united Christian effort would do much to diminish or destroy we, forsooth, may rightly sit with folded arms and upturned eyes awaiting His arrival! And this too notwithstanding the fact that according to the common belief His advent has already been postponed for nearly two thousand years, and therefore, for aught we know, may be postponed for two thousand years longer!

This religious quietism is founded on a huge blunder. The second coming of Christ on which so many false hopes have been based is now
an event of the remote past. The belief that it is still future is equivalent to an unintentional denial of the truth of some of the plainest words He ever uttered. The sovereignty of the Lord Jesus and His saints was established over the earth more than 1800 years ago. He must continue to reign until God puts all His enemies under His feet I Cor 15.25. God's Kingdom has come. It is now our solemn duty and our most glorious privilege to claim our share in all political and social movements which have for their object the welfare of our brothers for whom Christ died. He wants to make use of us in diminishing and destroying the evils that abound in the world.

Whatever of time or of money, of strength or of influence we may possess, it is for us to place it all at the absolute disposal of Jesus Christ, for the benefit of our fellow-men. Thus we shall become co-workers together with Him in causing the will of God to be done on earth even as it is done in heaven. Thus we shall hasten the day when He will surrender the Kingdom to God even the Father and God shall be All In All I Cor 15.24. The gain to the cause of Christ, and of humanity would be enormous if the religious earnestness of all His followers were to run in earthly and mundane channels.

The early date of the New Testament.- In the fact of the past, second advent we have a sure proof of the genuineness and early date of the books of the New Testament. It is generally admitted that after the destruction of Jerusalem belief in the immediateness of Christ's return to the earth began to grow obsolete. It is at least certain that the many varied statements to be found in the gospels and epistles predicting that His return would take place within the lifetime of His contemporaries have been persistently ignored by the church from that time to the present. These predictions run absolutely counter to the beliefs on the subject that have prevailed ever since the destruction of Jerusalem Therefore they cannot have been the invention of a later age. And if the predictions are genuine and authentic the books in which they are contained must be genuine and authentic too.

The divinity of Jesus.- A conviction of Christ's divine nature and a belief in His past second advent confirm and strengthen each other. If, to begin with, we believe that He was in an absolutely unique sense the Son of God, this leads to supreme confidence in His words whether or not they are supported by human testimony after the event. To all who accept His divine authority His predictions are merely history anticipated! To such Christian believers no event of the past is more sure than the fact that the Lord Jesus personally and visibly returned to the earth at the time of the

1. i.e. it has come to the world as a whole. But it has yet to be realised in the hearts of countless individual men and women.
destruction of Jerusalem. He Himself promised to do so, and in spite of the silence of history they know that He must have kept His word!

On the other hand, to begin with, we may be sceptical as to Christ's divinity. Yet, even then, the known fulfilment of so many of His predictions establishes His supernatural foreknowledge, and becomes a reasonable guarantee for the fulfilment of the whole. We know from Josephus and others that thirty years beforehand Jesus was able to predict many of the events which preceded and accompanied the destruction of Jerusalem.

Therefore He cannot have been mistaken when He solemnly went on to declare that at the end He Himself would be personally present and actually seen. This conviction is likely to be followed by faith in His divine nature. To anyone who believes in the past Second Advent, Christ will no longer be a mere man, however beautiful His character and however sublime His teaching God Himself judges no man but has committed all judgment unto the Son, that all may honour the Son even as they honour the Father (John 5.23).

**Where are we now?** - It is at once evident that the past Second Advent vastly changes the aspect of the New Testament. Most of the predictions uttered by Jesus and His apostles have already been fully and exhaustively realised. This at first sight may appear very perplexing. Yet, unfamiliar and unwelcome though the truth may prove, the fact must be faced that to us the latter half of the Bible is mainly a record of what is now the past a portion thereof having been given in the form of predictions before the event. It does not on that account lose its value and significance for its. The Scriptures as a whole have simply to be viewed, more emphatically than ever, as having originally been a Jewish book. They contain, among other things, a complete history of God's dealings with His chosen people from the call of Abraham down to their destruction as a settled nation. They exhibit to every succeeding generation the awful consequences of rejecting the Divinely appointed Saviour, and the unspeakable blessedness of those who truly love and obey Him. Truly saintly and consecrated believers of the apostolic age formed the church of the first-born. Of His own will He brought them forth that they should be a kind of first-fruits of His creatures (James 1.18). By His kindness in Christ Jesus to the Church of the first-born, God has made manifest to all succeeding ages the exceeding riches of His grace Eph 2.7.

It is true that our curiosity as to the details of the future is ungratified. Some may impatiently enquire "Then what have we left?" The reply is that we still know sufficient for our salvation, and have within our reach all the resources we need for living a useful and Christlike life, and dying a peaceful and triumphant death. Upon our acceptance there is pressed the
unspeakable privilege of belonging to the Church of the later-born. By laying hold of the almighty grace of God, we may grow so faithful to duty and so Christlike in character that for us there shall be no real death and no judgement. This is so because the man who is made thus truly and vitally one with the Redeemer comes not into judgement, but already has passed out of death into life, John 5.24. Otherwise we shall have our place in the worldwide resurrection and worldwide judgement of which we have definite announcements in John 5.29 and Rev 20.11.³

The expression "a better resurrection" Heb 9.35 is very noteworthy. The ancient Jews believed that man exists in three or four successive places or conditions.

1) EARTH.

2) HADES, or the intermediate state, which has PARADISE as one of its departments.

3) The final states of Heaven for the good, and Gehenna for the bad. The Lord Jesus Christ has proved to us the truth of this Jewish belief by Himself adopting and teaching it. To pass from one of these places or conditions may simply mean to rise to life in another! Hence there are probably six kinds of resurrection.

1) From earth to Hades - It was in this sense that Christ proved the resurrection when arguing with the Sadducees Matt 22.31; Mark 12.26; Luke 20.37. Jehovah was still the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Therefore these men were still alive in the intermediate state.

2) From Hades to earth. The following instances of resurrection are of this sort the two young men raised to life by Elijah and Elisha 1 Kings 17.22 2 Kings 4.34, the man whose dead body touched the bones of the prophet 2 Kings 13.21, the ruler's daughter Matt 9.25, the widow's son at Nain Luke 7.15, Lazarus John 11.44, Dorcas Acts 9.40 and Eutychus Acts 20.12.

3) From Hades, or Paradise, to heaven. In the New Testament this is, distinguished by the name of the First resurrection Rev 20.5. Saints of the highest rank who had previously left the earth and had remained in Paradise (the outer court or garden of heaven) until the coming of the Kingdom of God in 70 A.D. passed with Christ at the second advent through the veil into the most holy place the innermost sanctuary of heaven itself. This was the resurrection from among the dead which the apostle Paul passionately desired to share in Phil 3.11. It had been expressly predicted by Christ in John 5.25.

4) From Daniel 12.2 "Many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life and to shame and everlasting contempt"
it is probable that a resurrection of the wicked also took place at the second advent; and that some men who had previously passed from earth to Hades, having proved themselves utterly and therefore irrecoverably bad, now passed from Hades to Gehenna into the fire prepared for the devil and his angels Matt. 25.41, and were completely destroyed.

(5) From the time of the second advent onwards truly saintly and approximately Christlike believers enjoy a special privilege. For them the intermediate state has been abolished. In their case, resurrection means passing immediately at death from earth to heaven itself. (6) It is an awful thought that even in this brief mortal life some men may prove themselves utterly and therefore irrecoverably bad. If there be such, it is possible that their final judgment follows at once the death of their bodies, and that they pass without further delay from earth to Gehenna.

We have revealed to Us An Unchangeable God; And An Unchangeable Saviour (the Ruler and the Judge of men). Unchangeable Principles of Right and Wrong are also laid down in the New Testament which we shall find it blessed to observe, and shall neglect at our deadly peril.

"Is God the God of Jews only ? Is He not the God of Gentiles also ? Yea of Gentiles also; if so be that God is one, and He shall justify the circumcision by faith, and the uncircumcision through faith " Rom 3.29-30. " A righteousness of God hath been manifested even the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus unto all that believe; for there is no distinction, for all have sinned and fall short, of the glory of God " Rom 3.21, 22. " For the Scripture saith, Whosoever believeth on Him Shall not be put to shame, for there is no distinction between Jew and Greek (ie., Gentile); for the same Lord is Lord of all and is rich unto all that call upon Him, for whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved " Rom 10.11-13.

A child does not need to be informed what his parents will do tomorrow. he only needs to he able to trust them. A servant does not need to be informed what his master will do tomorrow. He only needs to know that his master is a good man and one who can be trusted. And the supreme need of humanity is not to be informed of the details of the future, but to be able to put absolute confidence in GOD THE FATHER ALMIGHTY and in JESUS CHRIST HIS ONLY SON. History repeats itself. and God is ever repeating Himself, He always distinguishes between a man's faults and the man himself. His attitude of severity towards sin, and of long suffering pity and forbearance towards all but the most hardened and hopeless of Sinners is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever. It will be our own fault, therefore, if through failure to put ourselves into direct personal relations with our Creator, and failure to study the Bible and the life of Christ who is the express image of the Father, we remain ignorant of the character of the God with whom we have to do.
The Millennium.- The word Millennium denotes the "thousand years" of Rev 20.3, 4, during which the dethroned ringleader of evil is placed under restraint, and the saints reign with Christ. It stands for an exceedingly long period which began at the time of the destruction of Jerusalem (ie., soon after the book of the Revelation was written), and has not yet terminated. The reign of the saints with Christ is therefore not on but over the earth, the Greek word [ep-ee' strongs 1909] being capable of either translation. "Millennium " is thus only another name for the " Kingdom of God " or "Kingdom of heaven," meaning by these phrases not merely the sovereignty of Christ over the human race, but the sovereignty of Christ and His saints. The near approach of the Millennium was unceasingly insisted upon throughout the New Testament. John the Baptist, Jesus, and the apostles, all agreed in solemnly proclaiming that the Kingdom was at hand; and we confidently believe that it was established in heaven over the earth in 70 A.D.¹

From I Cor 15. 25 "He must reign till God hath put all His enemies under His feet", we know that the whole duration of the Millennial Kingdom intervenes between Christ's second advent and the end of that Kingdom when He will surrender it to the Father. "Christ the first-fruits, then (ie., afterwards) they that are Christ’s at His coming Then (afterwards, or later on) cometh the end." Compare the intervals and successive stages denoted by the word "then" in Mark 4.28: "First the blade, then the ear, then the full corn in the ear."

¹. For further discussion of the question of the Millennium the reader is referred to the preface to the second edition.
Our relation to the Kingdom of God. The first resurrection continuous in its results. **Death is to us what the Second Advent was to the first Christians.** - In 70 A.D. the condition of the really saintly believer immediately after death became more blessed than it had been at any previous period of the world's history. Abraham "saw" the day of Christ's kingly triumph and was glad John 8.56, but died ere it came. The other Old Testament saints also "died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them and greeted them from afar" Heb 11.13. From the time when these servants of God left the earth, until the coming of the King and of the Kingdom in 70 A.D., they remained in Paradise, the garden or outer court of heaven. Paradise bears the same relation to heaven itself as the Holy place in the earthly tabernacle and temple did to the Holy of holies. The Old Testament saints had been there in a state of imperfect sanctification and imperfect happiness; for apart from the believers of the primitive Christian church it was not possible for them to be made perfect Heb 11.39, 40.¹

Jesus was the first human being to penetrate through the veil, and stand as man's representative in the innermost sanctuary of heaven. In 70 A.D. He returned to take the saints of previous ages from the intermediate state of Paradise, and introduce them (along with the living saints who had been caught up to meet Him in the air) into the presence of their God and Father.² From that day onward, truly consecrated Christians have had at death a great advantage over their predecessors.

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1. Concerning the complete salvation which came to earnest and watchful members of the primitive church at the revelation of Jesus Christ, the ancient prophets had sought and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace which was then to come; searching what time and what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did point to, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ and the glories which were to follow. And to them it was revealed that not unto themselves but to the believers of the primitive Christian church did they minister those things. See I Peter 1.7-12.

2. Possibly these Old Testament saints were the "other sheep" of whom Christ said: "*Them also must I bring, and they shall hear My voice, and there shall be one flock, one shepherd* " John 10.16.
A peculiar blessedness belongs to the dead who die in the Lord from henceforth Rev 14.13. In their case there is no delay, but they enter at once the innermost sanctuary of heaven and enjoy at once the full rest and inheritance that await the people of God. Since the Kingdom is already in existence, having been established in heaven in 70 A.D., the probability is that ever since it has been receiving constant accessions to its numbers by the transference from earth, at death, of really saintly and consecrated believers; the crown of glory hereafter being the reverse side of the cross truly and manfully carried here for Christ, and having no possible existence in separation therefrom.

In that case, death, which in the nature of the case is certain to come to us ere "this generation" passes away and may come at any moment, bears to us the same relation as the Second Advent did to the primitive Christians. The question of our admission to the Kingdom of heaven (as joint-heirs with Christ) or our eternal exclusion therefrom depends on whether or not, at the time the summons comes to us, we are living earnest and prayerful lives. When Christ's body lay in the grave, it is certain that all the powers of evil - the spiritual hosts of wickedness, Paul calls them - would be leagued together in the effort to prevent Him from rising. Hence, in the New Testament, our Lord's resurrection is represented as an act of triumph not only over Hades and the grave, but also over him that had the power of death - that is, the devil Heb 2.14. And this twofold victory Christ achieved not for Himself only but also for His faithful people in every age.

At the Second Advent and first resurrection the primitive saints shared in it to the very utmost, and had death and all the powers of evil put for ever beneath their feet. This is a pledge of what is possible for us. Whether when we leave this world we attain to the same great joy and the same perfect deliverance will depend on the sort of lives we have been leading. Here is a lesson of solemn significance for each of us. If at death we are found faithful and true, then we shall be exempt from Hades and the intermediate state, and have an entrance into the Kingdom itself immediately and abundantly administered to us. Otherwise we shall have sold for the passing pleasures of earth the birthright which is ours as sons of God, and we shall be excluded from the innermost sanctuary of heaven.

3. The gates of Hades do not prevail against them Matt. 16.18, i.e. they are not detained in the intermediate state for a single moment.

4. Compare the exclusion from Canaan of the Israelites who came out from Egypt Numbers 14.23, 29 "I desire to put you in remembrance how that the Lord having saved a people out of Egypt afterward destroyed them that believed not" Jude 5.
Christianity in its primitive purity and simplicity.- We see the necessity for going back to the fountain head of our religion and drawing a broad line of demarcation between the Christianity of Jesus and His apostles and that of subsequent ages. There was ground for the anxiety of the apostle Paul when he said I fear lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve in his craftiness, your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity and the purity that is toward Christ" 2Cor 11.3. At the heart of every ecclesiastical system since the destruction of Jerusalem has lain an enormous error a denial of some of the plainest words that Christ ever spoke. Degeneracy in life and doctrine was not merely something which arose within the church in the course of the third and fourth centuries. Already in the lifetime of the apostles a great falling away from the faith had taken place 1John 2.19. The misdeeds and doctrinal errors of the professedly Christian church of the last 1800 years are partly explained by the fact that (except so far as it was influenced by the survival, for a time of the apostle John) it has been the successor, and, to a large extent, the spiritual representative, of the foolish virgins - those primitive believers who failed to watch and pray in anticipation of their Master's return, and who stand condemned from the very fact that they were left behind on earth when the Lord took the wise virgins home to heaven.

The Sabbath.- The coming of the Christ at the destruction of Jerusalem was the consummation of a great epoch in the history of the world. The Mosaic dispensation then terminated, and the special forms and rules of the Mosaic law for ever passed away, the eternal principles of right, and wrong, which it had embodied, alone surviving under the changed circumstances. This explains the transference of the Sabbath from the end of the week to the beginning. The obligation to observe one day's rest in seven is written deep in the necessities of human nature, and will endure so long as the world lasts. But there is nothing inherently right or wrong in observing any one particular day rather than another. During the Jewish dispensation the enduring principle found temporary form and expression in the command to observe the end of the week.

The choice of the seventh day served to remind the Jews of God's cessation from the work of creation, and to point forward to that Sabbath rest in heaven into which His faithful people would enter when the Christ should come to establish His Kingdom Heb 4.11. At the Second Advent, that Sabbath rest was realised by the primitive saints, and it still continues in existence. At the same time, all that was temporary and arbitrary in the Mosaic law was formally, and for ever, abrogated.

5. Works of mercy, however, and of real necessity are an exception to the general rule Matt 12.1-13.
There was nothing to indicate that the seventh day must still be kept as the Sabbath. Yet the obligation to observe one day of rest in the week remained, and will remain to the end of time. The destruction of Jerusalem made it manifest that the observance of the Mosaic law, in its entirety, had become an impossibility. Christians, therefore, doubtless felt, themselves at full liberty to observe their weekly rest on the day that reminded them of their Master's resurrection from the grave, and of the descent of the Holy Spirit from heaven.

Further, under the Jewish dispensation, arbitrary and external distinctions had existed by which some men, some places, and some seasons were less (or more,) holy than others. But the coming of the Christ to terminate that dispensation proves that all such arbitrary and external distinctions were then swept away. Henceforth, standing as we do, each moment, in the immediate presence of the risen and living Jesus, to whom the whole of our time belongs, we are under a solemn obligation to keep holy seven days in the week.

**Why have miracles ceased? The exceptional character of the apostolic age.**—The great truth for which we contend emphasises the exceptional character not only of the Jewish dispensation but also of the period that intervened between Christ's first and second advents. God's elect people who were to form the church of the first-born Heb 12.23; James 1.18 were to be gathered out from among all nations in the lifetime of a single generation. To effect this result the Holy Spirit was poured out at Pentecost in an altogether abnormal manner and measure.

The gift of prophecy, the gift of tongues, and the power to work miracles, abounded among primitive believers 1Cor 12.8-10;14.26. The Lord confirmed the word by the signs that followed Mark 16.20.

In 1Cor 13.8 "Love never faileth; but whether there be prophecies they shall be done away; whether there be tongues they shall cease; whether there be knowledge, it shall be done away"

Paul definitely taught that these wonders were not to prove permanent, and (verse 11) that even while they lasted, compared with the realisation of perfect love to God and perfect love to our fellow men, they were like the attainments of childhood. compared with those of full manhood. Accordingly there can be but little doubt that Christ's advent at the time of the destruction of Jerusalem to receive into the Kingdom the church of the firstborn, terminated an altogether exceptional state of things which had prevailed since the day of Pentecost, and caused these abnormal miraculous gifts of the Holy Spirit to cease.

**Faith healing and prayer.**—This fact gives the reason why in these days
'the prayer of faith' although never without a rich reward does not always avail to restore a sick man to health, even when he is anointed with oil in the name of the Lord.\(^6\)

So also with respect to prayer generally. Regard for truth compels us to recognise the absolutely unlimited nature of some of the promises given by our Lord to His apostles. Again and again He assured them that whatsoever they might ask the Father in His name, they would be certain to receive\(^7\) It is true that, in every age, believers have discovered, within their own experience, the blessed results that come from persistent prayer when it has been accompanied by faith in God's goodness and wisdom.

They have had reason to give thanks for the peace and guidance and strength which have become theirs as the direct answer to petitions presented in Christ's name, beside the granting of much else that they have asked for. Yet, it is clear that, unless we make certain qualifications rendered necessary by the difference in the circumstances of the case, we who live outside the apostolic age cannot rightly claim the full fulfilment of this particular form of the promise. We may ask, and we do ask, for many foolish things, hurtful to ourselves or to others, which God in His wisdom denies to us things which it is probable that the apostles to whom the promise was addressed (enjoying, as they they did, a special and pre-eminent measure of the enlightening and Sanctifying influences of the Holy Spirit) would not have sought. [See Appendix F., page 136.]

**The Sermon on the mount.-** Paul's advice to his converts to abstain from marriage 1 Cor 7.26-31 derived its force and significance from the unparalleled distress of the times at which he wrote, and from the fact that the ties which bound his readers to the earth were in many cases destined to be severed, at latest, at the advent of the Christ a very few years afterwards. And the appropriateness of Paul's refusal to allow women to teach in the church I Tim 2.12 is at once recognised as having arisen from

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6. "Is any among you sick ? Let him call for the elders of the church and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord. And the prayer of faith shall save him that is sick, and the Lord shall raise him up, and if he have committed sins it shall be forgiven him " James 5. 14-15.

7. "And all things whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive " Matt 21.22. "All things whatsoever ye pray and ask for, believe that ye have received them, and ye shall have them " Mark 11.24. "Whatsoever ye shall ask in My name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If ye shall ask anything in My name, that will I do" John 14.13-14. "Ye did not choose Me, but I chose you and appointed you that ye should go and bear fruit, and that your fruit should abide; that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in My name He may give it you " John 15.16.
the special standards of decorum that prevailed in the world at the time he wrote.

From the exceptional and parenthetic character of the apostolic age it is reasonable also to infer that many authoritative commands recorded in the New Testament only remained in force, in the precise form in which they were given, until the Lord came at the time of the destruction of Jerusalem. They do not, on that account, lose their value and importance for succeeding generations. A new condition of things having arisen, the temporary rule gives place to the enduring principle. The special form passes away, but the spirit of the command lives and lives for ever.

Thus from our Lord’s command to His first disciples that they were not to resist ill treatment, but when smitten on the right cheek to turn the other also Matt 5.39 a command which, it is probable, was literally understood and obeyed by them - we learn the eternal obligation of curbing anger and resentment, and of never retaliating for retaliation sake. The apostolic communism,8 and Christ’s plain injunction that those to whom He spoke were to give to every beggar and lend to all who might wish to borrow of them,9 teach us to recognise in the wants of even the poorest and humblest of our fellow men a continual claim on our sympathy and assistance. The fact that the first Christians were absolutely forbidden to accumulate money or any other form of earthly wealth,10 and that the young ruler was bidden to part with all that he had and reduce himself to abject poverty,11 reminds us that no true servant of Christ, in any age, can ever rightly accumulate money for its own sake.

Every really consecrated believer, whether rich or poor, must in his heart renounce all for the Saviour, even through the renunciation may not take the outward and visible form in which it was demanded from the young ruler and from others of the early Christians.12 Paul, again, writing with

8. "And all that believed were to-other, and had all things common. And they sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all according as any man had need " Acts 2.44-45. "And the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and soul. And not one said that aught of the things which he possessed was his own ; but they had all things common " Acts 4.32.

9. "Give to him that asketh thee, and from him that would borrow fromo thee turn not thou away " Matt. 5.42.

10. " Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon the earth, where moth and rust doth consume, and where thieves break through and steal. But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth consume, and where thieves do not break through nor steal. For where thy treasure is, there will thy heart be also " Matt. 6.19-21.

11. "Sell all that thou hast, and distribute to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven " Luke 18.22.
divine authority, forbade the women of the primitive church to wear jewellery or expensive dresses, or to braid their hair.  

Under the changed circumstances in which we live, the prohibition has doubtless lost something of its force, but it still teaches the duty of simplicity of dress and the avoidance of needless display. Finally, modern preachers when travelling may rightly question whether it be God’s will that they should imitate the apostles in making no provision whatever for the journey but simply be satisfied with the food which will come to them in the providence of God.

Yet the instructions on the subject, given to the apostles, may well remind us that to the end of time excessive anxiety as to food and dress will always be irreconcilable with childlike confidence in Him who numbers the very hairs of our heads.

12. "Fear not, little flock, it is your Father’s good pleasure to give you the Kingdom. Sell that ye have, and give alms; make for yourselves purses which wax not old, a treasure in the heavens that faileth not, where no thief draweth nigh neither moth destroyeth " Luke 12.32,33.

13. "That women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shamefastness and sobriety; not with braided hair and gold or pearls or costly raiment; but (which becometh women professing godliness) through good works " I Tim2.9,10.

14. Circumstances alter cases! On the eve of His death, Jesus said to His disciples: "When I sent you forth without purse and wallet and shoes, lacked ye anything ? And they said, Nothing. And He said unto them, But now, he that hath a purse let him take it, and likewise a wallet, and he that hath no sword, let him sell his cloke and buy one!" Luke 22.35,36.

15. "Get you no gold, nor silver, nor brass, in your purses ; no wallet for your journey, neither two coats nor shoes nor staff ; for the labourer is worthy of his food " Matt 10.10, Revised Bible.
The Christ Has Come

By Earnest Hampden-Cook

CHAPTER XVI.

CONSEQUENCES.

(continued)

The Lord's Prayer.- It seems likely, also, that even in the case of the Lord's Prayer it is the spirit rather than the strict form and letter that is set before us for perpetual imitation. Indeed, the words of Jesus in John 16.23,24 prove that the exact form was not intended to be of permanent obligation. "Verily, verily, I say unto you, if ye shall ask anything of the Father, He will give it you in My name. Hitherto ye asked nothing in My name. Ask and ye shall receive, that your joy may be fulfilled." Moreover, by the dethronement and imprisonment of Satan Rev 20.2,3, and the establishment of the Kingdom of God over the earth in 70 A.D., the early church received speedy answers to the seventh petition as given in the Revised Bible ("deliver us from the evil one"), and the second petition ("Thy Kingdom come"). Having regard to the spirit of the prayer, we may retain and still use both these petitions as given in the Authorised version, although the second has become to us practically identical with the third Thy will be done on earth as it is done in heaven and the seventh ("deliver us from evil") differs little from the sixth ("lead us not into temptation").

Lawful variety in Church systems.- A recognition also follows of the comparative insignificance of any particular form of Church organisation. Suppose the Church system that prevailed in New Testament days could be ascertained beyond all controversy be it Independency, Episcopacy, or Presbyterianism. No evidence can be adduced to show that this one system was meant to be taken as a model for all time. The primitive Christians lived in an exceptional and parenthetical period of the world's history. The changed circumstances in which we live justify a departure from apostolic forms, but never from the apostolic spirit. A society of modern Christians may, therefore, rightly adopt any form of Church government and organisation that is not inherently wrong, and which appears to them suited to their needs in the present day.

The sudden break in early Church history. The fate of the apostles. Did Lazarus die a second time?- The fact that Christ's Second Advent took place in 70 A.D. is the only adequate explanation of the sudden break which then occurred in the records of the Church.
In the Acts of the Apostles the story ends abruptly, leaving us uncertain as to the fate of Paul and other prominent Christian workers. A mystery has hitherto surrounded the fate of most of the apostles, vague and untrustworthy legends as to the times and circumstances of their deaths having been all that was available.

But relying on the plain, emphatic and continually repeated statements of Jesus Christ, there is no longer any room for doubt on the subject. We may conclude, with certainty, that those of the apostles who survived until 70 A.D... were then taken away from earth to heaven, with the exception of John, who was left behind for a time to be the apostle of the new era. Their Master true to His word (Matt. 28.20) had been WITH THEM ALL THE DAYS as they preached and baptized; and now at the CONSUMMATION OF THE AGE and in fulfilment of another promise John 14.3 He visibly returned to fetch them home to heaven to that place which He had meantime been preparing for them in the Father's house of many mansions. Thus He verified His solemn prediction that their missionary labours would be cut short by His own personal advent ("Verily I say unto you, ye shall not have gone over the cities of Israel until the Son of man be come." Matt 10.23.

It has often been a matter of surprise that during His earthly ministry Jesus should have raised from the dead at least three persons (the widow's son, the ruler's daughter, and Lazarus), only to allow them later on to sink back into Hades. But no such inference is necessary. All three of these may well have lived until the time of the destruction of Jerusalem and by being then "translated" from earth to heaven have entirely escaped the intermediate State.

Apostolic succession.- The great fact that the Second Advent of the Lord Jesus Christ took place in 70 A.D. is a crowning proof of the shallowness of the theory that any particular class of men can rightly claim to be, in an exclusive sense, the successors of the apostles.

1. THE WORK OF THE APOSTLES, UNIQUE, FULLY ACCOMPLISHED AND INCAPABLE OF REPETITION. THEIR QUALIFICATIONS AND CREDENTIALS ALSO UNIQUE - Like John the Baptist, the apostles were mainly sent out into the world to herald the immediate coming of the divine Kingdom, and therefore also of the divine King.

"As ye go, preach, saying, The Kingdom of heaven is at hand" Matt 10. 7. "Into whatsoever city ye enter, and they receive you not, go out into the streets thereof and say, Even the dust from your city, which cleaveth to our feet, we do wipe off against you ".

"Howbeit know this, that the Kingdom of God is come nigh" Luke 10.9-11.
They had also to declare that faith and obedience were the indispensable qualifications for admission to the Kingdom. And they did not leave unfinished the task committed to them. They went forth and preached everywhere Mark 16.20, and ere their ministry ceased, the glad tidings of the near approach of the Kingdom of God had been made known unto all the nations Rom 16.26, and proclaimed in all creation under heaven Col 1.23. The work to which they were called was thus of a unique character, accomplished by them once for all, and incapable of being repeated in exactly the same form in succeeding generations. Further the apostles (including Paul, Gal 1.1,12 derived their message directly from Jesus Himself. With the exception of Paul, they were qualified for their work by three years of personal friendship with their Lord; and (including Paul, I Cor 9.1) by having seen Him alive after His resurrection. They had also special supernatural gifts Mark 16.17 and even the power of casting out demons and of raising the dead to life.

These special supernatural gifts ceased when their ministry ceased, at the time of the destruction of Jerusalem. It is also noteworthy that our Lord's promise (Matt 28.20) to be in a special and exclusive sense 'with' His apostles extended only to the end of the Jewish age! It is true that an analogy exists between the work of the apostles and that of Christian preachers of later ages. To all Christian preachers it has been given to proclaim the Saviour's name and to teach that repentance and faith are indispensable qualifications for admission to the Kingdom of heaven. Yet the ministry of the apostles like that of John the Baptist, is incapable of repetition in precisely its original form, the Kingdom of God having long ago been established in heaven over the earth. Moreover none of the alleged successors of the apostles can literally cast out evil spirits and raise the dead to life, as they did, or without, suffering injury take up serpents and drink poison Mark 16.17.

(2) Those Worthy To Succeed The Apostles Were Withdrawn From Earth To Heaven Along With Them. The claim of any priestly class to exclusively represent the apostles is also completely invalidated by the consideration

1. "Ye also bear witness because ye have been with Me from the beginning" John 15.27.
2. "Of the men therefore which have companied with us all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and went out among us, beginning from the baptism of John unto the day that He was received up from us, of these must one become a witness with us of His resurrection " Acts 1.21,22.
3. Paul, speaking of his own ministry, says " Truly The Signs Of An Apostle were wrought among you in all patience, by signs and wonders and mighty works " 2 Cor 12.12.
4. See Appendix A, page 133.
that the Church of history is the successor and for the most part the spiritual representative of those primitive believers of the second rank who stand condemned from the very fact that, being found lacking in earnestness and watchfulness at, the moment of Christ's Second Advent, they were left behind on earth at a time when their truly saintly and consecrated fellow Christians were taken away to heaven. Thus even if it were possible for the priestly pedigree to be traced back without, a break to the year 70, the most important links in the chain the links needed to connect, it with the apostles themselves would still be missing. In that year, on a day and at an hour previously unknown to any but God the Father Matt. 24.36, the apostles (with a single exception) and all those worthy to succeed the apostles were suddenly taken away from the earth. Hence the priestly pedigree is at best a chain hanging upon nothing, for no one asserts that episcopal succession has come simply through John.

(3) The Apostles Have Never Relinquished Their Position Pre-Eminence Over The Church. Jesus, with the utmost solemnity, invested His apostles with the very same authority over the church, as that which He Himself had received from the Father. "As the Father hath sent Me, EVEN SO SEND I YOU " John 20.21. " He that heareth you heareth Me, and he that rejecteth you rejecteth Me, and he that rejecteth Me rejecteth Him that sent Me " Luke 10.16, Like the Son of man Mark 2.10 they had bestowed on them the right and the power to forgive Sins. 5 But the church in heaven and on earth is not two but only one, and Peter and his fellow-apostles have never ceased to exercise over it the authority committed to them by their Master. A will cannot be proved and the property inherited until the testator is dead. 6 Just as Christ needs no successor to His throne because He is still alive and still occupies it, so none can succeed the apostles in their position of pre-eminence over the church, for the simple reason that these men are at this moment alive in the unseen world, and still have this pre-eminence.

The visible unity of Christendom.- Jesus Christ prayed for perfect union amongst His people, that union which is destined one day to bring about a world-wide recognition of His divine mission."Holy Father, keep them in Thy name which Thou hast given Me, that they may be one even as We are...... Neither for these only do I pray, but for them also which believe on Me through their word ; that they may all be one; even as Thou, Father, art in Me,

5. "Receive ye the Holy Spirit. Whose soever sins ye forgive, they are forgiven unto them. Whose soever sins ye retain, they are retained" John 20.22,23.

6. "For where a testament is, there must of necessity be the death of him that made it. For a testament is of force when there hath been death, for doth it ever avail while lie that made it liveth ? " Heb 9.16,17.
and I in Thee, that they also may be in Us that the world may believe that Thou didst send Me" John 17.11,20,21. For at least three reasons the fact of the past Second Advent is calculated to promote the unity of Christendom.

(1) Many sects and denominations are largely based on the belief that the Second Advent is still future. When it is recognised that this belief is a grave error and wholly irreconcilable with the plain teaching of the Lord Jesus, these sects must cease to exist.

(2) The past Second Advent is fatal to the dogma of Apostolic succession which otherwise must for ever prove an insurmountable barrier to the union of the Churches.

(3) The light which the great truth for which we contend throws on the New Testament, and the many passages of which it makes the meaning clear beyond reasonable doubt, will do much to minimise differences of opinion amongst Christian people. For example, there is no longer any room for the controversy between pro-millennarianism and post-millennarianism. The Millennium (or heavenly Kingdom of God) in the midst of which we are living was preceded by Christ's Second Advent, and will be followed by His Third Advent. We may therefore readily recognize the elements of truth which existed in what appeared to be conflicting opinions.

Other Consequences.- Theology is the servant of Religion; a schoolmaster to lead us to Him who is Himself the Way, the Truth and the Life or to bind us the more closely to Him. Like all other great truths, that of the past Second Advent has thus its God-appointed work to accomplish in the world, and will triumph at its God-appointed time and through God-appointed instruments. As will have been already seen from the results which flow from it, its mission will probably prove to be a wide and varied one. And in conclusion the following additional consequences may be briefly mentioned as coming from it:

(1) It vindicates THE VERACITY AND INERRANCY OF JESUS, by relieving His teaching from the suspicion of a serious error.

(2) It adds vastly to THE INTELLIGIBILITY, and therefore also to THE CREDIBILITY, OF THE NEW TESTAMENT by removing intellectual difficulties which for long ages have hindered thousands of thoughtful men and women from clearly seeing the way to Christ and His salvation.

(3) It severely TESTS (and thereby INCREASES) the FAITH of many Christians, by compelling them to choose between Scripture and tradition-between the teaching of Christ and His apostles and the teaching of the Church, which on this question of the date of the Parousia, are utterly at variance.
"The common translation 'the end of the world' has been a delusion to many readers of the English Bible, and this could hardly have been otherwise. But it is very strange that so many learned writers, who have property translated and explained the consummation of the age, should have paid so little regard to the question, What age is intended? They generally assume without question that the Gospel or Messianic age is meant. But, according to the whole trend of Gospel teaching, that age had not come when Jesus uttered this prophecy. It was only 'near' or 'at hand.' Now the uniform teaching of the New Testament is that Christ's whole ministry fell in the end of the days, or last days of an age. But surely it was not in the end of the Messianic age; that age still stretches on into the indefinite future. It was toward the close of the Mosaic, Jewish or pre-Messianic eon, and near the beginning of the Christian eon, that God brought life and immortality to light by the Gospel revelation. If, now Christ and His apostles lived and laboured near the close of an eon, it is obviously an error to represent them as living in an eon which had not yet fully opened in their day, and which they spoke of as about to come.

"Here, then, arises a most important question in this discussion; namely: What was the end of the age of which Jesus spoke? The age itself was the pre-Messianic; for the New Testament writers never represent themselves as in the first days, or the beginning of the age, but in its last days. At what point, then, are we to understand ' the end ' ? Some have said, at the crucifixion, when Jesus said, It is finished; others designate the resurrection of Jesus; a few fix upon His ascension. But many teach that the day of Pentecost was the transition point where we must fix the end of the old dispensation and the beginning of the new. To all these theories alike there are two fatal objections.

(1) That they are irreconcilable with the statement of Jesus that the Gospel must be first preached unto all the nations before the end.

(2) That the apostles, long after the day of Pentecost, represent themselves living in the last days, and near the end of the age. It is a begging of the whole question, and a dogmatic assumption, to say as Stuart does that the ' last days ' in the New Testament denote the period of the Christian dispensation. Such a misuse of the phrase has no warrant
in the New Testament. The disciples recognised themselves its in the last times of an eon that was to be succeeded by the kingdom and glory of their Lord.. At what point, then, shall we understand the end? Was there any great crisis to mark such a, consummation or any notable sign by which the end of the pre-Messianic age might be known?

"Is it not strange that any careful student of our Lord's words should fail to understand His answer to this very question? The disciples asked, When shall it be? Jesus proceeded to foretell a variety of things which they would live to see. He also foretold the horrors of the siege of Jerusalem which we know to have been most accurately fulfilled; no prophecy of the downfall of the Jewish temple and metropolis could have been more explicit. But having told them of all these things, He added: 'When ye see these things coming to pass, know ye that it [or He] is nigh-at the door. Verily I say unto you, This generation shall not pass away until all these things be accomplished.' The ruin of the temple and its cults was the great sign which marked the end of the pre-Messianic age."

Dr. M.S. Terry, Methodist Review, 1887.


"The undeveloped cannot know the developed, though it may presage and expect it. Bisulphide of Carbon is aware of actinic rays invisible to us. Selenium swells to light which is not felt by our organization. A sensitised film at the end of the telescope photographs a million stars we did not see. The magnetic needle knows and obeys forces to which our most delicate nerves are absolutely dull.

"Birth gave to each of us much, death may give very much more, in the way of subtler senses to behold colours we cannot here see, to catch sounds we do not now hear, and to be aware of bodies and objects impalpable at present to us, but perfectly real, intelligibly constructed, and constituting an organised society and a governed, multi-formed state. Where does nature show signs of breaking off her magic, that she should stop at the five organs and the sixty or seventy elements?

"As the babe's eyes opened from the darkness of maternal safeguard to strange sunlight on this globe, so may the eyes of the dead lift glad and surprised lids to 'a light that never was on sea or land'; and so may his delighted ears hear speech and music proper to the spheres beyond, while he smiles contentedly to find how touch and taste and smell had all been forecasts of faculties accurately following upon the lowly lessons of this earthly nursery.'
"DEATH AND AFTERWARDS," pp. 31, 35, 37, 51

Appendix C  On the phrase 'The Lord's Day.'

"After the fullest consideration of the remarkable expression in Rev 1.10, we are satisfied that it cannot refer to the first day of the week, but that those interpreters are right who understand it to refer to the period called elsewhere 'the day of the Lord.' There is no example in the New Testament of the first day of the week [Sunday] being called 'the Lord's day,' or 'the day of the Lord.' But the latter phrase is appropriated and restricted by usage to the great judicial period which is constantly represented in Scripture as associated with the Parousia. Nothing could be more violent than to refer the one phrase to one period or day, and the other to a totally different one. The phrase 'the day of the Lord' had a fixed and definite meaning in the apostolic churches. See 1 Cor 1.8; 5.5; 2 Cor 1.14; 2 Thess 2.2; 2 Peter 3.10 On the score of the grammar we prefer the construction, 'I was in spirit in the day of the Lord.' That is to say, the Parousia, is the standpoint of the Seer in the Apocalypse: a fact which is amply borne out by the contents."

DR. STUART RUSSELL, The Parousia, p 372. (See the Preface.)

Appendix D  The Fragmentary Character of History.

Very striking are the words which Goethe puts into the mouth of Faust on this Subject

To us, my friend, the times that are gone by
Are a mysterious book, sealed with seven seals.
That which you call the spirit of ages past
Is but, in truth, the spirit of some few authors
In which those ages are beheld reflected,
With what distortion strange, Heaven only knows.
Oh, often what a toilsome thing it is
This study of thine I At the first glance we fly it.
A mass of things confusedly heaped together;
A lumber-room of dusty documents,
Furnished with all-approved court-precedents,
And old, traditional maxims I History!
Facts dramatized, say rather-action-plot-
Sentiment-every thing the writer's own,
As best befits the web-work of his story;
With here and there a solitary fact
Of consequence, by those grave chroniclers.
Pointed with many a moral apopthegm;:

Faust (Anster's Translation).
And wise old saws, learned at the puppet-shows.” And Mr. J. A. Froude has somewhere said, "It often seems to me as if History was like a child's box of letters with which we can spell any word we please. We have only to pick out such letters as we want, arrange them as we like, and say nothing about those which do not suit our purpose."

Appendix E  "The Kingdom of God."

The Power and Spiritual Kingship which come to us through absolute Self-Surrender to Christ and God

There are those to whom Jesus Christ is a great Teacher, a splendid Example, a kind Friend, and a merciful Saviour, but not quite their King - the Lord and Ruler of their lives - to whose authority and will they are prepared at all times to yield submission and obedience. He has a worthy place in their hearts, but their religion is as yet a poor, imperfect thing, because (after all) that place is not the supreme place which is His by divine right. In other words, they keep back something from Him.

They love Him, not a little, it may be, but they love friends or home, money or ease, knowledge or fame, music or art, yet more. And unknown, perhaps, to themselves, this is a continual source of secret weakness and misery to them. "The Holy Spirit," in the full New Testament sense of the words—that Spirit who brings into human nature the very life of God Himself-has not yet been given them, because Jesus has not yet been glorified in their experience (John 7.39). But a perfect surrender to Christ and God is always followed by a wonderful accession of spiritual strength to the man who makes it. He gains new power with God in prayer, new power for enduring pain and conquering adverse circumstances and ruling his own earthly nature, and he gains a vastly increased influence for good over others. The Kingdom of God means pre-eminence in goodness and usefulness, and by the act of faith and Self sacrifice by which we make Christ in very deed the Lord and Ruler of our lives we even here and now enter that Kingdom and become kings along with Him.

Appendix F  Prayer and the Holy Spirit.

The prayers of a man who is filled with the Holy Spirit cannot possibly fail. For his will necessarily moves along the same lines as the divine, almighty will.
The Christ Has Come

By Earnest Hampden-Cook

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Dear Peter,

Thank you for your letter of April 27 and the accompanying photocopy of the introduction and summary of Russell's book.

I haven't read this book and should be interested to see it (and Hampden Cook's) when available.

Another work which takes a similar line is Alexander Brown, The Great Day of the Lord (1894).

A scholar who was much influenced by Brown was Daniel Lamont, Professor in Edinburgh University, whom I knew. After his death in 1950, a volume of his - Studies in the Johannine Writings - was published in which he maintained that the Parousia took place 40 years after the resurrection of Jesus, that it was not identical with the destruction of the temple and city of Jerusalem, but an event in the unseen world which took place at the same time (and which included the resurrection of the just; since then, believers at death have gone immediately into the Lord's presence, receiving their 'spiritual bodies' forthwith).

With all good wishes:

Yours ever,

F.F. Bruce
An Extract from

Christ and the World of Thought

by

Daniel Lamont

Professor of Practical Theology
New College
Edinburgh

Publishers T & T Clark
We are not concerned in this study with what may have been the meaning of conventional apocalyptic…. But now our second criticism of these two schools is that both of them uncritically assume either that Jesus predicted "the end of the world" as close at hand, even within that generation, or that His disciples mistakenly supposed Him to have predicted it. This assumption is made not only by the two extreme schools in question but also by the majority of modern theologians and New Testament scholars. In spite of all this authority we venture to hold that it is a huge misunderstanding.

Let it be admitted that Jesus did predict an event of cosmic significance, which was to occur within the lifetime of some who listened to His words.

To what kind of event did He refer? That is the whole question. The assumption with which we join issue varies in particulars, but in general it is to the effect that Jesus expected, or was supposed by His disciples to have expected, that He would return in Person to the earth within that generation, execute judgment upon His enemies, transform the course of nature, and reign over a pure and undying race. In short, the existing physical order was to terminate in something like forty years from the time of the prediction. Such a change did not occur, and so the assumption passes on to the inference that Jesus was mistaken or else that His disciples reported Him wrongly.

This alleged mistake is often pointed to with the finger of scorn by enemies of Christianity, by Christian theologians it is minimized; it was an error which did not affect the substance of the faith; the faith indeed proved its vitality by triumphing over the "disappointment" caused by the non-occurrence of the predicted event; and so on. Even so clear and profound a theologian as Emil Brunner follows the device to which resort has often been made¹... that "in the literal sense the critics are right: Jesus and the Apostles did identify this 'soon' with a point in the time-series; and this definition of a special time has proved to be incorrect. But no one who is quite unsophisticated is likely to be satisfied with such minimizing. If Jesus or His Apostles made the alleged mistake, we can hardly object to some honest minds putting them, in this particular matter, on a level with those earnest but misguided souls who, down through Christian history, have predicted "the Second Coming" for some date in the near future, and have thereby fortified millions in their skepticism.

No truth-loving person can very well deny that the four portraits of Jesus given us in the four Gospels reveal One who, even "according to the flesh," possessed incomparable balance of mind. Is it likely that this balance forsook Him in the matter which we are now discussing?

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¹. The Mediator, p. 421 (note).
One can hold very strongly that it would not be like the Jesus whom we otherwise know, to commit Himself to a very definite time-prediction (not "the day or the hour," but the generation) unless He had the best of reasons to know that it would be fulfilled. This conviction forces one to examine the prediction very closely to make sure that one has understood its meaning. It is possible, after such an examination, to come to the conclusion that the mistake is not in the apostolic tradition but in an interpretation of it which, beginning very early, has persisted until today. Even in New Testament times we have evidence of it. The difficult verse in the Appendix to St. John's Gospel which runs; "Then went this saying abroad among the brethren that that disciple should not die," seems meant to serve as the apostolic correction of the very misinterpretation of which we are speaking. Note the distinction between "brethren" and disciple. The Second Epistle of Peter also, which is probably the latest document of the New Testament, bears traces of the misinterpretation.

The time has come for New Testament scholarship to apply itself to the task of disentangling the apostolic tradition in eschatology from the misunderstandings which arose so early and which still cast their shadow upon the Faith of the Church. What did Jesus predict for the close of His own generation? Certainly not the end of the world in the commonly accepted sense of that phrase. The translation of the New Testament phrase "the consummation of the age" by "the end of the world" is proof of the bondage of our translators to the misinterpretation. Jesus never once foretold, nor is He ever reported to have foretold, the end of the world in that generation.

But His prediction had reference to something of cosmic significance. What was it? It was essentially something in the unseen world. It would be accompanied by repercussions upon the earth, signs which any eye could see, in particular the judgment upon the Jewish race. But in its essence it could be discerned by Faith alone. It was to be the completion of His redeeming and revealing work. Not till His Parousia, which means His Presence but not His bodily Presence on earth, would the work which His Father had given Him to do produce its full benefit to Faith.

His Parousia would mark the end of the age then in progress and the inauguration of the final age when everything that is human would be judged by its relation to Him and when all who believed on Him would immediately pass, at death, into His Presence. The standpoint of the New Testament is in "the last days" of the old age. The forty years or so during which the work of the Apostles was accomplished were no doubt regarded by them as the last days of the old order because they had the word of

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1. John 21. 23
Jesus for it. During that time the Parousia of Jesus was believed by them to be ever more imminent. In one of his later letters St. Paul writes: "The Lord is at hand." The vindication of the above interpretation of the Parousia of Jesus would require a volume all to itself. But an outline of the argument may be attempted here. I shall indicate it under four heads.

1. Man's redemption finds its completion in the redemption of his body, and this completion is one part of the essence of the Parousia of Jesus. In the last days of the old order believers at death "slept" in Christ. In the new order believers at death would "wake" at once into His Presence.

The Thessalonian Christians were troubled at the thought of their friends passing away before the age of the Parousia arrived. St. Paul comforts them with the assurance that those who survive and live on into the "Parousia" will not anticipate [go before] those who die before the new age arrives. When the new age comes in, those who have already fallen asleep in Christ will at once enter His Presence in their full risen life. They will be the first to "rise."

Those who live on into the age of the Parousia will not "sleep" at all. At death they will "wake" at once into the Presence of the Lord. This is surely the grammatical sense of 1 Thess 4.15-17, though our Authorized translators have obscure it, as they have obscured the whole subject, through their obsession by the old misinterpretation. St. Paul's use of apocalyptic language in the 17th verse has misled many into supposing his meaning to be that believers who survived at the Parousia would not die at all but be instantaneously caught up into glory. But what he means, as is plain from the whole context, is that those who live on into the age of the Parousia will pass at once, when they die, into the Presence of the Lord, to be gathered there with their loved ones concerning whom they were needlessly anxious. When, later in this epistle St. Paul uses the words: "whether we wake or sleep," he does not mean "whether we escape death or not," but "whether we die in the Parousia-age or before it comes." In any case they have to die. St. Paul never suggests that he or any one else will not die. He always takes death for granted. The trouble is that we read the customary interpretation, which I regard as the old misinterpretation, into his words. But St. Paul is not responsible for that.

We cannot appreciate the New Testament emphasis upon the Parousia of Jesus so long as we lack the seriousness of the New Testament thought of death. In our age, when the body has come to mean so much and the soul so little, we are apt to feel that the only serious thing about death is

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1. Phil 4. 5 2. 1 Thess 5.10
the dissolution of the body. This feeling springs from the double illusion that the soul is of little or no consequence and that God does not matter. There is no illusion of that kind in the New Testament. Death is not simply pathetic; it is tragic; and the tragedy lies here, that death cuts away all the earthly props on which we have been leaning and leaves the soul in naked guilt before the living God.

Many people of to-day boast openly of their superiority to this aspect of the fear of death. They suppose that they have got above God. In their own way they have robbed death of its sting. But what they have really done is to take the frozen serpent, sting and all, into their bosoms. With "man's unconquerable levity" they laugh at death while they are still on this side of it. But no laugh can alter the fact of sin or the fact of death or the fact of God.

It is not the passing out from life that makes death so serious; it is the passing into another form of life. So Jesus assumed, and the Apostles preached, and those who heard them believed. The fear of death borrows its dark colour from the fear of God. That is the same thing as saying that "the sting of death is sin." Into this plight of sinful man came the sinless Son of God. In what Emil Brunner has called the self-movement of God, Christ came from God and returned to God. His coming to man was not complete until He had returned to God, and His Parousia was the final term in His return to God. It was then that the age of His Presence was born He had prepared a place for His own people. The familiar words, "I go to prepare a place for you," ¹ are a statement of the supreme eschatological fact for Faith, expressed in spatial rather than in apocalyptic terms.

The children of this world scoff at both kinds of terms, but Faith understands. When that place was prepared, death was robbed of its sting for all who were and are in Christ. The last enemy was destroyed. The Apostles, living as they did in the last days of the old age, were lyrical in their prospect of it; and if our Faith is like theirs, we too must rejoice that it happened as Jesus had foretold.

2. A formal difficulty arises in connection with the forty years or so, which elapsed between our Lord's Resurrection and His Parousia. Why so long a time? Many are reconciled to the third day for His Resurrection who are not so easily reconciled to the fortieth year for His Presence. We make no attempt to explain the delay, for while it impinges upon the Time-series it is essentially transcendent. But there are certain historical circumstances which fit in to the fact of this delay and which have a reconciling effect upon the mind. Israel as a whole

¹. John 14. 2.
had to get its chance before being judged. The Jews were responsible for the rejection of Jesus, but the entire Jewish race could not be incriminated. The bulk of it was scattered over the Roman Empire; and Israel as a race had yet to prove how it would react to the Gospel of a Crucified and Risen Messiah. **To give Israel its opportunity was the first task of the Apostles.** From the words of Jesus Himself and from the words and actions of the Apostles we can gather the urgency of the command of Jesus that the Gospel should be preached to the Jew first and then to the whole world. Israel must have its full opportunity before the telos [end], and that meant the work of a generation at least. Jesus counted upon the fidelity and zeal of His followers.

This brings us to another historical consideration which possesses even greater weight. The Revelation in Christ had to be completed by His Apostles. It is amazing that this fact receives so little attention from theologians. As St. Paul puts it, the Apostles were the foundation of the. Christian edifice, Jesus Christ Himself being the duel cornerstone. This was the apostolic view of the matter. In another connection we have emphasized the simple fact that there can be no Revelation unless there is Faith to receive it. The Faith is an integral part of the Revelation itself. Otherwise it would be a theophany and no Revelation. **It was the momentous task of the Apostles, as first-hand witnesses, to receive the Revelation and hand it on by their testimony to others.** If they had failed in their task, which of course is an empty hypothesis, there would have been no Revelation, no Gospel, no Church. Conceivably they might have failed in either of two ways: by a misunderstanding of the Person and Work of Jesus, or by a failure to be faithful when days of persecution arose.

As to the former, there is **not a single hint** in the New Testament of any fear that Jesus might have been misinterpreted by His Apostles. As to the latter, their fidelity could only be proved by time and life and death, and it was so proved to the utmost. They gave their lives for Jesus and the Gospel. Everything depended upon their being true, and they knew it. Their life work was indispensable to the Revelation. The earthly work of Jesus was not complete till their work was done, and the dawn of the Parousia marked that completion. Nowhere is clearer and nobler expression given to all this than in the twelfth chapter of the Book of Revelation. The apocalyptic form ought not to conceal the spiritual fact. There, after the Resurrection of Jesus is referred to, Satan is represented as being conquered in heaven and cast out. This is an echo from a word of Jesus: 1 "I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven." Satan had been busy accusing the brethren before God, no doubt bringing up to date his

1. Luke 10.18
old taunt made familiar by the Book of Job: "**Wait till the persecution comes; these fellows will then curse Jesus to His face.**" This is followed by one of the most triumphant passages in all literature: "**And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death.**"¹ Note the emphatic *they*. Michael and his angels conquered Satan in heaven; the *brethren* conquered him on earth. They finished their work victoriously. Meanwhile, there is a loud voice in heaven. "**Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of His Christ.**"² Here, as elsewhere in the Book of Revelation, the completion of Christ's work on earth is identified with the completion of the apostolic testimony. According to the apostolic Faith, "the self-movement of God" which constituted the Christian Revelation had for its outstanding peaks the Birth, Baptism, Cross, Resurrection, and Parousia of Jesus. These all transcended history, but all had their counterpart within history.

3. It is surprising that this line of thinking with regard to the Parousia of Jesus has been so little explored. It has its difficulties, of course, but any other interpretation has much more serious difficulties, and this one has the advantage of preserving the unity and reliability of the New Testament.

It was powerfully sketched a generation ago by Alexander Brown of Aberdeen in his book entitled *The Great Day of the Lord*. This book, after passing through two editions, went out of print. Like most books it had its blemishes, and Dr. Brown was not regarded as in the front line of scholarship. But for incisive: thought, moral passion, and spiritual insight I have read no book to compare with it in its own field.

*Dr. Hastings of dictionary fame reckoned it to be the truest of all expositions of the Book of Revelation,*

but scholarship in general passed it by on the other side. Why do so many scholars and so many who are not scholars insist on assuming that Jesus and His Apostles were mistaken on this matter? To the New Testament at least it was a vital matter. New Testament scholars have not *proved* that Jesus is represented as predicting His early return to earth in a form which would be visible to every eye. His judgment upon Jerusalem would be visible to every eye, but that is very different. Nor have they *proved* that the New Testament represents Him as predicting an impending transformation of the existing physical order. They merely assume it. The assumption that the Parousia, in its essence, was something which any eye might see, and which, because no eye did see it, was therefore an unfulfilled expectation, has been so widespread from early times to our own day that it must have its roots in

1. Rev 12.2    2. Rev 12.10
our common human nature. I suspect that prosaic literalism is one of these roots. Let us see how influential this has been in generating the assumption in question. **Much of our modern scholarship is given to interpreting figuratively things in the New Testament which are meant to be taken literally and to interpreting literally things which are meant to be taken figuratively.**

It was natural that, when the Apostles passed away, apocalyptic language should tend to be **misinterpreted by the Greek mind, and perhaps still more by the Latin mind.** This tendency may account for the fact that St. John's Gospel, while preserving the apocalyptic facts, avoids apocalyptic language as far as possible.

**We have substantial proof that Jesus did not take the scenery of apocalyptic literally but used it with the utmost freedom.** To take only one instance, **Elijah was expected to return to earth** before Messiah came, and Jesus, when challenged by His disciples on the point, replied in effect that it was quite true about Elijah coming, but that **he had already come.** And St. Matthew adds "**Then the disciples understood that He spake unto them of John the Baptist.**"¹ That is to say, not only did Jesus use apocalyptic scenery very freely, but His disciples also came to understand that He did so. They were not likely to be literalists in such matters. The question which they put to Jesus regarding the predicted destruction of the Temple is illuminating in this connection. "**When shall these things be ? And that shall be the sign of Thy Parousia and consummating the age ?**"² Note that there are **two questions** here, the first relating to events expected to be visible such as the destruction of the Temple, the second relating to events of a different kind which they presumed would be invisible. Indeed, the invisible events referred to in the second question are but one event. Grammatically, "**Thy Parousia**" and "**Thy consummating of the age**" must be regarded as one thing. The Parousia of Jesus would, in the disciples’ minds, be His consummating of the age. But the important point is that these disciples already distinguished between coming events which would be visible and those which would be invisible. Their double question is almost equivalent to: **"Will the destruction of the Temple be one of the signs of Thy Parousia."** For a "**sign**" in the New Testament is not a prelude to something afterwards to occur, but a visible accompaniment of something which is invisible. Their question therefore suggested the possibility of the Parousia arriving without any one knowing it.

The answer of Jesus bears out this interpretation of the disciples' question. **The destruction of the Temple would indeed be part of the**

1. Matt 17.13  
2. Matt 24.3 (exact translation).
The sign of "the Son of Man in heaven" would be the judgment which was to fall upon Jerusalem and the Jews. Here He uses apocalyptic scenery, such as "the stars shall fall from heaven," but only a pitiful prosiness could imagine that Jesus meant an actual dropping of the stars upon the earth. Indeed it is about as certain as any such thing can be that not only He, but also apocalyptic in general, meant by this impressive figure that the moral and spiritual standards by which the chosen people had lived would be laid in the dust. And so it came to pass.

This was the inward side of the Jewish apocalypse. Josephus tells us how incredibly depraved the religious leaders of the Jews had become before Jerusalem was destroyed, and the Book of Revelation confirms the lurid tale by informing us that the Jerusalem of that day was spiritually called "Sodom and Egypt," synonyms for moral depravity and spiritual tyranny. Jerusalem and its Temple were in every way ripe for destruction. Jesus predicted all this and His disciples did not misunderstand Him. They neither misinterpreted His apocalyptic figures nor confused His Parousia with its outward signs. They could not well do so when He added: "When ye see all these things, know ye that He is nigh, even at the doors." The visible judgment was to mean that the Judge was there, invisible but very near.

It was to mean also that He was very near to Faith as Saviour. The age of His Parousia would then have arrived when, in addition to giving them victory over life. He would be ready to give them victory over death. "The coining of the Son of Man in the clouds" is the impressive apocalyptic figure

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1. "...Instantly there are all the signs which usher in the Day of the Lord. The darkened sun, the lurid moon, the showers of meteors, the shriveled heavens, the terror with which men call on the rocks and mountains to fall on them and hide them, are the metaphors of vast earthly changes and catastrophes. A first sight it might well seem as if they could describe nothing short of the final conflagration and ruin of the globe. But there is not one of these metaphors which is not found in the Old Testament prophets and in them they refer in every instance to the destruction of cities and the establishment of new covenants, or to other earthly revolutions. Not only had our Lord adopted these vivid Oriental symbols to describe the sign of His coming in the fall of Jerusalem and the close of the aeon..."

See Isa 2.12,19; 13.10; 34.3,4; 50.3; 63.4; Jer 4.23; Ezek 32,7,8; Joel 2.10,21; 3.4,15; Hos 10.8; Nah 1.6; Mal 3.2; etc The extent to which the Apostle borrows the phrases of the Old Testament may be seen by taking Rev 1.12-17, and comparing it phrase by phrase with Zech 4.2; Dan 7.13; 10.5; 7.9; 10.6,11,12; Isa 49.2; Ezek 43.2. Early days of Christianity by F W Farrar page 447/8

for the Son of Man executing judgment. The judgment is something to which none can be oblivious. The Jewish Apocalypse was also to be a time of supreme trial for the followers of Jesus and especially for His Apostles.

It is seldom recognized with precision that the Parousia had its two sides. It meant on the one hand that Jesus was now the Saviour of His people from death as well as from sin, and on the other hand that He was now Judge of all the earth. It was therefore something for Faith to rejoice in with joy unspeakable. At the heart of Faith was the "good hope through grace." But at the same time it was something whose advent was to be attended with sore trial for Christ's folk. The Apocalypse was to be like a Golgotha to them. The earnestness of Jesus in warning His disciples in view of the great tribulation is unmistakable. "Ye shall be hated of all men for My name's sake." "By your endurance ye shall win your souls."

They were never permitted to imagine that they would have an easy time in the approaching telos [end]. They would be persecuted, and most if not all of them would be killed before it came. Forewarned is forearmed. Jesus would be with them in the power of the Spirit and by this power they would conquer, but it would be a hard, hard battle. The idea which is so prevalent among modern writers that there was disappointment at the non fulfillment of the Lord's prediction is, so far at least as the Apostles were concerned, as remote from all the realities of the situation as any idea could be.

How could they be disappointed when they expected nothing else and got nothing else than contumely and persecution from the world, and when they lived and died in the greatest of all faiths and the brightest of all hopes? Their triumph was to be through tribulation. The last days were days of increasing trouble and of increasing triumph. In the language of the Epistle to the Hebrews, "the powers of the impending age"\(^1\) were already at the disposal of men of faith. And those men of Faith were actually completing the Revelation of God in Jesus. Of course they were doing it by the power of Jesus Himself. One feels that in this whole question of Christian eschatology we have to begin again at the alphabet of the New Testament.

4. The last consideration to be mentioned in connection with this subject is that the foregoing interpretation of the Parousia does not preclude the idea of a final judgment of mankind. This world will of course come to an end, and the New Testament is no stranger to the fact. But I have been dealing only with our Lord's definite prediction of an impending cosmic event. That event, in its essence, could only be known by Faith. The

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1. Heb. vi. 5 (exact translation).
Apostles expected it and rejoiced in the expectation, and we should accept it as an accomplished fact and rejoice in the experience of it. We are in the age of the Parousia. Faith can know the Presence of Christ to the utmost that is possible under earthly conditions and Hope can confidently expect to enter His nearer Presence when our day's work is done. We should set no limits to what His Presence can mean to us now, but even at the best it is only an earnest and foretaste of what He will mean to us by and by.

It is important to recognize that the Parousia is an age. It began in an event, if we can rightly speak thus of something which, while it impinges upon history, essentially transcends history. The Parousia is the Presence of Jesus, to Faith during this earthly life, and "face to face" in the life which is to come. Its beginning, according to the prediction of Jesus, was to be attended with judgment upon Israel.

But that was only the first term in the series of judgment. The other terms of the series would follow in due course. All the nations would be liable to similar historical judgment, now that the age of His Presence had come; they would in every case stand or fall by their attitude to Him. All judgment upon the earth was committed to Him. It is particularly in the Book of Revelation that there looms up the picture of a more distant judgment of the whole Time series. That judgment will be both the teles and the termination of the existing temporal order. In this age of His Parousia, Christ judges progressively "all nations and kindreds and peoples and tongues," but this process will take end in the final judgment of the temporal order itself. How long that will be in coming is no concern of ours, for Revelation does not tell us.

What it does tell us is to make our calling and election sure, so that we enter not into condemnation but into salvation. It ought not to be necessary to add that the judgment upon the Jewish race, foretold by Jesus and fulfilled in the year A.D. 70, does not mean that the Gospel is less free to the Jew than it is to any one else. It is an unwarranted and wicked idea that the curse of God rests upon the Jew. It would be an impertinence even to mention such an idea were it not that the behaviour of many nations, sometimes in the name of Christianity itself, seems to be rooted in it. Judgment by the Son of Man began at the House of God, and since the Son of Man was Himself of the seed of David, it is true to say that judgment is from the Jews.

But it is Jesus Himself who reminds us\(^1\) that salvation also is from the Jews. Jews were the first to receive the Revelation and to know salvation; Jews were also the first to suffer judgment as a race in the new age. That

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1. John 4.22
judgment was the termination of their special religions privilege and leadership. The destruction of the Temple was an instrument as well as a symbol of the universalizing of Christianity. Renan tells us dispassionately that if the Temple had not been destroyed Christianity could not have been more than a mere appendage of Judaism. But the classical statement of the liberation of the Gospel from the trammels of Judaism is in the Book of Revelation. In reference to the events of A.D. 70 we are there told that "the temple of God was opened in heaven."¹

Indeed this whole picture, which makes the close of the earthly temple coincide with the opening of the heavenly one, is a true and graphic, epitome of the whole New Testament doctrine of the Parousia. The purpose of this rough sketch of the relation between ethic and apocalyptic may not be immediately apparent. But it is my conviction that the comparative ineffectiveness of modern Protestantism is due to indecision, and that this indecision is bound up with the loss of the New Testament eschatological sense. New Testament eschatology, its doctrine of the Last Things, is interpenetrated with the idea of apocalypse. This idea, quite apart from the scenery in which it is embodied, is absolutely indispensable to Christianity. It is a voice declaring the tremendous urgency of the Present. It is an authentic and authoritative voice. It is the very voice of God. It declares, first, what every one is capable of hearing, that the Present is pregnant both with Past and Future, that we carry our whole past along with us, and that we are pressing on inexorably to a goal ahead.

Our souls are making for something stupendously momentous. And it declares, next, what Faith alone can hear. that the whole urgency of the Present is concentrated in the fact of Jesus Christ. His Parousia, which is His Presence, makes the Present what it really is. The Present is that in which we have to do with One who is Saviour and Judge. If we decline to have Him as Saviour, then we must have Him as Judge. Our telos will reveal to every one of us which of the two choices we have made. The Day will declare it. The Present is the moment of decision, and decision is the theme to which this chapter tends.

¹. Rev 11.19
The Parousia

By James Stuart Russell

“No Attentive reader of the New Testament can fail to be struck with the prominence given by the evangelists and the apostles to the PAROUSIA, or 'coming of the Lord.' That event is the great theme of New Testament prophecy. There is scarcely a single book, from the Gospel of St. Matthew to the Apocalypse of St. John, in which it is not set forth as the glorious promise of God and the blessed hope of the church. It was frequently and solemnly predicted by our Lord; it was incessantly kept before the eyes of the early Christians by the apostles; and it was firmly believed and eagerly expected by the churches of the primitive age.

The rash predictions of those who have too confidently undertaken to be interpreters of prophecy, and the discredit consequent on the failure of their predictions, have no doubt deterred reverent and soberminded men from entering upon the investigation of 'unfulfilled prophecy.' On the other hand, there is reason to think that rationalistic criticism has engendered doubts whether the predictions of the New Testament were ever intended to have a literal or historical fulfilment.

Between rationalism on the one hand, and irrationalism on the other, there has come to be a widely prevailing state of uncertainty and confusion of thought in regard to New Testament prophecy, which to some extent explains, though it may not justify, the consigning of the whole subject to the region of hopelessly obscure and insoluble problems.

This, however, is only a partial explanation. It deserves consideration whether there may not be a fundamental difference between the relation of the church of the apostolic age to the predicted Parousia and the
relation to that event sustained by subsequent ages. The first Christians undoubtedly believed themselves to be standing on the verge of a great catastrophe, and we know what intensity and enthusiasm the expectation of the almost immediate coming of the Lord inspired. The same event cannot be imminent at two different periods separated by nearly two thousand years. There must, therefore, be some grave misconception on the part of those who maintain that the Christian church of to-day occupies precisely the same relation, and should maintain the same attitude, towards the 'coming of the Lord' as the church in the days of St. Paul.

The present volume is an attempt, in a candid and reverent spirit, to clear up this misconception, and to ascertain the true meaning of the Word of God on a subject which holds so conspicuous a place in the teaching of our Lord and His apostles. It is the fruit of many years of patient investigation, and the Author has spared no pains to test to the utmost the validity of his conclusions. It has been his single aim to ascertain what saith the Scripture, and his one desire to be governed by a loyal submission to its authority. The Bible is a book for every man, and the Author has not written for scholars and critics only, but for the many who are deeply interested in Biblical interpretation."

This book is available on the Web at Amazon and the preteriest web site.

www.preteristarchive.com/books/russell

AUTHOR PROFILE

James Stuart Russell (1816-1895), son of a pious Scotsman, born at Elgin, Morayshire, England, November 28, 1816. Entered King's College, Aberdeen, at the early age of twelve, and at eighteen took his M.A. degree. Served in a lawyer's office for a short time. Then, having begun to read with a view to the ministry, he studied in Edinburgh and Glasgow, and ultimately in Cheshunt College. In June 1843 Russell settled at the Congregational Church in Great Yarmouth, first as assistant minister and next as successor to the Rev. Alexander Creak. In 1857 he moved to the congregational Church in Tottenham and Edmonton. While holding that charge, he visited Belfast to observe the great Irish Revival, and came under its influence. After five years in the second church, Russell was attracted to a new church in Bayswater, whose chapel on Lancaster Road was built in 1866. Here he served until his retirement toward the close of 1888.