

The Magnitude and Awfulness of the Advent

“Every bondman, and every freeman, hid themselves in the dens and in the rocks of the mountains; and said to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of Him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb: for the great day of His wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand?” Rev. 6:15-17.

DESCRIBING the end of the world, the apostle Peter declares: “The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some men count slackness; but is long-suffering to usward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance. But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up. Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness?” 2 Peter 3:9-11.

Our church membership may be roughly divided into four groups as regards the second advent. The first group consists of those who, because the Lord has not come as soon as they thought He ought to come, have begun to doubt the fact of His coming, have begun to question very seriously whether or not the Lord will ever come. That group need to remember that though the Lord is long-suffering and

should conjure up in our minds all the most fearful catastrophes that we can recall, whether earthquakes, fires, pestilences, or famines, we would obtain but a faint suggestion of what is soon to take place right here on this earth and before our eyes.

Think of that dreadful catastrophe that occurred years ago in San Francisco—fire and earthquake. Think of Vesuvius pouring out its stream of death upon men and women. Think of all the dreadful things that have occurred. Add them together, multiply them to the greatest degree possible, and you have something that pales into insignificance in comparison with what will take place when God finally arises to shake terribly the earth.

Some time ago we read a story written by a scientist regarding what would take place if an earthquake shook New York City, and all the inhabitants of those great skyscrapers suddenly stampeded and rushed out. It was estimated that they would be three deep down there in those narrow streets, and the large majority, even if they escaped from the buildings, would be trampled to death. The Scripture says that the great cities of the nations will fall when the final dreadful earthquake takes place.

The second coming of Christ is so real and so definite that it means the shattering and shaking of the earth beneath our very feet. As the tragedy of sin draws to a close, the inanimate earth is convulsed. For six thousand years this earth has had to bear up under the burden of sinful, blasphemous men who have defiled it and defamed the name of Him who created it.

There is only one event in the history of man that can even faintly compare with this, and that is the deluge,—that fearful flood of water that rushed over the whole earth, sweeping everything before it, and causing even Satan himself to shudder for fear his own destruction was at hand! But the flood was as nothing compared with what will take place at the second coming of Jesus Christ. The flood was a physical manifestation. At the second advent, not only will the cities fall and the earth shudder under our feet, but there will also be a moral and spiritual manifestation, the like of which has never been witnessed before in all the six thousand years of earth's history.

At the second coming of Christ the veil that has separated us from the invisible spiritual world is to be removed. The veil that has kept our physical eyes from observing the dreadful controversy that has raged between the forces of good and evil, will be parted. This whole earth in those last closing hours will be given over to the powers of evil. That has never occurred before in the history of the earth. When God's Spirit is finally withdrawn from the earth, evil spirits will have full control.

No one can adequately visualize what will occur on this earth when Satan is finally given control. Evil angels will work supernatural wonders. They will go forth to the kings of the earth to gather them for the last terrible battle, and as a climax, Satan himself will impersonate Jesus Christ! Think of it—Satan incarnate! The eyes of men and women will actually look upon the face of him who has been the

leader in this fearful rebellion through all the history of mankind. That is what is to take place in connection with the second advent of Jesus Christ. Yet that is but a prelude, for man is not only to look upon the face of Satan himself, but to look upon the face of God.

It is impossible for any of us to realize even faintly what is comprehended in the statement that we shall look upon the face of God Himself. The heavens will part, and as all the world gazes upward, every eye will look upon the face of Jesus Christ, and upon the faces of countless thousands of angels. That sight in the heavens will cause men far more terror than the sights that will have been confronting them on the earth, dreadful as those sights will have been. For it is when evil men gaze upon the face of God that the scripture is fulfilled which says: "The kings of the earth, and the great men, and the rich men, and the chief captains, and the mighty men, and every bondman, and every freeman, hid themselves in the dens and in the rocks of the mountains; and said to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of Him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb: for the great day of His wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand?" Rev. 6:15-17.

To hide them from what? Not from earthquakes, not from the terrible things on the earth. They are even hoping that the rocks and mountains will fall upon them, because they want to be hid from *the face of God*. All the great men, all the brave men, all the men who have faced battle, who have braved

the most terrible things that this world can present,—those men fall in terror simply at the sight of God. How awful, then, is that event! The reason they fall is that the terrors of conscience take hold upon them—the terrors of an accusing conscience before God. The guilty man realizes that he is guilty, hopelessly guilty, and that nothing is hid from the eye of God—*nothing*.

"The Great Controversy," describing that dreadful event, says that from time to time the dark clouds in the heavens were parted, and the sun came out for a little while in all its brilliance, as if it were the accusing eye of God searching out men and women everywhere. Nothing is hid from the brightness of God, a brilliance so great, so blinding, that it finally consumes men.

There are a few faint comparisons in the history of the world. There have been a few occasions when the brilliance of God has broken forth to a certain extent. At times an angel has come down with great power. Think of Jesus Christ in the Garden of Gethsemane when all the rabble fell back, as it were dead, because of one momentary flash of glory. Then at the tomb of Christ, when one angel came down, all the hardened Roman soldiery fell back as dead. Afterward they quaked so at the very memory of it that they could scarcely make their way to the city to tell their story. If one lone angel, reflecting power and light from the presence of God, could make all the Roman soldiery fall back as dead, what will it be when God Himself and all the innumerable hosts of heaven stand fully revealed?

We have another illustration. At Mt. Sinai God came down as a consuming fire on the top of the mountain. But even that was very circumscribed. No man saw the face of God then. But limited as was that scene, the people were terror stricken, and pleaded with Moses, You speak with us, and tell us the words of God, "but let not God speak with us, lest we die." Of the million or two people present around that mountain, God found only one man, Moses, to whom He could say, "Come up to Me into the mount." And the record is that Moses gat him up into the mount, and the top of the mount was like a consuming fire. Moses lived in such close association with God that, unafraid, he walked up the side of that mountain into the consuming cloud, and talked with God.

Are we ready to go up into the mountain? If we had been back there with Moses, could it have been said of us as it was of Moses, that we gat us up into the mountain, that we were not terror stricken at the sight, that we were so conscious of walking with God and communing with Him day by day, that we longed for closer fellowship and closer communion with Him? Or, to put it in another way, are you, who are reading this book, ready to look upon the face of God? *Are* you? There are going to be some who *will* look upon the face of God, and will not flee in terror. There are some who are going to lift up their heads and look upon the face of God, and rejoice that their redemption draweth nigh. We repeat, *Are you* ready to look upon the face of God?

*Are You Ready to
Stand Before God's
Judgment Bar?*