

8. THE GREATEST EVENT IN HISTORY

WHILE STANDING in the Capitol Building, Washington, D. C., one day, we gazed high up into the dome where are inscribed Tennyson's immortal lines:

“One God, One Law, One Element —
And one far—off Divine Event—
To which the whole creation moves.”

That one supreme event toward which all creation moves and toward which all history is tending, is the second coming of Christ.

Nineteen centuries ago, our Lord entered this world via Bethlehem's manger. He remained here thirty-three years, and then returned to the world of glory and light whence He came. His first advent is the greatest and most important fact in human history — so great that today all history is reckoned as before or after His birth. (BC or AD). We have noted that Jesus Christ, the Son of God, by reason of that visit, and by what He did and taught while here, became and has remained the greatest figure of all time.

It naturally follows, then, that the most important announcement that one could bring to the people of this generation is that He who has wielded such great influence in human affairs, is about to appear in this world the second time. On His first visit to this planet, He laid the foundation of human salvation. When He returns He will put into effect the eternal principles of His kingdom, and he will establish righteousness, justice, and equity in all the earth.

While this may all sound fanciful and improbable to many, it is, nevertheless, no cunningly devised fable. Our Lord will surely come again. In fact, we say on the authority of God's Word, that the second advent of Christ is an absolute, assured certainty. There is nothing more positive and certain in God's program for the salvation of mankind. Events all about us, in fulfillment of Bible prophecy, are shaping with amazing positiveness to this very end. Yes, Tennyson was right when he wrote, “One far-off divine event to which the whole creation moves,” with the exception that that event is not now so far off.

Every person who believes in God, every person who accepts Jesus and would be counted as a Christian, every person who holds the Bible to be God's Word, must believe in the second coming of Christ and that He will return in the near future. This doctrine is one of the outstanding teachings in the Bible which is the foundation of our Christian belief. I suppose no subject of the Scriptures is more pronounced or more clearly stated than this one, for there are at least three hundred positive statements regarding the second coming of Christ in the New Testament alone. It would appear that every writer insists upon it, so it is not a matter of interpretation.

When we deal with this subject, we are dealing with one of incontrovertible fact. Jesus Christ is coming again, and what is more, He is coming in our time, and if we understand the Bible aright, His coming will change the face of this world. His coming will solve all the vexing problems facing the nations just now. His coming will usher in an eternal kingdom of peace. His coming will mark the inauguration of a new kingdom in which there will not be found any of the things that make this life so sad. His coming will mark the end of evil, sin, and suffering, and the bringing in of righteousness, peace, and everlasting joy.

In support of our contention that the Lord will come again, we read Hebrews 9:28: “So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for Him shall He appear the second time without sin unto salvation.” To those who are ready when He returns, this will be the greatest of all days in their experience, for it is recorded of them in Isaiah 25 that they will gaze heavenward in that glad day and say, “Lo, this is our God; we have waited for Him, and He will save us: this is the Lord; we have waited for Him, we will be glad and rejoice in His salvation.” Verse 9. So, to His followers who are waiting and praying for their Lord's return, this will be the culmination of their every hope, the realization of their every desire.

To others, however, His coming will be as a thief in the night, and they shall mourn when they ultimately view His appearing. John the revelator, in the sixth chapter of the Book of Revelation, has outlined the reaction of those who are not prepared to meet the Lord when he returns in all His

glory. Here it is recorded: “And the heaven departed as a scroll when it is rolled together; and every mountain and island were moved out of their places. And 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 free man, 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 sits on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb: [17] For the great day of his wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand?” Revelation 6:14-17. Now is the time to prepare our hearts for that great day, for whether the world approves or not, whether men desire Him or not, Jesus our blessed Lord and Redeemer is coming again.

Let us turn to God’s Word once more and see how absolutely certain these things are. We base our belief in the second coming on the authority of the infallible word of Jesus Himself. When Jesus says He is coming again the second time, that settles the matter forever for us, and Jesus has said just that. Immediately prior to His death upon the cross, He said to His disciples, “I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto Myself; that where I am, there you may be also.” John 14: 2, 3.

Here in the words of the greatest of all authorities, Jesus Himself, is a clear-cut unequivocal promise and pledge, the meaning of which there is no possibility of mistaking. “I will come again,” said our Lord. And in the twenty-eighth verse of John 14 He repeats this promise in these words, “I go away, and come again unto you.” To the unbelieving Pharisees and scribes just before His betrayal, He declared “You shall not see Me henceforth, till you shall say, Blessed is He that comes in the name of the Lord.” Matthew 23:39.

Replying to the questions of His disciples as to what would be the signs of His coming and of the end of the world — and those signs are all clearly outlined in Matthew 24 and Luke 21 — Jesus said, “Then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: . . . and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.” Matthew 24:30.

On another occasion, he said to His disciples, “the Son of man shall come in the glory of His Father with His angels.” Matthew 16:27. On the occasion of His trial, when adjured by the High Priest, Jesus replied, “Hereafter shall you see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven.” Matthew 26:64.

In the last chapter of the Bible, this same Jesus repeats three times to His servant John this great truth of His second coming: “Behold, I come quickly,” and “Behold, I come quickly,” and “Surely I come quickly.”

After reading these precious promises, it would seem only natural that every person who accepts Jesus as his guide and teacher must have a conviction created in his heart regarding the certainty of the second coming of Christ. These things admit of no doubt.

Not only did our Lord make these plain, positive statements giving assurance of His second coming, but during His public ministry He uttered many parables in which He forcefully presented this great truth.

In the parable of the ten virgins (Matthew 25), He admonishes His people, “Watch, therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of man comes.” And He appeals to every disciple to be ready.

In the same chapter, in the parable of the talents, He represents Himself as a man travelling into a far country who, before going away, delivered His affairs in this world — the work of human salvation — into the stewardship of His servants, giving them special privileges and opportunities to carry forward His work. Then He declares that after a long time He will come again and reckon with them all in a final judgment.

In the parable of the tares, recorded in Matthew 13, He plainly declares that the end of the world is to be connected with a work of separation between the righteous and the wicked, at the establishment of His kingdom.

In parable after parable, Jesus sets before the world in His public teaching, the truth of the coming of His kingdom, at which time final judgment of the world, and ultimate rendering of rewards and punishments, take place. In His model prayer, He taught His disciples to pray, “Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth as it is in heaven.” Plainly then, the immutable Word of God teaches the second coming of Christ. Nothing can prevent its occurrence. Unbelief will not hinder it. Opposition will not stop it. Fear of it will not keep it from coming, for it is predicted in the infallible Word of God.

In the early days of the last war when the German invasion was on, a bomb was dropped near the Warsaw Depot of one of the great Bible societies, blowing out windows and doors. Only one little pane of glass remained unshattered, on which was printed, "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but My Word shall not pass away." These words remained on that small fragment of glass for all to see during the long months and weary years of the war, and passers-by often took off their hats saying, "It is a miracle." Yes, and God's Word, too, is a miracle. We should thank Him every day for it, especially for those precious promises concerning our Lord's second coming.

It may be difficult for you to appreciate that fact that Christ is coming, and coming soon. Nevertheless, He will come, and we pray that you will be among those who will greet Him with joy when He returns.

A gentleman who lived on Long Island, New York, had for many years wanted to buy a good, reliable barometer. The price asked for these delicate instruments seemed more than he could afford; but one day in 1938, he satisfied his long ambition by buying a barometer made by a reputable firm. It was shipped to his home. You can imagine his disappointment when, after unpacking it, the instrument registered, "Hurricane." He shook it vigorously to dislodge the needle, but it still stayed on the "storm" area on the dial. He was not only disappointed, but he was angry, and returned the barometer to the firm with a strong letter of complaint. Upon returning to his Long Island home the next evening, he found his home was missing. The barometer was right. A hurricane had swept away his home and all he possessed.

Many people today are skeptical about the barometer of God's Word of prophecy; but, friends, a fair and impartial study of the prophecies will lead any honest man to discern that God's barometer has predicted present world conditions. We are living in that "storm" period immediately prior to the second advent. But beyond the storms and tempests there lies, in sunny peacefulness and rest, the glory that is to be revealed, the kingdom of the Most High, joy unspeakable, and life eternal. May God keep us calm as we face the future, and may His abiding presence be with us all as we keep on looking up till He comes to take us to our home above.

PRAYER: Dear heavenly Father, we thank Thee for the precious promise of our Lord's return. We are happy in the knowledge that soon all sin and sorrow will be removed from the earth for ever. Like the disciples of old, we pray again this day, "Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven." Grant that we might be there in that glad day, we pray in His precious name. Amen.
