

The Keystone of the Events of Future Prophetic Fulfilment
is the Second Coming of Christ.



“God’s Great Prophecies”

BOOK No. 2. LECTURES 3 & 4

3. IS CHRIST’S COMING Again a Reality
or a Mere Fancy?

4. THE SIGNS OF THE TIMES, or Is
CHRIST’S Coming at Hand?

The excitement and extreme abundance of Religious Propaganda of the present day makes it seem very appropriate that God’s people should consider “His Counsel” as revealed in the Prophetic Utterances of the Scriptures.

Many who have hitherto ignored prophecy altogether are eagerly turning to it today. It is, therefore, very necessary that certain directions and warnings should be given to those earnestly investigating. These two Lectures are thus quite appropriate.

LECTURE No. 3



Is Christ's Coming Again a Reality or a Mere Fancy?

*THE FIRST QUESTION OF ALL
PROPHETICAL STUDY*



Let the Reader fail to answer this first question and he can never hope to comprehend the Prophetic Utterances of GOD'S Word.

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Lo, He comes with clouds descending,
Once for favored sinners slain;
Thousand, thousand saints attending
Swell the triumph of His train.
Hallelujah! God appears on earth to reign.

Lift your heads, ye friends of Jesus,
Partners in His patience here,
Christ to all believers precious,
Lord of Lords, shall soon appear.
Mark the tokens
Of His Heavenly Kingdom here.

—*Charles Wesley.*

Lecture 3

IS CHRIST'S COMING AGAIN A REALITY OR A MERE FANCY?

One of the most important religious questions of modern times is the question of the topic of this lecture—

Is Christ's coming again a reality or a mere fancy?

It is the bounden duty of every intelligently sincere person to know whether this great cry of the present day, that the Lord Jesus is coming, has any truth in it or is mere rumor.

The attitude of the World at large should not be the criterion of our interest in it, because the World has not recognized the worth of Christ, or, if so, is very inconsistent in its attitude toward Him.

Let it be rumored that the King of England or the Prince of Wales, or the President of the United States, has serious intentions of visiting our city and what a stir it would make! Our leaders and civic authorities, and newspapers, would be all excitement. They would demand to know whether there was any truth in the matter or not. They would make elaborate preparations to welcome the distinguished visitor, and would call on the people in general to be prepared to do honor to him by turning out in crowds. We have seen this again and again.

But let it be declared that the Lord Jesus Christ, the King of Kings and Lord of Lords, is going to return again to this earth in all His glory and power, and what then? Do our leaders and those in authority over us demand to know the truth? Do they call upon the people in general to be prepared to do honor to this heavenly visitor? Ah, no! the world doesn't know Him. They are crying out today for peace, and will not recognize the Prince of Peace.

That is the strangely inconsistent attitude of the world for you! Your interest cannot be gauged by that. To you, interested people, I sound once more the midnight cry, "Behold, the Lord is coming again!" I want to say

this to you this afternoon: no person can fairly claim to have entered the field of Christian Revelation and truth who has not given this subject careful consideration enough to be able to say whether Christ's Second Coming is a reality or a fancy. It is surely most fitting that we should make this the opening enquiry of our Conference work this fall.

History Repeats Itself.

Students of the World's progress readily admit the principle that history is constantly repeating itself. Herein lies the value of historical study. We may learn what the result of certain attitudes and actions will be.

Now, I want you to note that there was a time about nineteen centuries ago, when the question of the first advent of the Messiah was practically in the same category as this of the Second Coming is today. From an historical point of view this fact is most instructive and interesting.

Over and over again the prophets had forewarned the people that the Messiah was to visit the world in a marvellous way. Away back in the Garden of Eden, the Lord God Himself gave utterance to this thought.

Gen 3: 15.—And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.

The Seed of the Woman, the Messiah, was to come into the world and be stung to death by the Serpent.

Then again, in the days when Israel were journeying out of Egypt to the Promised Land, about two thousand years before the birth of Christ, Moses, that grand old law-giver, whose system of jurisprudence has become fundamental to every form of good government, declared to the people—

Deut. 18: 15.—The Lord Thy God will raise up unto thee a prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me; unto Him ye shall hearken!

Israel must have realized from this that the Messiah was to be a man, born in their midst; a prophet, whose word was to be believed.

Time rolled on, and this message was repeated again and again with greater frequency and more minute detail, until about 700 B.C., when Micah, under inspiration, revealed the very spot at which the Messiah was to appear.

Micah. 5:2. — But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth have been from old, from everlasting.

This was certainly distinct and definite enough. The Messiah, the ruler in Israel, was to be born in Bethlehem.

Isaiah, a contemporary of Micah, living in Judah during the reign of that wicked King Ahaz, added a further note of detail in his wondrous declaration of the virgin birth.

Isaiah 7:14.—Therefore the Lord Himself shall give you a sign: Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel.

This, and many more such proclamations, were in the hands of the priests and the scribes in those days, but they heeded them not. It was too much exertion for the priests to study these things out, so they treated the whole question with cold indifference. They would not believe that these mighty prophecies meant what they literally declared. Their forefathers had killed the prophets. They in turn killed the influence of the prophets' messages.

Then the days of John the Baptist drew near, and the story of Joseph and his strained relationship with his beloved Mary became known. She had been found with child before their marriage, and Joseph was constrained to put her away. What a splendid morsel for gossip in those days!

But, in a dream, Joseph was warned that Mary was with child of the Holy Ghost, and the prophecy of Isaiah was being fulfilled in their midst.

Hardly had this strange happening ceased its grip upon the public mind when Simeon, a just and devout priest, one of the most godly in the temple, further startled the people by declaring that he had a revelation from the Spirit that he "should not see death before he had seen the Lord's Christ." (Luke 2:26.)

However, all this had little effect. What did the world care regarding the trouble of a man and his betrothed? And as for Simeon, truly he was a just and devout man, but he was an old man in his dotage. His fellow priests placed no reliance on his startling revelation.

Then the shepherds came down from the hills of Judea and told of the glad message of the angels and the discovery of the Babe wrapped in swaddling clothes and lying in a manger at Bethlehem. But these shepherds were ignorant, unlearned men of the hills, and the people were persuaded to pay no heed to them.

Finally, the wise men came from the East and all Jerusalem was stirred, but the chilling atmosphere of the fog of indifference had settled upon the people and they could not be aroused to investigate.

As I, meditate upon these things, I am amazed at the indifference and spiritual indolence of people in the face of God's Mighty Word. Here they were just six miles from Bethlehem, where they were told the King of the Jews was born, and yet there was no investigation, no enquiry on their part regarding the truth or falsity of the whole matter. They depended almost wholly upon their blind and indolent priests and scribes, who later crucified the Lord of Glory. How sad it is!

Yet, ladies and gentlemen, I am persuaded that the same may be said of many today. How much time have the people given to enquiry regarding the Second Coming of Christ that is heard on every side today? How many of our fellows could be found in an attitude of careless indifference to this matter? Are you one of those, my friend, who care nothing about it? Or are you ready to investigate and believe it if true?

Prophecies Concerning the Second Coming:

The first thing that will strike you as you begin to investigate this matter is the fact that we have in our Scriptures as many if not more prophecies equally as explicit, definite and detailed as they had regarding His First Coming.

It would be altogether out of place to weary you with the many passages in regard to this matter. In your leisure moments you can take your concordance and easily find them by the

scores. On this occasion I shall take only a few of the more striking and singularly impressive ones.

What could be plainer than His own promise to His disciples on the eve of His departure out of the World?

John 14:1-3.—Let not your heart be troubled; ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. 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 ye may be also.

Two outstanding facts are correlated in this promise, (1) His Departure (2) His Return.

Did he go away? Not long ago a preacher declared in one of the pulpits of this land that Jesus never left the earth. How disastrous such a conclusion would be if we follow it out logically! If He did not go away, then He certainly deceived His disciples when He said, "I go to prepare a place for you." If He did not go then the place is not prepared. Furthermore, the evidence of His disciples (who were first-hand witnesses) is entirely discredited. They saw him depart from the Mount of Olives—

Acts 1:9.—And when He had spoken these things, while they beheld, He was taken up; and a cloud received them out of their sight.

I wonder what kind of evidence could logically displace or discredit the evidence of first-hand witnesses? No, no, my friend, the denial of His departure savors of the pit.

Jesus did depart out of this world, and it therefore follows, by the integrity of His own word, that He is coming again to receive His own unto Himself. Deny this and you at once declare His Word unreliable.

I have already called your attention to the prophecy of Micah, wherein he foretold the exact location of Christ's First Advent. It was to be in Bethlehem, and in Bethlehem it was. The shepherds and the wise men found the Child there just as the prophet had declared. Now, please, note that the Prophet Zechariah, in as explicit terms, tells us that Christ's Second Coming is to be at the Mount of Olives.

Zech. 14:4-5.—And his feet shall stand in that day upon the Mount of Olives, which is before Jerusalem on the east, and the Mount of Olives shall cleave in the midst thereof toward the east and toward the west, and there shall be a very great valley: and half of the mountain shall remove toward the north, and

half of it toward the south and the LORD my God shall come, and all the saints with thee.

This has not happened yet. The Mount of Olives still stands intact on the East of Jerusalem, as a monument pointing forward to the day of the Lord's Return.

What logical reason can we have to doubt the literalness of this prophecy any more than they had to doubt the literalness of Micah's prophecy regarding Bethlehem? No good can come to us from skepticism regarding this future fact.

In this connection may I recall the message of the men in white apparel as the disciples stood on this same Mount of Olives on that notable day of Christ's Ascension. Jesus had shown Himself alive by many infallible proofs. He had said, "Handle me and see, for a spirit hath not flesh and bones as ye see me have." (Luke 24:39.) And now they have reached the summit of the Mount of Olives. Suddenly, without a moment's warning, the Lord began to rise higher and higher until He disappeared out of their sight in a cloud. Immediately two men in white apparel appeared at their side and said:

Acts 1:11.—Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen Him go into heaven.

The same Jesus—in like manner; these are surely significant words. The same Jesus had flesh and bones; he spake; he ate; he talked. In like manner—he left the Mount of Olives; he disappeared in a cloud. What is it but that He should come again in flesh and bones, in a cloud, to the Mount of Olives!

Anything less than the literal fulfillment of words such as these makes the whole passage ridiculous. Why, listen, Christian friend, every time you sit around the Communion Table to commemorate the love of the Saviour in His death upon Calvary's cross, you declare that He is coming again.

1. Cor. 11:26.—For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till he come.

This ordinance was introduced to perpetuate a loving memory of the Saviour during His absence. After His return we shall have no need of symbols or pictures. We shall have the reality then, so the ordinance will cease.

How, then, can a minister officiate at the Communion Table if he declares that Christ came at Pentecost, or at the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70, or as one lately said, at the signing of the Peace Treaty on November 11, 1918? It must be surely formal to him, and bear no meaning, if he declares that Christ has already come and he still celebrates the Communion. He could not at least finish the text "till He come."

How can any person partake of the Communion who believes that Jesus came at any of these times, or in 1874, or 1914, as the Russellites and Seventh Day Adventists declare? Dearly beloved, we are living in days when we should give heed to the exhortation of God's Holy Writ:

1. Cor. 10:21—Ye cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of devils; ye cannot be partakers of the Lord's Table and of the table of devils.

The Scriptures abundantly declare the Lord Jesus Christ is again coming to this earth, in the same way that He left it.

The Attitude of the Modernists

You have noted that in olden times, they said the prophets did not mean what they literally declared. So the modernists say today. You cannot take these passages literally. They scoffed at old Simeon and Anna the Prophetess. They looked upon the shepherds as ignorant and unlearned in those days. They are doing the same thing today. What is your opinion of those who believe this doctrine? Do you think they are foolish, fanatical and unlearned?

Stop a minute! Do you not know that all down the ages, this message has been heralded abroad?

John Wickliffe, the morning star of the Reformation, commonly called the Gospel Doctor, because of his intimate acquaintance with the Holy Scriptures, said—

"I look for no intervening period of millennial blessedness to occur prior to the second advent of Christ, but instead regard the Redeemer's appearing as an object of hope and the constant expectation of the Church."

John Calvin, that old prince of theological debate, who stood like adamant in the support of the Word, expressed himself thus:

"Moreover, it must be held as a first principle that ever since the ap-

pearing of Christ there is nothing left to the faithful but with wakeful minds to be always ready intent on His second advent."

Bishop Latimer, that old saint of Anglican fame, earnestly exhorted his people thus—

"I believe that the Lord Jesus may come in my day, old as I am."

John Knox, that fearless fiery Presbyterian preacher of Scotland, in his blunt way said:

"We know that He shall return and that with expedition."

And dear old Martin Luther, the great leader of the Reformation, in the midst of all the great struggles of his day, earnestly expressed himself thus:

"I ardently hope that amidst these internal dissensions on earth, Jesus Christ will hasten the day of His coming."

Were all these great reformers mere pigmies, ignorant unlearned fanatics? I challenge that position.

What further shall I say of John Milton, Jeremiah Taylor, Samuel Rutherford, John Bunyan, John Fletcher, Augustine Toplady, Wm. Cowper, Charles and John Wesley, Geo. Whitfield, the Bonars, Spurgeon, Moody, Chapman. The fact is that it is hard to name a single evangelical preacher of note who did not earnestly believe this doctrine.

I challenge you, therefore, to face this matter fairly. Give it your earnest consideration with an open mind. It is no side issue. Any question regarding the Lord Jesus Christ must, of necessity, be fundamental. The world is full of it today. Our city has heard of it again and again. The Bible makes reference to it three hundred and eighteen times in the New Testament. How then, can a man live in the present day and attempt to read his Bible without coming face to face with it? It is evident that God meant it to be a subject of our consideration.

It is Time our Church People Aroused Themselves.

I am persuaded that many of our church people are being hoodwinked by those of Modernist tendencies who sneer and jeer at this doctrine as fanciful and fanatical. The Bible plainly warns us that such shall arise:

11. Peter 3:3,4—Knowing this first, that there shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts and saying,

Where is the promise of His Coming?

For since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation. . . .

You cannot go far in these days before you meet them. They are found in the Colleges, in the pulpits, in the pews.

I met one of these modernists a few years ago and he was a bird (a real fowl of the air in the Scriptural sense), a religious Bolshevik. After he had delivered a suave smoothly finished tirade regarding the fanaticism and foolishness of this doctrine and all who believed in it, I ventured a question: "Will you kindly explain to me—

1. Thess. 4: 16-17.—The Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first:

Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air; and so shall we ever be with the Lord.

"Oh," said he, smilingly, "that is a sample of Apocalyptic literature, that is to be found here and there throughout the Bible."

"Yes," I said, "call it what you like, but kindly explain its meaning. It says, 'The Lord Himself shall descend from heaven.' What does that mean?"

"Well, now, it would take too long for me to explain that fully, but Apocalyptic literature is merely Jewish delusion regarding the future."

"Oh," I said, "you mean that this statement regarding Christ's return is merely delusion and is not true?"

"Yes, that is precisely what I mean."

"But, unfortunately, the great difficulty with your point of view in this regard is that the Master Himself over and over again gave utterance to this same idea. Here is one.

John 14: 1-3—Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions: If it were not so, I would have told you. 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 ye may be also.

"Well," he said, as a dark scowl crept over his face, "I speak with reverence (?) when I say, Jesus Himself shared the same delusion. He, of course, did not know His statement was false."

I looked at him for a moment in dumbfounded amazement, then I ventured again, "But what about the de-

claration of the two messengers from heaven?

Acts 1:11.—Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven.

He replied, "The trouble with you, and others like you, is that you treat the Bible as literal and final. The majority of scholars (?) have long since discovered the fallacy of that."

"Then what would you say to your people, as a pastor, if they asked you what all these passages meant?"

"I would simply warn them to leave this matter alone."

That was exactly the attitude of the priests and scribes at the First Coming of Christ.

Some of the members of our Evangelical Churches today have assumed this attitude, and are being governed by these men.

Listen, men and women! Harken unto me! The next time any of these fellows come along with doctrines such as that, take the creed of your church and ask them if they said they believed this creed to be in harmony with the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, and would preach it faithfully. You Anglicans, take your Book of Common Prayer and turn to the Collect for the third Sunday in Advent, and read it to them.

O Lord Jesus Christ, who at the first coming didst send thy messenger to prepare thy way before thee; Grant that the ministers and stewards of thy mysteries may likewise so prepare and make ready, by turning the hearts of the disobedient to the wisdom of the just, that at Thy Second Coming to judge the world, we may be found an acceptable people in Thy sight who livest and reignest with the Father, and the Holy Spirit, ever one God world without end. Amen.

Then turn to the Articles of Religion, Clause 8, and read this also:

The three creeds, Nicene Creed, Athanasius's Creed and that which is commonly called the Apostle's, ought thoroughly to be received and believed; for they may be proved by most certain warrants of the Holy Scripture.

Ask them if it is not true that "In this Council of Nice, A.D. 325, the **Chilistic Doctrine** stands before us, not only disassociated from heresy, but opposed to it; nay, not only opposed to heresy, but united to what was sound 'and holy'?" (London Quarterly Journal of Prophecy.) No good

Anglican doubts the reality of the Second Coming of Christ.

You Presbyterians, take your Westminster Confession of Faith, and turn to Chapter 33, Section 3, and show it to them—

As Christ would have us certainly persuaded that there shall be a day of judgment both to deter all men from sin and for the greater consolation of the godly in their adversity, so He will have that day unknown to men that they may shake off all carnal security and be always watchful, because they know not at what hour the Lord will come and may be prepared to say, "Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly."

Surely a Presbyterian must renounce his established creed who doubts the reality of the Second Coming of Christ?

And you Baptists, tell them, will you, that as early as 1660, the Baptist Confession of Faith declared—

That the same Lord Jesus who showed Himself alive after His passion by many infallible proofs, which was taken up from His disciples and carried into heaven, shall so come in like manner as He was seen to go into heaven. And when Christ who is our life shall appear, we also shall appear with Him in glory, for then shall He be King of Kings and Lord of Lords. For the kingdom is His and He is the Governor among the nations and King over all the earth, and we shall reign with Him on the earth.

That surely is plain. The Baptist Church loses its authority for its existence immediately it departs from the literalness of God's Word.

And lastly, you Methodists should know that John Wesley, that glorious saint of God, is responsible for the following—

I grant, suppose the Lord should delay His coming, it were meet and right to wait for His appearing. But there is no necessity for making such a supposition. How knowest thou that He will delay? Perhaps He will appear as the day-spring from on high before the morning light. Oh, do not set Him a time. Expect Him every hour. Now He is nigh, even at the door.

Charles Wesley, his brother, was known as the Millennial Poet. This is his poem—

L. O. He comes with clouds descending,
Once for favored sinners slain;
Thousand, thousand saints attending,
Swell the triumph of His train.
Hallelujah! God appears on earth to reign.
Lift your heads, ye friends of Jesus,
Partners in His patience here,
Christ to all believers precious,
Lord of Lords, shall soon appear.
Mark the tokens
Of His heavenly Kingdom near.

It strikes me that a man who can

boldly proclaim that all the Bible declarations, and all the utterances of the great reformers, and all the statements of the Evangelical Church Creeds are foolish and fanatical and not worthy a Christian's attention, has really a very high opinion of himself. Does he not?

It is good to think highly of yourself, but there is a limit. It reminds me of the Irish mother in the time of the war, who had been down to see her son's regiment embark for the Front. "Ah," she says, "Patrick was a foine lad. It made my heart ache to see him marching down the strate. And faith, would you be after belaying it, every soldier of the rigitment was out of step but Patrick. Man, Patrick is a foine lad."

Hear men, men and women, as long as you will continue to listen to these proud, presumptuous boasters you will never get anywhere. You will be no use to God or man.

What a difference it would make to your life if you actually believed, down in the depths of your heart, that Jesus was really coming again. Suppose a gallant young man has won the affections of a fair young lady, when one day, shortly after the engagement he is suddenly called away into a far country. Next day she receives his letter explaining that he has had to leave a little while, but that he will return at an early date and be married. In the letter he pours out words of encouragement, that though she may not hear directly from him, yet he will surely return.

A year passes, and then two, and no word nor sign has come. Then a rival hatches out a plan. He has failed in securing her affections in the first place, but he will win her yet. He calls in a friend and urges his assistance. "Go," says he, "go to her, and tell her that you are sure Jack didn't mean what he said. Tell her you are sure he'll never return, and she is foolish to wait for him. Tell her that she cannot depend upon a mere letter. Jack has, no doubt, forgotten all about her."

Away the friend goes, and insidiously plants the doubt in her mind. How distressed it makes her! She weeps half the night. Can it be possible that Jack would deceive her and never return? Could he have been deluded when he promised to come

back? Eagerly she reads his letter again and again. Yes, there it is. He did actually promise to return.

But, why all this fuss? What difference did it make to her? Why, my friend, all the difference in the world. If Jack would deceive her in this she would never be able to trust him again.

Then the rival came and offered her a good time. He would give her this and he would take her there. She might as well go, as Jack would surely never return. Others had been deceived. Jack had been a long time gone now. Who knows that he is really to return? Probably the letter was not written by him.

What should she do? The curtain falls on the scene.

Then a few weeks later Jack came back to receive his own. Where will he find her? Do you know what I think? If she loved him, she would be true.

Now, listen, the Bible tells us the Church is espoused to Christ as a chaste virgin.

II. Cor. 11:2—For I am jealous over you with godly jealousy; for I have espoused

you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ.

The Master has gone into a far country to prepare a place for her. He has promised to return.

The agents of the Enemy come and tell us, "You've waited a long time. You must have misunderstood. He didn't mean you to understand him literally."

What difference does it make, anyway? Listen—

I. John 3: 2-3—Beloved, now are we the Sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be; but we know that, when He shall appear, we shall be like Him; for we shall see Him as He is.

And every man that has this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure.

Listen, my friend, some of these days He is coming again. Will you be glad? Where will He find you?

There is no use saying you believe this unless the effect is seen in your life. It is all very well to say you give assent to it mentally. Do you love His appearing? Are you willing to live truly for Him? I call you to a higher life. Will you come?



TEST REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Why should the attitude of the World to Christ's Second Coming not be the criterion of our interest in it?
 2. (a) What historical event of nineteen centuries ago was in the same category as this of the Second Coming is today?
(b) Show the points of similarity between them.
(c) How definitely was the First Advent of Christ foretold? Did holy people expect his first advent at the time it occurred? What attitude was assumed toward them?
 3. (a) State a few striking passages of Scripture dealing with the Second Advent?
(b) Was the very place of His Second Advent foretold?
 4. (a) Mention the attitude of some of the Great Reformers of History toward this truth.
(b) Name ten others that believed and taught it.
(c) Explain its relationship to the Communion Ceremony.
 5. (a) Show that this doctrine has always been held by the great Protestant Denominations.
(b) What explanation do the Modernists boldly make of these many passages?
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NOTE—Any reader who cares to write the answers to the above questions carefully, on one side of the paper only, and mail the same to—

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will receive his personal supervision and correction of the same, if One Dollar is enclosed to cover postage, etc. This also advances the privilege of any three other Bible questions that you may desire.

LECTURE No. 4



The Signs of the Times

OR

Is Christ's Coming at Hand?

A Warning Against a Growing
Tendency of Today



On every side we hear of those who are
seeing strange signs and wonders.

*Are these hallucinations or Demonic
Demonstrations to Deceive?*

Remember

Matt. 24: 24.—

“For there shall arise false Christs and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders; in so much that if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect.”

Rev. 13: 13-14—

“And he (False Prophet) doeth great wonders, so that he maketh fire come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men,

“And deceiveth them that dwell on the earth by the means of those miracles which he had power to do. . . .”

Lecture 4

THE SIGNS OF THE TIMES, or IS CHRIST'S COMING AT HAND?

When Christ the Lord was here upon earth, He found great opposition and skepticism among the Pharisees and Sadducees of those days. Time after time they challenged His statements, and on every occasion His replies were impressive and final. It was a common saying among the people of those days that "never man spake as this man." One day the Pharisees and Sadducees came and desired that He would show them a sign from heaven. This was His answer:

Matt. 16:2-4—When it is evening ye say it will be fair weather; for the sky is red; and in the morning, it will be foul weather today; for the sky is red and lowering. Oh ye hypocrites, ye can discern the face of the sky; but can ye not discern the signs of the times?

Apparently the Pharisees were more interested in the weather than they were to expect in the future than in the prophetic events that were about to come. They could discern the face of the sky, but they were entirely ignorant of the signs of the times. I wonder if the same charge could not be made against the people of today. Every week or so the papers issue a prognostication of the weather, and the majority of their readers carefully peruse these declarations. Would the world be as interested if the newspapers, from week to week, or month to month, issued prophecies concerning the signs of the times?

I need not stop to establish the fact that Christ Jesus is again coming to this earth visibly, in all His power and glory. In the previous lecture I pointed out that a person must surely be most presumptuous and self-opinioned, who could declare that this doctrine is foolish, fanciful and fanatical, in the face of all the numerous declarations of the Scriptures, and all the many utterances of the great reformers down the centuries, and of all the definite statements of every

evangelical church of the present day. Imagine a man sweeping aside all this mass of evidence, and boldly declaring this doctrine false and foolish and fanciful! That is the spirit of red radicalism and bolshevism, which despises the experiences of history and seeks to overthrow the decisions and established findings of the ages. The sooner you cut clear of such, the better for yourself and those you come in contact with. I care not where you find them—whether it is in the pew or in the pulpit, or in the theological chair, or in the seat of government—you cannot reasonably support those who manifest this attitude to established customs, and to our Bible, and to our Lord Jesus.

No, the evidence is overwhelming in favor of the truth of this doctrine. It is as certain as the First Advent was, and this is now history. It is equally corroborated by prophecies and indications, and it will some day be history. The next question that demands our attention is in connection with the nearness of the event. Have we any indications of its near approach? Are there things happening today that unmistakably point to the fact that the Second Coming of Christ is near at hand? What are the signs of the times?

A DANGER TO BE AVOIDED

To begin with, it is well to note that there is a danger underlying this line of study, a danger of misunderstanding or of misapplication, which will lead to heresy or fanaticism. The Evil One has placed many side-tracks along the main road of this truth. It would seem that there is a smoke-screen thrown up over it, and we need carefully to know the Word of God as a light that shines in the dark places.

II. Peter 1:19—We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do

well that ye take heed as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn and the day star arise in your hearts.

This danger is plainly indicated in the Scriptures. You will remember that in the Upper Room, just before Jesus went out to the Cross of Calvary, He had many things to say to His disciples as a farewell message. One of these things was the declaration of His return.

John 16: 16-18.—A little while and ye shall not see me; and again a little while and ye shall see me; because I go to the Father. Then said some of His disciples among themselves, "What is this that He sayeth unto us. 'A little while and ye shall not see me; and again a little while and ye shall see me; and, because I go to the Father?'"

They said, therefore, "what is this that He sayeth, 'A little while?' We cannot tell what He sayeth."

First you see, it was hard for them to grasp the truth of the matter. They couldn't comprehend what he meant by "a little while." That is the thing that bothers most people today. It has been nineteen hundred years since Jesus went away, and all things seem to continue as they were from the beginning, so people cannot understand why Jesus said, "a little while." Here is the danger of misunderstanding, but the Master explained it to His disciples.

John 16: 19-21.—Now Jesus knew that they were desirous to ask Him, and said unto them, "Do ye inquire among yourselves of that I said, 'A little while and ye shall not see me; and again a little while and ye shall see me?'"

"Verily, verily, I say unto you that ye shall weep and lament but the world shall rejoice; and ye shall be sorrowful but your sorrow shall be turned into joy.

"A woman when she is in travail hath sorrow because her hour is come; but as soon as she is delivered of the child she remembereth no more the anguish, for joy that a man is born into the world."

Christ here evidently told His disciples that Israel were going to have great tribulation and sorrow, the greatest tribulation the world would ever see, and then, after that, He would return. When it was all over Israel would look back over the period and it would appear to them but "a little while." It is like the woman in travail. There is no pain equal to that of travail, but as soon as the great trial is over and the son is born, she remembereth no more the anguish, for joy that the baby is alive. Do not allow the question of time, in connec-

tion with the Lord's return, to cause you to misunderstand the Master.

A little later on the danger appeared in another form, namely that of misapplication, leading to heresy. It was after the resurrection of Christ, when the disciples saw Him on the sea-shore, and the great haul of fishes had been made, that he invited them to have breakfast with Him on the shore. After breakfast the conversation with Peter took place, wherein He urged him to feed His sheep. Following this, Peter made inquiry regarding his beloved Christian brother, John:

John 21: 20-23.—Then Peter turning about seeth the disciple whom Jesus loved following; which also leaned on His breast at supper and said, "Lord, which is he that betrayeth Thee?" Peter, seeing him sayeth to Jesus, "Lord, and what shall this man do?"

Jesus sayeth unto him, "If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee? Follow thou me."

Then went this saying abroad among the brethren, that that disciple should not die.

Once more, the Evil One has stirred up the cloud. The rumor goes forth that one person living shall never die. How very similar this is to the present day heresy, "Millions now living will never die!" Jesus, therefore, at once denied the rumor, and corrected the impression that had gone forth.

John 21: 23.—Yet Jesus said not unto him, "Ye shall not die; but, if I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee?"

In the days of Paul this heresy developed into a serious fanaticism. In Thessalonica many of the members of the Christian Church, believing that Christ's coming was very closely at hand, had ceased to work and had become busybodies.

II. Thess. 3:11.—For we hear that there are some which walk among you disorderly, working not at all, but are busybodies.

These men concluded that there was no need to work further, as Christ was immediately to return. They looked upon it as their duty to go about from person to person, urging them to quit work. It is well for us to note the admonition that the apostle gave to the Church.

II. Thess. 3: 6.—Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the tradition which ye received of us.

And again in verse 14:—

If any man obey not our word by this epistle, note that man and have no company with him, that he may be ashamed.

Coming down to modern times, we see the same tendency exhibited. Back in 1840, William Miller, a singularly gifted man, thought he saw plainly indicated in the Scriptures that Christ was coming in 1843. This he taught, in spite of the plain admonition of the Lord Himself:

Matt. 24: 36.—But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but My Father only.

Many people who listened to him began to believe that in the spring of 1843 the Lord Jesus was to return to this earth. Spring came, and the Millerites were all prepared to receive Him, but He never came. Then Miller declared he had made a mistake of a few months, and Christ would surely come in the fall. Fall came, and once more the Millerites were doomed to disappointment.

Today the Millennial Dawnists, or as they are commonly called, the International Bible Students, declare that millions now living will never die—Jesus is to come in 1925. Numbers of people here and there are being led into this heresy.

On the other hand, a new form of this danger is making itself felt. People here and there and everywhere are seeing wonderful signs in the heavens. A few weeks ago, there came into my possession a tract published in Los Angeles in which the following strange incidents were recorded:

1. On Palm Sunday, April 16th, 1916, at Stavanger, Norway, there appeared between the hours of 7.30 p.m. and 9.00 p.m. a most remarkable vision in the heavens. One of the many eye-witnesses relates the following:

"A large black cloud arose in the west, becoming very red as though it were on fire, and forming an arch out of which appeared great letters:

“Be Ye Converted, for Jesus is Coming Soon.”

"Then there appeared an angel with large white wings, at whose side arose a large cross, and below whom stood the word 'AMEN.' During the whole time it was light, but afterwards it became very dark, as a big cloud hid it all; and we became very much alarmed because of the sight."—From Stavanger Aftenblad.

2. Again, in Sweden, in the summer of 1917, to a company of three hundred people returning from an all-night prayer meeting, there appeared a hand pointing to the words written in the heavens in large letters:

“See, I come Quickly.”

3. In another instance, one hundred girls from a missionary home in Bombay, India, were holding services on the street one evening, when they all saw in the sky an immense semi-circle of letters of fire:

“Jesus Is Coming Soon.”

4. A missionary in India writes: "One evening, as two girls were praying, they saw appearing and disappearing in the sky:

“The End—I Come Quickly.”

5. A lady living in Providence, R.I., was in an electric car about sundown going to her home, when suddenly the conductor cried out, "Look, look!" and stopped the car. A number of persons were in the car, and all looked in the direction pointed out by the conductor. There, in the western sky was the distinct form of a man from the waist up. His arms were extended and a radiance shone above his head. He had as it were a beseeching look, which brought a solemnity over all in the car. Two of the passengers were overheard to say, "Well, probably they are right after all," referring, no doubt, to those who are expecting the coming of the Lord.

6. In Portland, Oregon, a simple German woman, who had never heard of salvation, one day, when at work in her kitchen, suddenly saw handwriting appear on the wall:

“Jesus is Coming Soon. Go and Tell it.”

7. From Walcott, N.Y., Mrs. J. E. Smith writes:

"I was awakened from sound sleep, and looking into the sky I beheld a sight I can never forget. The lower half of the moon was as black as ink, and revealed distinctly against a dark sky a lurid flame arose from the upper part of the moon in flaring flames, merging into a large column of thick black smoke which made a fearful sight. I cannot describe it exactly, but I believe it is one of the signs of the last days."

8. In San Jose, Calif., a woman standing in her home one evening suddenly observed a cross in the heavens,

and called her family. Some were unsaved, and when they saw the cross in the sky great fear came upon them.

What can these all mean?

THREE IMPORTANT FACTS TO BE KNOWN.

This leads me to call attention to three important facts that every Christian should note in connection with the last days or the end of the world.

First, the Scriptures distinctly declare that there is more than one end to the world.

1. Cor. 10:11.—Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples; and they are written for our admonition upon whom the ends of the world are come.

You will note, please, that the word "ends" is plural. To be precise about this matter, I would like you to recognize that the Scriptures speaks of three ends to the world:

(a) The popular idea—the end of the world that precedes the final judgment. The Prophet Micah declares plainly what shall be just previous to this end.

Micah. 4: 1-4.—But in the last days it shall come to pass that the mountain of the house of the Lord shall be established in the top of the mountains, and it shall be exalted above the hills; and people shall flow unto it.

And many nations shall come and say, "Come and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, and to the house of the God of Jacob; and He will teach us of His ways and we will walk in His paths: for the law shall go forth of Zion, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem.

"And He shall judge among many people and rebuke strong nations afar off; and they shall beat their swords into plow shares and their spears into pruning hooks: nation shall not lift up a sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more.

"But they shall sit every man under his vine and under his fig tree; and none shall make them afraid: for the mouth of the Lord of Hosts hath spoken it."

This plainly refers to the millennial reign of Christ on earth, when war shall be no more.

When we come to the New Testament, we find that the Lord Jesus, speaking of the end of the world, here states:

Matt. 13: 38-42.—The field is the world; the good seed are the children of the kingdom; but the tares are the children of the evil one;

The enemy that soweth them is the devil; the harvest is the end of the world; and the reapers are the angels.

As therefore the tares are gathered and

burned in the fire; so shall it be in the end of the world.

The Son of Man shall send forth His angels and they shall gather out of His kingdom all things that offend and them which do iniquity, and shall cast them into a furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth.

Here, in the interpreting the parable of the wheat and the tares, the Lord informs us that at the end of the world, that is the millennial age, He will send His angels to gather out of the world the tares, the children of the Evil One.

The Apostle John further describes in detail the things that shall occur at the end of the world.

Rev. 20: 7-15.—And when the thousand years are expired, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison.

And shall go out to deceive the nations which are in the four corners of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle; the number of whom is as the sand of the sea.

And they went up on the breadth of the earth, and compassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city; and fire came down from God out of heaven and devoured them.

And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are and shall be tormented day and night forever and ever.

And I saw a great white throne, and Him that sat on it, from Whose face the earth and the Heavens fled away; and there was found no place for them.

And I saw the dead small and great stand before God; and the books were opened; and another book was opened, which is the book of life; and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books according to their works.

And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them; and they were judged every man according to their works.

And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death.

And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire.

(b) The End of the Time of the Gentiles.

The Lord Jesus speaks of this in His sermon to the disciples on the occasion of their last visit to the Temple.

Luke 21: 24.—And they shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be led away captive into all nations; and Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled.

This takes place immediately before Christ's second coming. It is of this period that the Apostle Paul spoke in

his delineation of the characteristics of the last days.

II. Tim. 3:1-3.—This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come,

For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholly.

Without natural affections, truce breakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good.

Jesus declared that these days would be similar to the last days before the flood.

Matt. 24:38-39.—For as in the days that were before the flood, they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noe entered into the ark.

And knew not until the flood came and took them all away; so shall also the coming of the Son of Man be.

(c) The third end of the world spoken of in the Bible is the end of the dispensation in which we live. These last days are spoken of by the Apostle Paul in his comparison between the ages of the past and our present dispensation.

Hebrews 1:1-2.—God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets,

Hath in these last days spoken unto us by His Son, whom He hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also He made the world.

The age in which we live is to be closed by the appearing of Christ, to take out of the world the Church, His Own Body.

I. Thess. 4:15-17—For this we say unto you by the Word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep,

For the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first:

Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air; and so shall we ever be with the Lord.

These, then, are the three ends to the world, and every Christian student should know them and be able to distinguish to which of these any particular passage is referring.

II. THE SIGNS OF THE TIMES

Now regarding the signs of the times, Jesus declared that there would be signs of the second end of the

world, but not of the first or third.

Luke 21:25-27.—And there shall be signs in the sun and in the moon and in the stars; and upon the earth distress of nations with perplexity; the sea and the waves roaring;

Men's hearts failing them for fear and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth:

For the powers of heaven shall be shaken, and then shall they see the Son of Man coming in a cloud, with power and great glory.

These are the signs of the second coming of Christ, commonly called the signs of the times, but Jesus has been very careful to warn us that there shall be no signs in this age, with one exception.

Matt. 16:4.—A wicked and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign; and there shall no sign be given unto it but the sign of the Prophet Jonas.

This sign of the Prophet Jonas was the sign of the resurrection of Christ, proving Him to be the Son of God. Thus did Christ compare for us His death with that of Jonas.

Matt. 12:40.—As Jonas was three days and three nights in the whale's belly, so shall the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.

Hell could not hold Him permanently, so He rose from the dead the third day, thus declaring Himself to be the Son of God.

Rom. 1:4.—And declared to be the Son of God with power according to the spirit holiness by the resurrection from the dead.

This is a very important matter for us to note. No signs will be given to us preceding the appearing of Christ. Hence these so-called signs of today are demoniac deception and delusions. I heard a speaker not long ago say that the European War was a sign of the near approach of Christ. He declared that it was the fulfilment of—

Matt. 24:6-8.—Ye shall hear of wars and rumors of wars: see that ye be not troubled: for all these things must come to pass but the end is not yet.

For nation shall rise against nation and kingdom against kingdom; and there shall be famines and pestilences and earthquakes in divers places.

All these are the beginning of sorrows.

You will note that Jesus carefully warns us that these wars and rumors of wars are not the signs of the end, but rather the beginning of sorrows. You will also see that this passage is from His sermon dealing with the events that shall precede His second

coming. If it could be proven that the European War had been prophesied by Christ in this passage, then the Apostle Paul, through ignorance or deceit, was wrong when he looked for Christ to appear in his day. How could he have honestly and intelligently expected Christ to appear in his day if the European War had to happen previous to the rapture? No, there shall no sign be given us.

III. THE CYCLIC ASPECT OF HISTORY.

This is another important factor in understanding the significance of the great events of the present age. Careful students of history have discovered that as the ages roll on conditions and events appear and reappear in great cycles; that action and reaction occur in history as cause and effect do in science. If we stop to think it is evident that the conditions of today must have arisen from those previous to this, and that future conditions will be the outcome of those of today. Time after time the magistrates and judges of our courts have warned us that the wave of juvenile crime that seems to be spreading over this land arises from lack of parental control and training of the previous generation. These series of conditions seem to form themselves naturally into great cycles, as the centuries go by.

For example, away back in 1814 that dread monster militarism raised its ugly head in Europe, and Napoleon openly declared that he would by force of arms conquer the world and bring it under his control. But Waterloo came, and we had hoped that a death-blow had been inflicted upon this great beast. Time rolled on, and just one hundred years later it again raised its terrible head, and the Kaiser began to speak of the Day when he should rule the world. Thus the cycle was completed, and the ages rolled on.

This is the cyclic aspect of history, and in fact so striking is this matter that higher critics and careful students suggest that the prophets were merely careful students of history, and could make very accurate statements regarding the future. It is peculiar that these clever (?) men do not themselves attempt what they claim the prophets did so successfully.

In dealing with my topic specifically, I propose simply to draw your attention to certain well-defined prevail-

ing conditions of our day, which adumbrate or shadow forth those that are to come.

1. PRESENT DAY MILITARISM.

Did you ever know of a day when militarism, with all its strifes, warfare and bloodshed, was so rampant in the world? The papers are full of it day after day. At present it is the civil war in China. A few weeks ago South America was ablaze. A few months ago Turkey was on the rampage. Did you ever stop to consider the tremendous total expenditure that the nations of the world are making to maintain and equip with modern devices the great navies and fighting forces? Examine the published budgets of the various nations, and you will find the figures appalling. You may be assured of this, that these mighty engines of warfare are not made for mere show, but for actual use. I am persuaded that no person can know all this and not be greatly impressed as they read the prophecies of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Matt. 24: 6-7.—And ye shall hear of wars and rumors of wars: see that ye be not troubled: for all these things must come to pass but the end is not yet.

For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom: and there shall be famines and pestilences, and earthquakes in divers places.

We are surely fast hastening to the day when this prophecy will be actually fulfilled.

Then it is the Prophet Joel warns us—

Joel 3: 9-12.—Proclaim ye this among the Gentiles: prepare war, wake up the mighty men, let all the men of war drawments are moth-eaten.

Beat your plowshares into swords, and your pruning hooks into spears: let the weak say, "I am strong."

Assemble yourselves and come all ye heathen and gather yourselves together round about: thither cause thy mighty ones to come down, O Lord.

Let the heathen be awakened, and come up to the valley of Jehoshaphat: for there will I sit to judge all the heathen round about.

We hear a great deal about democracy today, but the time is coming when the common people shall be controlled by a power that they know not of, and terrible warfare shall be the order of the day. All the world needs today is a superman, who is diabolical-

ly inclined, to wreck all order and government.

2. THE MAD RUSH OF THE PRESENT DAY WARNS US OF THE FUTURE.

What a number of people are traveling today—here, there and everywhere. The trains and the steamboats are constantly filled to their utmost capacity. Aeroplanes and automobiles and transcontinental trains tear across the country at terrific speeds. Human progress and invention are making tremendous strides. It is stated on good authority by those in a position to know, "that the nineteenth century advanced human progress and invention more than all the centuries before, and that the first decade of the twentieth century has surpassed the whole of the nineteenth."

If this is true of the first ten years of this century, what shall we say of the four years of the war times? Without doubt they have easily doubled the rate of progress. We are furthermore told that the next few years will see the aeroplanes reach an almost perfect condition as a means of transport of commerce and passengers, not to mention its terrible use in warfare. Surely these things point in no uncertain way to the future, as described by the prophets Daniel and Isaiah.

Dan. 12: 4.—Many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased.

Isa. 21: 5.—As birds flying, so will the Lord of Hosts defend Jerusalem; defending also he will deliver it; and passing over he will preserve it.

3. THE ECONOMIC CONDITIONS OF THE PRESENT.

These clearly shadow forth the character and trend of affairs in the last days. The long-standing strife between labor and capital seems to be growing more and more intensified. Statesmen of all nations are constantly face to face with the fearful probability of revolution. What wanton wastefulness and extravagance is exhibited on the part of the rich, and at the same time what hunger and suffering is to be found among the poor! Think of men openly boasting of 130 per cent. profit, and declaring that they do not run their business for the glory of God! No wonder the prices

of all commodities are high, and children must go underfed and undernourished.

Prophecy tells us that this struggle will continue to the very end, with the unscrupulous rich more aggressive.

Jas. 5: 1-7—Go to now, ye rich man, weep and howl for your miseries that shall come upon you.

Your riches are corrupted and your garments: let them come up:

Your gold and silver is cankered; and the rust of them shall be a witness against you and shall eat your flesh as it were fire. Ye have heaped treasure together for the last days.

Behold the hire of the laborers which have reaped down your fields, which is by you kept back by fraud, crieth: and the cries of them which have reaped are entered into the ear of the Lord of Sabaoth.

Ye have lived in pleasure on the earth and been wanton; ye have nourished your hearts as in a day of slaughter.

Ye have condemned and killed the just and he doth not resist you.

Be patient therefore, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord.

Evidently the references here are to the last days just previous to the end of the Gentile times, when the great image will be set up and the people shall not be able to buy or sell without having the mark of the beast.

Rev. 13: 17.—And that no man might buy or sell save he that hath the mark or the name of the beast, or the number of his name.

It surely appears that we are almost ripe for such a condition as that.

4. THE PRESENT CONDITION OF SOCIETY PLAINLY INDICATES CHARACTERISTICS THAT ARE TO BE.

Here, again, external gloss would seem to veneer and camouflage the corruption beneath. Was there ever a time when women dressed with such indifference to decency and modesty? Look at some of the upper set, as they appear on the street, plastered with rouge and lipstick and eyebrow pencil, etc. They tell me that in the United States, in 1921, over seven million dollars were spent in cosmetics. There they go, in their outlandish, semi-barbaric fashions, mincing as they proceed. Statistics show that in 1921 there was more money spent for chewing gum than for sending the Gospel of Christ to the mission fields. Here

again Scripture has something to say regarding the last day conditions.

Isa. 3: 18-24.—In that day the Lord will take away the bravery of their tinkling ornaments about their feet, and their cauls and their round tires like the moon.

The chains and the bracelets and the mufflers.

The bonnets and the ornaments of the legs, and the head bands and the tablets and the ear-rings.

The rings and the nose jewels.

The changeable suits of apparel and the mantles and the wimples and the crisping pins.

The glasses and the fine linen, and the hoods and the veils.

And it shall come to pass that instead of sweet smell there shall be stink; and instead of a girdle a rent; and instead of well-set hair baldness; and instead of a stomacher a girdling of sackcloth; and burning instead of beauty.

I need not stop to do more than remind you of the pleasure-seeking madness of the present day, and of the increased divorce proceedings and disrespect for marriage relationships. These are all declared as future conditions upon this earth.

II. Tim 3: 1-4.—This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come.

For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God.

Isa. 4: 1.—And in that day seven women shall take hold of one man, saying, "We will eat our own bread and wear our own apparel; only let us be called by thy name to take away our reproach."

5. THE RELIGIOUS CONDITIONS ARE STRANGELY SIGNIFICANT.

A close examination of the religious conditions of the present day should impress us that we are in a preparatory stage to the terrible apostasy that is fast creeping upon the world. The persistent attempt of the fallen spirits to gain intercourse with mankind is most pronounced. They will demonstrate by signs and lying wonders, in order to obtain the homage and worship of humanity. They love to get men to substitute religion for Christianity. They encourage the thought that as long as a person is faithful in his church attendance, enthusiastic in brotherhood and forward movements, he is doing all that should be expected of him. When the leaders of our churches can take an active part in whist drives, dances and conversa-

zation, and the next evening expect to have power in prayer, they are certainly being deluded by the forces of evil.

What is the result of it all? Simply this: that our theatres and playhouses are constantly filled to capacity, while the Church prayer-meeting is practically abandoned. I sometimes wonder if people are aware of the grotesque and mischievous things, the horrible travesties, that are preached in the name of Christianity. The great cause that makes this possible is the pronounced lack in the knowledge of God's Word. The Christian people need to get back to the Bible and know definitely the declarations of God's Word. The revelation of the actual conditions in Spiritualism, Theosophy, Christian Science, etc., should alarm every serious-minded person. When women and men hold intercourse with familiar spirits who are not visible to them, or go through a marriage ceremony with them, surely it cannot be long before conditions will be as described in the Word—

I. Tim. 4: 1.—The Spirit speaketh expressly that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits and doctrines of devils.

Rev. 18:2.—Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, and is become the habitation of devils and the hold of every foul spirit and a cage of every unclean and hateful bird.

On the other hand, in our churches what do we find? We are told that seventy-five per cent. of the instructors in the theological colleges are higher critical in their beliefs, and deny the great fundamentals. It cannot be long before the conditions spoken of by Peter are literally upon the world.

II. Pet. 2: 1-2.—But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction.

And many shall follow their pernicious ways: by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken.

When men today openly scoff at the atoning blood of Christ, and publicly declare that they will have nothing to do with a "slaughter-house" religion, we may be assured that conditions are pointing gravely to the time of the end. They speak in exalting terms of the deity of man, but in a disparaging

way of the deity of Christ, His virgin-birth, bodily resurrection, and visible return to the earth. What does this imply but that we are nearing the time of the end?

1. **John 2: 18, 22-23.**—Little children, it is the last time; and as ye have heard that Anti-Christ shall come, even now are there many Anti-Christ: whereby ye know that it is the last time.

Who is a liar but he that denieth that Jesus is the Christ? He is Anti-Christ that denieth the Father and the Son.

Whosoever denieth the Son, the same hath not the Father: but he that acknowledgeth the Son hath the Father also.

CONCLUSION.

Look where you will, you will see indications, not of the coming of the

Christ, but symptoms which adumbrate or shadow forth conditions of the last days before Christ comes. Surely there is warning enough that we should keep clear of the world's trend. Religion, with all its formality, will get you nowhere, but if you give heed to the Word of God, and obey its simple, direct instructions, you will find the power in your life necessary to stem the tide of the present day; and the peace of God which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts for Him.

Matt. 11: 28.—Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.

John 6: 37.—Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out.



TEST REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. (a) What great danger is there in connection with the truth of Christ's Second Coming?
(b) Trace its growth in the early days of the Church.
(c) State one form in which this heresy appears today.
 2. (a) What new form of this danger is making itself felt today?
(b) Give two illustrations?
 3. (a) Is there more than one end to the world? Prove your answer.
(b) What takes place at the end of the world that is the popular notion only?
 4. (a) What is the second end of the world called, and when does it take place?
(b) What are the conditions at this time?
 5. How is the dispensation in which we live to be closed?
 6. (a) Of which of these ends is there to be signs?
(b) What form will these signs take?
(c) Will there be signs to warn us of Christ's Appearing?
 7. (a) What is meant by the Cyclic Aspect of History? Illustrate.
(b) Of what value is this to Prophetical Students?
 8. Write a full article showing how prevailing conditions of today shadowforth conditions of the future time of Apostasy.
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NOTE—Any reader who cares to write the answers to the above questions carefully, on one side of the paper only, and mail the same to—

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will receive his personal supervision and correction of the same, if One Dollar is enclosed to cover postage, etc. This also advances the privilege of any three other Bible questions that you may desire.

