

# THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST

AN ESSAY IN INTERPRETATION

BY THE  
REV. S. P. T. PRIDEAUX, B.D.

RECTOR OF DOGmersFIELD, AND SOMETIME  
INCUMBENT OF CHELSEA OLD CHURCH, AND  
DEAN OF WHITELANDS COLLEGE

TEMPORARY CHAPLAIN TO THE FORCES

“ . . . . . like enow  
They are building still, seeing the city is built  
To music, therefore never built at all,  
And therefore built for ever.”

NEW YORK  
E. P. DUTTON & COMPANY  
681 FIFTH AVENUE  
1918

PRINTED BY

SIR ISAAC PITMAN & SONS, LTD., LONDON, ENGLAND

## PREFACE

THE difficulties of the Apocalyptic element in the Gospels have long been a sore puzzle to many, and much light has recently been thrown upon its inner meaning and its perennial value by the world-catastrophe of the war. The writer has here attempted to offer a solution for the one, and an interpretation of the other, hoping that both will be acceptable to thinking men and women of the present age who long for light and direction in its mazes and perplexities. A good deal of space is devoted to the Jewish element, as it is essential to realise this background of Our Lord's teaching ; and many references and quotations are given, in the hope that readers will be induced to turn to larger works and original documents, and study the subject for themselves.

The writer further hopes that his words will lead many to perceive that the Kingship of Christ is an actual present fact and power, as well as a hope yet to be realised ; and, even more, that they will understand that this power is conveyed through the Holy Spirit. For it is not too much to say that *all* difficulties, whether personal, ecclesiastical, national, or world-wide, can be removed by an adequate appreciation of the Person of the Holy Spirit ; and that their persistence and seriousness has been almost entirely due to men's failure in this appreciation. If men had only taken Him

## PREFACE

more into their counsels, followed His teaching, and claimed His power, in times past, Heaven to-day would have been far more of a reality and less of a dream.

To Him, as our Teacher, Guide, Helper, and Strength, alone be glory, in the Father, through the Son.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

THE following are the chief works alluded to or quoted, to which the student may care to refer—

ABBOTT, E. A.—*The Fourfold Gospel* (1913–15).  
BEET, J. AGAR—*The Last Things* (1905).  
BRUCE, A. B.—*The Kingdom of God* (1904).  
BROWN, W. A.—*The Christian Hope* (1912).  
BURKITT, F. C.—*Jewish and Christian Apocalypses* (1914).  
CHARLES, R. H.—*Eschatology, Jewish and Christian, or the Critical History of the Doctrine of a Future Life* (1913).  
DAHLE, L. N.—*Life after Death, and the Future of the Kingdom of God* (1896).  
DALMAN, G.—*The Words of Jesus* (1902).  
DAVIDSON, S.—*The Doctrine of the Last Things* (1882).  
DEWICK, E. C.—*Primitive Christian Eschatology* (1912).  
DOBSCHÜTZ, E. von.—*The Eschatology of the Gospels* (1910).  
DRUMMOND, J.—*The Jewish Messiah* (1877).  
EDERSHEIM, A.—*Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah* (1901).  
*Encyclopaedia Biblica*.—Arts. : “Apocalyptic Literature,” “Eschatology,” “Eternity.”  
*Encyclopaedia Britannica*.—Arts. : “Apocalyptic Literature,” “Eschatology.”  
*Foundations* (1912).  
GAYFORD, S. C.—*The Future State* (1903).  
HASTINGS.—*D B.*—Arts. : “Apocalyptic Literature,” “Eschatology,” “Parousia,” “Millennium,” “Development of Doctrine,” “Religion of Israel,” Ext. 710b., “St. Matthew’s Gospel,” “Son of Man.”  
HASTINGS.—*D C G.* Arts. : “Apocalyptic Literature,” “Messiah,” “Eternal Life,” “Eschatology,” “Immortality,” “Accommodation,” “Day of Judgment,” “St. Matthew’s Gospel,” “Life.”  
HÜGEL, F. von.—*Eternal Life* (1912).  
KENNEDY, H. A. A.—*St. Paul’s Conception of the Last Things* (1904).  
LATIMER-JACKSON, W.—*The Eschatology of Jesus* (1913).  
LOISY, A.—*Les Evangiles synoptiques* (1907).  
MACNEILE, A. H.—*St. Matthew* (1915).  
*Manchester Church Congress, Report of.*

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

MOULTON, J. H. and MILLIGAN, G.—*Vocabulary of the Greek Testament* (1914).

MUIRHEAD, L. H.—*The Eschatology of Jesus* (1906).

OESTERLEY, W. O. E.—*The Doctrine of the Last Things* (1908).

PORTER, F. C.—*Messages of the Apocalyptic Writers*. (1905).

PUSEY, E. B.—*What is of Faith as to Everlasting Punishment?* (1880).

RIEHM, A.—*Messianic Prophecy* (1891).

ROBERTSON, A.—*Regnum Dei* (1901).

*Report of Third Internat. Congress of Religions* (PEABODY and VON DOBSCHÜTZ).

SCHÜRER, E.—*The Jewish People in the Time of Christ*, II. 3, 44 ff. (1885).

SALMOND, S. D. F.—*The Christian Doctrine of Immortality* (1895).

SANDAY, W.—*The Life of Christ in Recent Research* (1907); and a helpful Art. in the *Hibbert Journal* for Oct., 1911.

SAVAGE, H. E.—*The Gospel of the Kingdom* (1910).

SCHWEITZER, A.—*The Quest of the Historical Jesus* (1910).

SWETE, H. B.—*Some Biblical Questions of the Day*.

TERRY, M. S.—*Biblical Apocalyptic* (1898).

TOY, C. H.—*Judaism and Christianity* (1890).

TYRRELL, G.—*Christianity at the Cross Roads* (1909).

WALPOLE, G. H. S.—*This Time and its Interpretation* (1915); *The Kingdom of Heaven* (Paddock Lectures, 1909).

WINSTANLEY, E. W.—*Jesus and the Future* (1913).

WORSLEY, F. W.—*The Apocalypse of Jesus* (1912).

And, of course, the Commentaries of W. C. Allen and A. Plummer on St. Matthew; H. B. Swete on St. Mark; A. Plummer on St. Luke.

The dates of each work, and the edition referred to, are given in brackets.

The chief Jewish Pseudepigrapha quoted or alluded to are these, their dates being those ascribed to them by Dr. Charles—

*Jubilees*.—A Midrash (Commentary) on Genesis and Exodus. (c. 135–105 B.C.)

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

*The Ascension of Isaiah*.—Composite; contains “The Martyrdom of Isaiah.” (First century, A.D.)

*I Enoch*.—A composite work. Ch. i.—xxxvi. (before 170 B.C.); xxxvii.—lxxi. (The Similitudes or Parables, 94–64 B.C.); lxxii.—lxxxii. (c. 110 B.C.); lxxxiii.—xc. (The Dream-Visions, c. 166–161 B.C.); xci.—civ. (c. 95–79, or 70–64 B.C.).

*The Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs*.—The death-bed charges of the Sons of Jacob to their children (109–107 B.C.).

*The Sibylline Oracles*.—Of the fifteen original books and fragments (of which 9, 10, and 15 are lost), venerated at Rome, a Jewish author or authors took books 3, 4, and 5, and worked them up as evidence in defence of Judaism, and subsequent additions and emendations were made at intervals by Jewish and Christian writers. They date between c. 160 B.C. and the fifth century A.D. or later.

*The Assumption of Moses*.—The story of the taking up of Moses into heaven and his farewell words. Date, 7–30 A.D. (i.e., the book is contemporary with Our Lord).

2 *Enoch*.—(The book of the secrets of Enoch, or Slavonic Enoch.) Date, A.D. 1–50.

2 *Baruch*.—(The Apocalypse of Baruch.) Composite. Date, A.D. 50–90.

3 *Baruch*.—Composite Date, c. A.D. 150.

4 *Ezra*.—(2 Esdras in our Apocrypha.) Composite. Date, c. A.D. 120.

*The Psalms of Solomon*.—Date 70–40 B.C.

*The “Zadokite Fragment.”*—Describes a reform-movement from within the priesthood which took place about 196–176 B.C. Date, 18–8 B.C.



# THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST

---

## CHAPTER I

THERE can be few thinking men and women who do not pass through a time of deep spiritual dissatisfaction and discomfort, at least once every year, when the season of Advent comes round. They recognise, easily and readily enough, that the Second Coming of Our Lord is an article of the Church's faith ; the recurrence of the Advent Season does not allow them to forget it ; indeed, they witness to it every time that they worship, by the congregation's repetition of one or other of the three Creeds, in which they declare that He shall come again for judgment. But the singing of the customary Advent Hymns brings home to them, with painful emphasis, what at all events has hitherto been the Church's belief as to the nature of His coming ; and with her interpretation of it they find themselves profoundly and uncomfortably in disagreement. They believe in, and cherish, the Christian Revelation ; they profess themselves followers of Christ and loyal members of His Church ; they find in Christianity the satisfaction of their soul's need ; they recognise that the world's great and only need is Christianity ; they assent to its claim to be the one and only

## THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST

religion. But they feel that an intolerable burden is laid on them, an insult offered to their intelligence, even, and to the advance made by the human race in the apprehension and interpretation of reality, when they are asked to voice and to assent to the crude literalism and sensuous conceptions which previous ages have handed down.

How can such people sing *ex animo*, and without qualms and reservations, such words as these?—

Lo! He comes with clouds descending  
Once for favoured sinners slain ;  
Thousand thousand saints attending  
Swell the triumph of His train.<sup>1</sup>

Or these<sup>2</sup>—

Great God, what do I see and hear ?  
The end of things created ;  
The Judge of all men doth appear  
On clouds of glory seated.  
The trumpet sounds, the graves restore  
The dead that they contained before ;  
Prepare, my soul, to meet Him.

The dead in Christ are first to rise  
At that last trumpet's sounding,  
Caught up to meet Him in the skies,  
With joy their Lord surrounding.

The ungodly, filled with guilty fears,  
Behold His wrath prevailing;  
In woe they rise, but all their tears  
And sighs are unavailing;  
The day of grace is past and gone;  
Trembling they stand before His Throne,  
All unprepared to meet Him.

---

<sup>1</sup> By C. Wesley and J. Cennick, middle of 18th Cent.

<sup>2</sup> By several authors, early 19th Cent.

## THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST

It is clear, even to limited intelligences, that if Our Lord appeared, say, in England, He would not be visible in Australia, even if the angelic trump be audible in both hemispheres ; no one locality could contain the entire population of the world ; and how long would the opening and reading of the Books take ? The opened graves would only surrender corruption, and what of men devoured by beasts, or blown to pieces in an explosion ? These conceptions of a visible, physical, return of Our Lord, with the literal clouds and archangel's trumpet, the gathering of nations, and the Great Assize, are, to the educated mind, so much childishness, and more reminiscent of the staging of Wagnerian opera, or even pantomime, than provocative of awe. They are not less offensive to the spiritually minded, who see in them something derogatory to the majesty of Christ, and require a spiritual and not material interpretation of the last days, which they deem more in harmony with Our Lord's deepest and best teaching, and required by the essentially progressive nature of all Revelation.<sup>1</sup>

It is, of course, true that the writers of these and similar Hymns, and the preachers who at any time echo their sentiments, are but quoting or paraphrasing the words of Our Lord and His Apostles, as recorded in the New Testament ; and these words must command the respect of all men, both Christians and non-Christians alike. Thus, the Great Assize is described by St. Matthew (xxv. 31, *cf.* xxiv. 30) ; and the literal resurrection

---

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Latimer Jackson, Ch. ix.

## THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST

of the physical body may be inferred from St. Paul (1 Thess. iv. 15), although his words there must be taken with and qualified by those in 1 Cor. xv. 50 ff. But such mere transliteration will not stand ; these words and passages need more study and light, and more comparison with the rest of the teaching of Our Lord and His Apostles, before they render up their true meaning. And we shall not reach this true meaning until we have compared them also with the other current literature of the period, now, fortunately, made available for the student by the labours of Dr. Charles and other scholars ; only so will husk and kernel be separated, and the permanent and essential stand out from the temporary, transient, and accessory.

The clearest and fullest eschatological teaching of Our Lord is, of course, to be found in Mt. xxiv., and its parallels Mk. xiii., Lk. xxi., and there are a number of other passages in the Gospels bearing an eschatological character or phraseology, to all of which abundant parallels are to be found in the Jewish pseudepigraphical writings. It will be most convenient to take this central passage first by itself, and illustrate it from these books ; and then the other Gospel writings and expressions ; and then offer some comments and suggestions upon the problem in question.

“ And 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 end of the world ? ”

## THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST

(rather, as margin, “of the consummation of the age?”) v. 3.

Here, at once, we meet with three technical expressions, *παρουσία*, *συντέλεια*, *αιών*, translated respectively by “coming, end, world.”<sup>1</sup> For a discussion of their meaning and use, see pp. 53 ff. But for their use here by St. Matthew, we may compare 1 Enoch i. 3: “The Holy Great One will come forth from His dwelling.”

2 Enoch xxxii. 1: “My second coming.”

1 Enoch xvi. 1 (*Cf.* x. 12): “The day of the consummation, the great judgment in which the age shall be consummated.”

T. Reub. vi. 8: “The consummation<sup>2</sup> of the times.”

T. Levi x. 2, xiv. 1: “The end of the ages.”

T. Zeb. ix. 9: “The time of consummation.”

T. Benj. xi. 3: “The consummation of the age.”

Ass. Mos. i. 18: “The consummation of the end of the days.”

2 Baruch xxi. 8, xxx. 3: “The consummation of the times.” 12: “The consummation of those who have been righteous.” 17: “If a consummation had not been prepared for all.”

2 Enoch lxv. 8: “The great aeon.”

2 Baruch xliv. 15: “The world to come”; 1 Enoch lxxi. 15.

4 Ezra viii. 1: “This age—the age to come.”

*Cf.* Matt. xii. 32; Mark x. 30; Luke xx. 35.

<sup>1</sup> *Cf.* John vi. 39, 54: “The last day.”

<sup>2</sup> *τελέσιωσις*; see Charles’s note.

## THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST

“ And Jesus answered and said unto them, Take heed that no man lead you astray. For many shall come in My name, saying, I am the Christ ; and shall lead many astray. And ye shall hear of wars and rumours of wars ; see that ye be not troubled ; for these things must needs 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 earthquakes in divers places. But all these things are the beginning of travail. Then shall they deliver you up unto tribulation, and shall kill you ; and ye shall be hated of all the nations for My name’s sake. And then shall many stumble, and shall deliver up one another, and shall hate one another. And many false prophets shall arise, and shall lead many astray. And because iniquity shall be multiplied, the love of the many shall wax cold. But he that endureth to the end, the same shall be saved. And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in the whole world for a testimony unto all the nations ; and then shall the end come.”

(vv. 4-14.) *Cf.* Matt. x. 21, 34, 35 : “ And brother shall deliver up brother to death, and the father his child ; and children shall rise up against parents, and cause them to be put to death. . . . I came not to send peace, but a sword. For I came to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother . . . a man’s foes shall be they of his own household.” And Luke xii. 49 : “ I came to cast fire upon the earth.”

Here, Our Lord declares that the end shall be

## THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST

preceded by the appearance of false claimants to the Messiahship, and their success in gathering adherents ; by wars and rumours of wars, famines, and earthquakes ; by the persecution of His disciples; by the increase of wickedness ; by mutual hatred and strife, and by the evangelisation of the world. Similar predictions are found in—

1 Enoch i. 1 ; iv. 3 : “ The day of tribulation.”  
i. 5, 6, 7 :

“ And all shall be smitten with fear,  
And the watchers shall quake  
And great fear and trembling shall seize them  
unto the ends of the earth.

And the high mountains shall be shaken,  
And the high hills shall be made low,  
And shall melt like wax before the flame.

And the earth shall be wholly rent in sunder,  
And all that is upon the earth shall perish.  
And there shall be a judgment upon all men.”

xci. 5 : “ I know that violence must increase on the earth.”

c. 12 :

“ And in those days in one place the fathers together with their sons shall be smitten  
And brothers one with another shall fall in death.

Till the streams flow with their blood.  
For a man shall not withhold his hand from slaying his sons and his son’s sons,

## THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST

And the sinner shall not withhold his hand  
from his honoured brother :

From dawn till sunset they shall slay one  
another.”

2 Bar. lxx. 3, 6 :

“ And they shall hate one another,  
And provoke one another to fight. . . .”

• • • •

“ Then shall confusion fall upon all men,  
And some of them shall fall in battle,  
And some of them shall perish in anguish,  
And some of them shall be destroyed by  
their own.”

Sib. iii. 41–43 : “ For no man of wealth endowed  
with goods will give any part to another, but  
miserable meanness shall be among all mortals, and  
faith they shall never keep at all, . . . .”

4 Ezra v. 2 : “ Iniquity shall be increased above  
that which thou thyself now seest or that thou hast  
heard of long ago.”

xiii. 31 : “ Behold the days come when the  
Most High is about to deliver them that are upon  
the earth. And there shall come astonishment of  
mind upon the dwellers on earth ; and they shall  
plan to war one against another, city against city,  
place against place, people against people, and  
kingdom against kingdom.”

*Cf.* also 1 Enoch xcix. 5 ; T. Levi iv. 1 ;  
Isa. xix. 1, 2.

Compare Matt. xxiv. 19 : “ Woe to them that

## THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST

are with child and to them that give suck in those days ! ” with 2 Bar. x. 14 : “ For the barren shall above all rejoice, and those who have no sons shall be glad, and those who have sons shall have anguish.” Cf. Luke xxiii. 29 : “ Behold the days are coming, in which they shall say, Blessed are the barren, and the wombs that never bare, and the breasts that never gave suck.”

Compare xxiv. 21 : “ For then shall be great tribulation, such as hath not been from the beginning of the world until now, no, nor ever shall be,” with Ass. Mos. viii. 1 : “ And there shall come upon them a second visitation and wrath, such as hath not befallen them from the beginning until that time.” 1 Enoch xlv. 2 (cf. xcvi. 10) : “ the day of suffering and tribulation.” Dan. xii. 1 : “ And there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time.”

Compare xxiv. 22 : “ Those days shall be shortened,” with 2 Bar. xx. 1 : “ Therefore, behold ! the days come, and the times shall hasten more than the former, and the seasons shall speed on more than those that are past, and the years shall pass more quickly than the present (years).” For the “ elect,” cf. 1 Enoch xciii. 2 : “ The elect of the world ” ; 10 : “ The elect righteous.”

Compare xxiv. 5, 24 : “ There shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders ; so as to lead astray, if possible, even the elect,” with Sib. iii. 65 ff. : “ He (Beliar) shall perform many signs for men . . . nay, he deceives mortals, and many shall he deceive.

## THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST

Heb. faithful and elect and lawless too"; and 2 Bar. xlvi. 34.

Compare xxiv. 27: "As the lightning cometh forth from the east, and is seen even unto the west: so shall be the coming (*παρουσία*) of the Son of Man," with 2 Bar. liii. 9: "Now that lightning shone exceedingly, so as to illuminate the whole earth."

xxiv. 29 ff. describes the portents which shall precede the coming of the Son of Man, a passage couched in current eschatological language, and possessing abundant parallels: "But immediately after the tribulation of those days, the sun shall be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven" (St. Luke adds: "And upon the earth distress of nations, in perplexity for the roaring of the sea and the billows; men fainting for fear, and for expectation of the things which are coming on the world"), "and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken: and then shall appear the sign of the Son of Man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. And He shall send forth His angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together His elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other." Cf. Matt. xxvi. 64: "Henceforth ye shall see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of power, and coming on the clouds of heaven."

Here, compare 4 Ezra v. 1 ff.:

## THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST

“ Behold, the days come when the inhabitants  
of earth shall be seized with great panic,  
And the way of truth shall be hidden, and  
the land be barren of faith.  
And iniquity shall be increased . . .

Then shall the sun suddenly shine forth by  
night and the moon by day :  
And blood shall trickle forth from wood, and  
the stone utter its voice :  
The peoples shall be in commotion,  
The outgoings of the stars shall change.  
. . . the birds shall take to general flight,  
and the sea shall cast forth its fish.

And the earth o'er wide regions shall open,  
and the fire burst forth for a long period :  
The wild beasts shall desert their haunts, and  
women bear monsters.  
And one-year old children shall speak with  
their voices ; pregnant women shall bring  
forth untimely births at three or four  
months, and these shall live and dance.  
And suddenly shall the sown places appear  
unsown, and the full storehouses shall  
suddenly be found empty.

Salt waters shall be found in the sweet ;  
friends shall attack one another suddenly.  
Then shall intelligence hide itself, and wisdom  
withdraw to its chamber—by many shall  
be sought and not found.  
And unrighteousness and incontinency shall

## THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST

be multiplied upon the earth. One land shall also ask another and say: Is Righteousness—that doeth the right—passed through thee? And it shall answer, No.

And it shall be

In that time men shall hope and not obtain, shall labour and not prosper."

vi. 23: "And the trumpet shall sound aloud, at which all men, when they hear it, shall be struck with sudden fear."

ix. 3: "When in the world there shall appear quakings of places, tumults of peoples, schemings of nations, confusion of leaders, disquietude of princes, then shalt thou understand that it is of these things the Most High has spoken since the days that were aforetime from the beginning."

Sib. iv. 56 ff.: "Darkling night shall fall at the middle hour of day: the stars and the moon's disc shall fail from heaven. And the earth shaken by the upheaval of a mighty earthquake shall cast down headlong many cities and works of men. . . . Then there shall be all those evil works which men pray to be spared, wars, and murders, schisms and exiles."

Ass. Mos. x. 3 ff.:

"For the Heavenly One shall arise from His royal throne,

And He will go forth from His holy habitation With indignation and wrath on account of His sons.

And the earth shall tremble: to its confines shall it be shaken:

## THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST

And the high mountains be made low  
And the hills shall be shaken and fall.  
And the horns of the sun shall be broken and  
he shall be turned into darkness ;  
And the moon shall not give her light, and be  
turned wholly into blood.  
And the circle of the stars shall be disturbed.  
And the sea shall retire into the abyss,  
And the fountains of waters shall fail,  
And the rivers shall dry up.”

Isa. xiii. 10 : “ For the stars of heaven and the constellations thereof shall not give their light : the sun shall be darkened in his going forth, and the moon shall not cause her light to shine.” Ezek: xxxii. 7 ; Joel ii. 10, 31 ; iii. 15 ; Amos v. 20 ; viii. 9 ; Zeph. i. 15.

Dan. vii. 13 : “ Behold, there came with the clouds of heaven one like unto a son of man.”

Zech. xii. 12 : “ And the land shall mourn, every family apart ” ; ii. 6 : “ I have spread you abroad as the four winds of heaven ” ; in the LXX., “ from the four winds will I gather you ” ; Deut. xxx. 4.

Also T. Levi iv. 1 ; 2 Bar. xxvii. ; Jub. xxiii. 18 ff. ; see Charles, *Pseudep*, p. 375.

The “ Great Assize ” is described in Matt. xxv. 31 ff.—

“ But when the Son of Man shall come in His glory, and all the angels with Him,<sup>1</sup> then shall

---

<sup>1</sup> Cf. John i. 51 : “ Ye shall see the heaven opened, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man.” Matt. xxvi. 53 : “ Shall even now send me more than twelve legions of angels.”

## THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST

He sit on the throne of His glory<sup>1</sup> and before Him shall be gathered all the nations: and He shall separate them one from another, as the shepherd separateth the sheep from the goats: and He shall set the sheep on the right hand, but the goats on the left. Then shall the King say unto them on His right hand, Come, ye blessed of My Father, inherit the Kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: for I was an hungred, and ye gave Me meat: I was thirsty and ye gave Me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took Me in: naked, and ye clothed Me: I was sick, and ye visited Me: I was in prison, and ye came unto Me. Then shall the righteous answer Him, saying, Lord, when saw we Thee an hungred, and fed Thee? or athirst, and gave Thee drink? And when saw we Thee a stranger, and took Thee in? or naked, and clothed Thee? And when saw we Thee sick, or in prison, and came unto Thee? And the King shall answer and say unto them. Verily, I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye did it unto one of these My brethren, even these least, ye did it unto Me. Then shall He say also unto them on the left hand: Depart from Me, ye cursed, into the eternal fire which is prepared for the devil and his angels: for I was an hungred, and ye gave Me no meat; I was thirsty and ye gave Me no drink: I was a stranger, and ye took Me not in; naked, and ye clothed Me not; sick, and in prison, and ye visited Me not. Then shall they also answer, saying, Lord, when

---

<sup>1</sup> Rev. xx. 11.

## THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST

saw we Thee an hungred, or athirst, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not minister unto Thee ? Then shall He answer them, saying, Verily, I say unto you. Inasmuch as ye did it not unto one of these least, ye did it not unto Me. And these shall go away into eternal punishment ; but the righteous into eternal life.”<sup>1</sup>

With this familiar passage, *cf.* 4 Ezra vii. 33, 37, 38:

“ And the Most High shall be revealed upon the throne of judgment :

• • • • •  
And then shall the Most High say to the nations that have been raised [from the dead] ;

Look now and consider Whom ye have denied, Whom ye have not served, Whose commandments ye have despised.

Look, now, before you :

here delight and refreshment,  
there fire and torments ! ”

2 Bar. lxxii. 2 : “ After the signs have come, of which thou wast told before, when the nations become turbulent, and the time of my Messiah is come, He shall both summon all the nations, and some of them He shall spare, and some of them He shall slay.”

Joel iii. 12 : “ Let the nations bestir themselves, and come up to the valley of Jehoshaphat ; for there will I sit to judge all the nations round about.”

---

<sup>1</sup> Cf. xvi. 27.

## THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST

For the sheep and goats, *cf.* Ezekiel's parable of the cattle and sheep and goats, xxxiv. 17.

Dan. xii. 2: "Some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt."

A close parallel is found in 1 Enoch lxii. 1-5: so close that Mr. Burkitt argues that Our Lord must have been familiar with the passage—

" And thus the Lord commanded the kings, and the mighty and the exalted, and those who dwell on the earth, and said :

' Open your eyes and lift up your horns if ye are able to recognise the Elect One.'

And the Lord of Spirits seated Him on the throne of His glory,

And the Spirit of righteousness was poured out upon Him,

And the word of His mouth slays all the Sinners.

And all the unrighteous are destroyed from before His face.

And there shall stand up in that day all the kings, and the mighty.

And the exalted and those who hold the earth.

And they shall see and recognise

How He sits on the throne of His glory,

And righteousness is judged before Him,

And no lying word is spoken before Him.

And one portion of them shall look on the other,

And they shall be terrified.

And they shall be downcast of countenance,

## THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST

And pain shall seize them,  
When they see that Son of Man  
Sitting on the throne of His glory.”

cii. 3 : “ The Great Glory.”

*Cf.* Luke xxi. 36 : “ That ye may prevail . . . to stand before the Son of Man.”

v. 6 speaks of “ Him who rules over all ” ; *cf.* Matt. xxviii. 18 : “ All authority hath been given Me in heaven and on earth.”

For “ His right hand,” *cf.* T. Benj. x. 6 : “ Ye shall see . . . rising on the right hand in gladness.”

A strikingly close parallel, too close to have been accidental, is found in T. Jos. i. 5, 6 : “ I was beset with hunger, and the Lord Himself nourished me ” ;

“ I was alone, and God comforted me ;  
I was sick, and the Lord visited me ;  
I was in prison, and My God showed favour unto me ;  
In bonds, and He released me.”

With the same passage, *cf.* 2 Enoch ix. 1 : “ This place is reserved for the righteous, who . . . give bread to the hungering, and cover the naked with clothing, and raise up the fallen, and help injured orphans . . . and for them is prepared this place for eternal inheritance.”

And 4 Ezra ix. 10 : “ For all who failed to recognise Me in their lifetime, although I dealt bountifully with them.”

In 2 Enoch x. 4 is described a place of fiery torments (and partly of piercing cold) which is

## THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST

“prepared for” the wicked, “for eternal inheritance.” And 1 Enoch liv. mentions “a deep valley with burning fire” with “iron chains of immeasurable weight,” which “are being prepared for the hosts of Azazel.”

St. Luke’s version of the same utterance of Our Lord is very similar, but has some variations. With one of these there are two parallels: Lk. xxi. 28, “But when these things begin to come to pass, look up, and lift up your heads; because your redemption draweth nigh.” Here, *cf.* 1 Enoch li. 2: “The day has drawn nigh that they should be saved”; and 2 Bar. xxiii. 7: “For truly my redemption has drawn nigh, and is not far distant as aforetime.”

Other passages and phrases of an eschatological character are—

Matt. v. 22: “The hell (Gehenna) of fire.” This, a common expression in Our Lord’s mouth, is no less common in the Jewish literature;<sup>1</sup> it is, in fact, one of the stock phrases and conceptions used to describe the punishment and fate of the wicked, whether angels or men. Gehenna is the transliteration of Ge-Hinnom, *i.e.*, the Valley of Hinnom, a ravine on the S. of Jerusalem, where the Israelites had at one time offered human sacrifices to Moloch;<sup>2</sup> and had been condemned by Josiah<sup>3</sup> to be kept as a place for the destruction of refuse. Here were

<sup>1</sup> *Cf.* Isa. lxvi. 24.

<sup>2</sup> 2 Chron. xxviii. 3, xxxiii. 6.

<sup>3</sup> 2 Kin. xxiii. 10.

## THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST

fires perpetually burning, and the whole place was a scene of ghastly and unpleasant corruption, and it became a natural parable for Jewish teachers. Cf. 1 Enoch xxvii. 2 : " This accursed valley is for those who are accursed for ever " ; xc. 26, 27 : " And I saw at that time how a like abyss was opened in the midst of the earth, full of fire, and they brought those blinded sheep (*i.e.*, apostate Jews) and they were all judged and found guilty and cast into this fiery abyss and they burned ; now this abyss was to the right of that house." <sup>1</sup>

For the conception of " fire," we may compare 1 Enoch x. 6 : " On the day of the great judgment he shall be cast into the fire " ; x. 13 : " The abyss of fire " ; xcvi. 3 : " Their spirits shall be cast into the furnace of fire " ; c. 9 : " In blazing flames burning worse than fire shall ye burn " ; Ps. Sol. xv. 6 : " The flame of fire and the wrath against the unrighteous shall not touch him."

A parallel figure is that of the " worm " ; <sup>2</sup> for which cf. 1 Enoch xlvi. 6 : " worms shall be their bed " ; Isa. lxvi. 24.

In Matt. vii. 13, Our Lord alludes to the current doctrine of the " Two Ways " : <sup>3</sup> " Enter ye in by the narrow gate : for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction ; and many be they that enter in thereby. For narrow is the gate, and straitened the way, that leadeth unto life, and few be they that find it."

---

<sup>1</sup> Hinnom was S. of Jerusalem.

<sup>2</sup> Mark ix. 48.

<sup>3</sup> Derived ultimately from Jer. xxi. 8.

## THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST

Here, *cf.* 4 Ezra vii. 4, 5, 12, 13: “There is a sea lying in a wide expanse so that it is broad and vast; but the entrance thereto lies in a narrow space so as to be like a river. He then, that really desireth to go upon the sea to behold it or to navigate it, if he pass not through the narrow part, how shall he be able to come into the broad? . . . The ways of this world became narrow and sorrowful and painful, and full of perils coupled with great toils. But the ways of the future world are broad and safe, and yield the fruit of immortality”; 2 Enoch xxx. 15: “I . . . showed him the two ways, the light and the darkness, and I told him ‘This is good, and that bad.’”

In Matt. viii. 11 appears another common conception, the Messianic banquet: “Many shall come from the East and the West, and shall sit down<sup>1</sup> with Abraham and Isaac and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven.” *Cf.* xxvi. 29: . “I will not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine, until that day when I drink it new with you in My Father’s kingdom.” Lk. xiv. 15: “Blessed is he that shall eat bread in the Kingdom of God.”

Here, *cf.* 1 Enoch lxii. 14: “With that Son of Man shall they eat”; 4 Ezra ix. 19: “a world made ready with both an unfailing table and an inexplorable pasture.”

Isa. xxv. 6: “In this mountain shall the Lord of Hosts make unto all peoples a feast of fat things,

---

<sup>1</sup> Lit. “recline at table.”

## THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST

a feast of wines on the lees, of fat things full of marrow, of wines on the lees well refined.”<sup>1</sup>

For the casting of the unworthy sons of the kingdom out into the “outer darkness,” and “the weeping and the gnashing of teeth”<sup>2</sup> *cf.* 4 Ezra vii. 125: “Our faces shall be blacker than darkness.”

In Matt. viii. 29, the demons beseech Our Lord not to torment them “before the time”; *i.e.*, they recognised Him as the Messiah, and He neither disallowed their witness (in Lk. iv. 41, He “suffered not the demons to speak, because they knew Him to be the Christ”), nor their implication that there was a time for judgment and torment already fixed.

For this we may *cf.* 1 Enoch xvi. 1: “From the days of the slaughter and destruction and death of the giants, from the souls of whose flesh the spirits, having gone forth, shall destroy without incurring judgment . . . thus shall they destroy until the day of the consummation, the great judgment in which the age shall be consummated.”

The “day of judgment,” also called “that day,” “that great day,” deriving ultimately from Amos v. 18, *cf.* Joel i. 15, Isa. ii. 12, etc., is too common a conception in both Gospels and Jewish literature to need further quotation; the student may care to

---

<sup>1</sup> In 2 Bar. xxix. 4, 4 Ezra vi. 49 ff., it is said that Behemoth and Leviathan are being kept in order to provide the substance of this banquet, which throws light on the obscure verse Ps. lxxiv. 14.

<sup>2</sup> Note the articles.

## THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST

refer to 1 Enoch x. 6, l. 1, liv. 6, lx. 6, 25, lxi. 8, lxii., lxxxiv. 4, xci. 15, xcvi. 10, ciii. 8; Sib. iii. 91, 670, iv. 41, 183; 4 Ezra vii. 33; Ps. Sol. ii. 37, xv. 12.

In Matt. x. 33, we read: “ Whosoever shall deny Me before man, him will I also deny before My Father which is in Heaven.”

For this, *cf.* 1 Enoch xxxviii. 2: “ Those who have denied the Lord of Spirits ”; xlvi. 10: “ They have denied the Lord of Spirits and His Anointed.”

With Matt. xi. 25: “ I thank Thee . . . that Thou didst hide these things from the wise and prudent, and didst reveal them unto babes ”; *cf.* 1 Enoch xlvi. 3: “ The Son of Man . . . who revealeth all the treasures of that which is hidden.”

Another strongly eschatological passage is Matt. xiii. 37 ff., the parable of the tares: “ He that sowed the good seed is the Son of Man; and the field is the world; and the good seed, these are the sons of the kingdom; and the tares are the sons of the evil one; and the enemy that sowed them is the devil; and the harvest is the consummation of the age (*τυντέλεια τοῦ αἰώνος*); and the reapers are angels.<sup>1</sup> As therefore the tares are gathered up and burned with fire; so shall it be in the consummation of the age. The Son of Man shall send forth His angels, and they shall gather out of

---

<sup>1</sup> Cf. John iv. 35: “ The fields . . . are white already unto harvest.”

## THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST

His Kingdom all things that cause stumbling, and them that do iniquity, and shall cast them into the furnace of fire ; there shall be the weeping and the gnashing of teeth. Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father.” And xiii. 47 ff., the parable of the net : “ The angels shall come forth, and sever the wicked from among the righteous, and shall cast them into the furnace of fire ; there shall be the weeping and the gnashing of teeth.”

With this passage, *cf.* 2 Bar. lxx. 2—

“ Behold ! the days come, and it shall be when the time of the age has ripened,  
And the harvest of its evil and good seeds has come,  
That the Mighty One will bring upon the earth and its inhabitants and upon its rulers Perturbation of spirit and stupor of heart.”

4 Ezra iv. 28 : “ The evil concerning which thou askest me is sown, but the ingathering of it is not yet come.”

1 Enoch c. 4—

“ In those days the angels shall descend into the secret places,  
And gather together into one place all those who brought down sin, . . . ”

Joel iii. 13 : “ Put ye in the sickle, for the harvest is ripe.”

1 Enoch xlivi. describes “ other lightnings and the stars of heaven,” and explains these as “ the holy who dwell on the earth and believe in the name of the Lord of Spirits for ever and ever.”

## THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST

1 Enoch xxxix. 7: "The righteous and elect before Him shall be strong as fiery lights."

civ. 2: "Now ye shall shine as the lights of heaven."

*Cf.* Dan. xii. 3: "They that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever."

cviii. 14: "The righteous shall be resplendent."

Wisd. iii. 7—

"In the time of their visitation they shall shine forth,

And as sparks among stubble they shall run to and fro."

4 Ezra vii. 97, 123: "Their face is destined to shine as the sun . . . the faces of such as have practised abstinence shall shine above the stars."

*Cf.* 2 Bar. li. 3, 10.

In Matt. xix. 28, a fresh expression appears: "In the regeneration (*παλιγγενεσία*, *cf.* Acts iii. 21) when the Son of Man shall sit on the throne of His glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel."<sup>1</sup>

For this, *cf.* 2 Bar. xxxii. 6: "When the Mighty One will renew His creation."

4 Ezra vii. 75: "Until those times come in which Thou shalt renew the creation." Jub. i. 29: "The day of the [new] creation when the heavens and the earth shall be renewed."

---

<sup>1</sup> Discussed by Dalman, p. 177.

## THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST

1 Enoch cviii. 12: "I will seat each on the throne of his honour. *Cf.* Asc. Isa. ix. 10, 18.

The phrase "the throne of His glory" is common. See 1 Enoch xlv. 3, xlvii. 3, li. 3, lv. 4, lx. 1, lxi. 8, lxii., lxix. 27, xc. 20; Dan. vii. 9 ff.; T. Jud. xxv. 1: "I and my brethren shall be chiefs of the tribes of Israel."

*Cf.* Matt. xx. 21: "Command that these my two sons may sit, one on Thy right hand, and one on Thy left hand, in Thy kingdom."

For the next verses, Matt. xix. 29, 30: "Everyone that hath left houses, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or children, or lands, for My Name's sake, shall receive a hundred fold,<sup>1</sup> and shall inherit eternal life. But many shall be last that are first; and first that are last"; *cf.* 2 Enoch l. 5: "Whoever of you spends gold or silver for his brother's sake, he will receive ample treasure in the world to come."

1 Enoch xl. 9: "Those who inherit eternal life."

4 Ezra v. 42: "Just as there is no retardation of them that are last, even so there is no hastening of those that are first."

2 Bar. li. 13: "For the first shall receive the last, those whom they were expecting, and the last those of whom they used to hear that they had passed away."

With Matt. xxii. 14: "Many are called, but few

---

<sup>1</sup> St. Luke: "Manifold more in this time."

## THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST

chosen," *cf.* 4 Ezra viii. 1: "This age the Most High has made for many, but the age to come for few."

With Matt. xxii. 30: "In the resurrection they neither marry, nor are given in marriage, but are as angels in heaven," *cf.* 2 Bar. li. 10—

"For in the heights of that world shall they dwell,

And they shall be made like unto the angels,  
And be made equal to the stars,

And they shall be changed into every form  
they desire,

From beauty into loveliness,

And from light into the splendour of glory."

1 Enoch civ. 6: "Ye shall be companions of the hosts of heaven." *Cf.* xv. 3 ff.

On the passage Matt. xxii. 23 ff., Dr. Charles says: "The conception of the future life portrayed in Our Lord's reply tallies almost exactly in thought and partially in word with that described in (1 Enoch) xci.—civ., according to which there is to be a resurrection indeed, but a resurrection of the spirit."<sup>1</sup>

With Matt. xxiii. 38: "Your house is left unto you desolate," *cf.* 1 Enoch lxxxix. 56: "I saw that He forsook that their house and their tower."

Jer. xii. 7: "I have forsaken mine house, I have

---

<sup>1</sup> *The Book of Enoch*, p. cviii.

## THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST

cast off mine heritage"; xxii. 5: "This house shall become a desolation."

With Matt. xxiv. 36: "But of that day and hour knoweth no one, not even the angels of heaven, neither the Son, but the Father only," *cf.* 2 Enoch xxiv. 3: "For not to my angels have I told my secret"; xl. 3: "Not even the angels see their number."

With Luke x. 18 ff. (the return of the Seventy): "I beheld Satan fallen as lightning from heaven. Behold, I have given you authority to tread upon serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy; and nothing shall in any wise hurt you. Howbeit, in this rejoice not, that the spirits are subject unto you; but rejoice that your names are written in heaven" (*cf.* Matt. xii. 28: "How can one enter into the house of the strong man, and spoil his goods, except he first bind the strong man?"—in the passage about casting out devils through Beelzebub; Isa. xiv. 12: "How art thou fallen from heaven, O day star, son of the morning!").

*Cf.* T. Sim. vi. 5—

"For the Lord God shall appear on earth,  
And Himself save men.

Then shall all the spirits of deceit be trodden  
under foot,

And men shall rule over wicked spirits."

T. Levi xviii. 12—

"And Beliar shall be bound by Him,  
And He shall give power to His children  
to tread upon the evil spirits."

## THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST

1 Enoch xlvi. 3: "The books of the living." civ. 1: "Your names are written before the glory of the Great One."

cviii. 3, 7: "Their names shall be blotted out of the book of life and out of the holy books, . . . for some of them are written and inscribed above in the heaven." *Cf.* Dan. vii. 10, xii. 1; 4 Ezra vi. 20.

With Luke xiv. 14: "The resurrection of the just," *cf.* Sib. iv. 187: "All who are godly shall live again on earth." In T. Benj. x. 6-8, three stages of resurrection are noted, of the patriarchs, then of Israel, then of all men, good and evil.

With John v. 29: "They that have done good, unto the resurrection of life," *cf.* Ps. Sol. iii. 16: "They that fear the Lord shall rise to life eternal."

With Luke xvi. 8, John xii. 36: "Sons of the light," *cf.* 1 Enoch lxi. 12: "Every spirit of light," cviii. 11: "The generation of light."

With Luke xvi. 9: "The eternal tabernacles," *cf.* 2 Ezra ii. 11: "The eternal tabernacles."

With Luke xvi. 11: "Unrighteous mammon," *cf.* 1 Enoch lxiii. 10: "Unrighteous gain."

In the parable of Dives and Lazarus, Luke xvi. 19 ff., Dives sees Lazarus in Abraham's bosom. It was held that Heaven and Hell were in full view

## THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST

of one another; *cf.* the passages in the Psalms where the righteous rejoice in seeing the punishment of the wicked (*e.g.*, xxxvii. 34, lli. 6, xci. 8, etc.); and Isa. xiv. 9 ff.

Thus, 4 Ezra vii. 36—

“ And then shall the pit of torment appear,  
And over against it the place of refreshment;  
The furnace of Gehenna shall be made  
manifest, and over against it the Paradise  
of delight.”

Ass. Mos. x. 10—

“ And thou shalt look from on high and shalt  
see thine enemies in Gehenna,  
And thou shalt recognise them and rejoice  
And thou shalt give thanks and confess Thy  
Creator.”

Dives appeals to Abraham, who is thus invested with the office of “ sinner’s friend ”; for which doctrine *cf.* 2 Enoch liii. 1: “ And now, my children, do not say, ‘ Our father is standing before God, and is praying for our sins,’ for there is no helper of any man who has sinned.” (*Cf.* 2 Macc. xv. 14; Jos. Ant. i. 13. 3; Matt. xxvii. 47, 49, iii. 9 (?); Heb. vii. 25.)

He asks that Lazarus may quench his thirst, for he is “ in anguish in this flame ”; *cf.* 4 Ezra viii. 59: “ As the things aforesaid abide for you, so thirst and anguish await them ”; 1 Enoch xxii. 11: “ Their spirits shall be set apart in this great pain ”; c. 7: “ The day of strong anguish.”

Isa. lxvi. 24: “ Neither shall their fire be quenched.”

## THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST

For the word “Paradise” in Luke xxiii. 43 (the Word to the Penitent Thief), *cf.* 1 Enoch xxxii. 3 : “The Garden of Righteousness”; lx. 8 : “The garden where the elect and righteous dwell”; lxi. 12 : “The garden of life”; 4 Ezra viii. 52 : “For you is opened Paradise”; T. Levi xviii. 10 : “He shall open the gates of Paradise.”

With John iii. 19 :<sup>1</sup> “This is the judgment, that the light is come into the world,” *cf.* 2 Enoch xlvi. 3 : “When the Lord shall send a great light, then there will be judgment for the just and the unjust,” *cf.* John viii. 12 : “I am the light of the world.”

With John v. 22 : “He hath given all judgment unto the Son,” *cf.* 1 Enoch lxix. 27 : “The sum of judgment was given unto the Son of Man.”

With John x., the Allegory of the Sheepfold, *cf.* 1 Enoch lxxxiii. xc., where the Israelites are described under the figure of sheep, and God is called “the Lord of the sheep”; Ezek. xxxiv.

With John viii. 12 : “I am the light of the world; he that followeth Me shall not walk in the darkness, but shall have the light of life,” *cf.* 1 Enoch xlviii. 4 : “He shall be the light of the Gentiles.”<sup>2</sup>

With John xii. 31, xvi. 11 : “The prince of this

---

<sup>1</sup> Probably the Evangelist’s comment.

<sup>2</sup> Deriving, of course, from Isa. xlvi. 6.

## THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST

world," *cf.* Mart. Isa. ii. 4: "The angel of lawlessness, who is the ruler of this world" (*i.e.*, Beliar).

In St. John is very evident the dualistic conception of the universe, which is characteristic of Jewish eschatology (as well as of the later gnosticism). It is this thought that largely induced the conception of a new heaven and earth, because "this world lieth in the evil one," and therefore only fit to be destroyed; but Our Lord, while not contradicting this dualism, regarded it as only temporary, and this world as both possible and essentially good.

With John xiv. 2: "In My Father's House are many mansions" (*marg.*, "abiding-places"), *cf.*, 1 Enoch xxxix. 4: "I saw another vision, the dwelling-places of the holy, and the resting-places of the righteous."

2 Enoch lxi. 2: "In the great time are many mansions prepared for men."

With John xvi. 8: "And He, when He is come, will convict the world in respect of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment," *cf.* T. Jud. xx. 5: "The spirit of truth testifieth all things, and accuseth all"; 1 Enoch i. 9—

"And to convict all flesh,  
Of all the works of their ungodliness which  
they have ungodly committed."

A very remarkable and interesting parallel to

## THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST

the situation and effect ascribed to Our Lord's Passion is found in Ass. Mos. ix. 7, x. 1, where Taxo (*i.e.*, Eleazar—2 Macc. vi. 10) says that his and his sons' deaths rather than transgress will bring about the promised salvation: “Let us die rather than transgress the commands of the Lord of Lords, the God of our fathers. For if we do this and die, our blood shall be avenged before the Lord. And then His kingdom shall appear throughout all His creation.”

It should be sufficiently evident by this time how deeply lie the roots of Our Lord's eschatological teaching in the current literature and conceptions of His time and nation. In word and thought, the parallels are far too close and too numerous to have been accidental. And it is not only in eschatology that we notice this. In a number of other passages dealing with other subjects we notice similar parallelisms.

The description in Matt. iii. 16 of the opening of the heavens, and the appearance of the Holy Spirit as a dove, and the voice of God the Father, must have come from Our Lord Himself (if it be genuine), and with it we must at once compare T. Levi xviii. 6, 7—

“ The heavens shall be opened,  
And from the temple of glory shall come upon  
him sanctification,  
With the Father's voice as from Abraham to  
Isaac.

## THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST

And the glory of the Most High shall be uttered over him,

And the spirit of understanding and sanctification shall rest upon him."

T. Jud. xxiv. 2—

"And the heavens shall be opened unto him,  
To pour out the spirit, (even) the blessing of  
the Holy Father."

With the words "My Beloved Son" (and the phrase "The Beloved" in Eph. i. 6, *cf.* Jn. iii. 35, x. 17), *cf.* its frequent recurrence as a technical title of the Messiah in the *Ascension of Isaiah*.<sup>1</sup>

With Matt. iv. 17: "Repent ye; for the kingdom of heaven is at hand," *cf.* Ass. Mos. i. 18: "The day of repentance in the visitation wherewith the Lord will visit them in the consummation of the end of the days."

Dr. Savage has drawn out in great and interesting detail the Jewish character of the Sermon on the Mount, in his *Gospel of the Kingdom*; but we may note one or two of the more striking parallels.

With Our Lord's going up on to a mountain<sup>2</sup> we may compare 1 Enoch xxv. 3: "This high mountain, which thou hast seen, whose summit is like the throne of God, is His throne, where the Holy Great One, the Lord of Glory, the Eternal

<sup>1</sup> For its use, see J. A. Robinson, *Ephesians*, p. 229; Charles, *Asc. Isa.*, p. 3; *cf.* p. 41 below.

<sup>2</sup> *Cf.* Mt. xvii. 1; Mk. iii. 13.

## THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST

King, will sit, when He shall come down to visit the earth with goodness."

With Matt. v. 3 : "Blessed are the poor in spirit; for theirs is the kingdom of heaven," *cf.* T. Jud. xxv. 4 : "They who were poor for the Lord's sake shall be made rich." (Charles brackets as marginal gloss.)

Sib. iii. 767 : "He will raise up His Kingdom for all ages."

Ass. Mos. x. 1 : "His Kingdom shall appear throughout all His Creation."

With v. 8 : "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God," *cf.* 4 Ezra vii. 98 : "They are hastening to behold the face of Him whom in life they served, and from whom they are destined to receive their reward in glory"; Ps. xxiv. 4.

With v. 9 : "Blessed are the peace-makers, for they shall be called the sons of God," *cf.* 2 Enoch lii. 11 : "Blessed is he who implants peace and love."

With v. 11 : "Blessed are ye when men shall reproach ye, and persecute you, and say all manner of evil against you falsely, for My sake . . . for great is your reward in heaven"; *cf.* 1 Enoch cviii. 10 : "He hath assigned them their recompense, because they have been found to be such as loved heaven more than their life in the world, and though they were trodden under foot of wicked

## THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST

men, and experienced abuse and reviling from them and were put to shame, yet they blessed Me."

With v. 18: "Till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass away from the law, till all things be accomplished," *cf.* 2 Bar. xix. 1, 2—

"Wherefore at that time he appointed for them a covenant and said:

'Behold, I have placed before you life and death,'

And he called heaven and earth to witness against them.

For he knew that his time was but short, But that heaven and earth endure always."

With v. 19: "Whosoever shall do and teach them [the commandments], he shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven,"<sup>1</sup> *cf.* T. Levi xiii. 9: "Whosoever teaches noble things and does them, shall be enthroned with kings."

4 Ezra viii. 29: "Regard them that have gloriously taught Thy Law."

With v. 22: "Every one that is angry with his brother [without cause] shall be in danger of the judgment," *cf.* 2 Enoch xliv. 2: "He who vents anger on any man without injury, the Lord's great anger will cut him down, he who spits on the face of man reproachfully, will be cut down at the Lord's great judgment."

---

<sup>1</sup> *Cf.* vii. 24, 26.

## THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST

With v. 28 : “ Every one that looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery already with her in his heart,” *cf.* T. Iss. vii. 2 : “ I never committed fornication by the uplifting of my eyes.”

T. Reub. iii. 10—

“ Pay no heed to the face of a woman,  
Nor associate with another man’s wife ” ;

vi. 1—

“ If you wish to be pure in mind, guard your  
senses from every woman ” ;

Prov. vi. 25 ; and T. Benj. viii. 2—

“ Lust not after her beauty in thine heart ;  
Neither let her take thee with her eyelids.”

With v. 34 : “ Swear not at all, neither by the heaven, for it is the throne of God ; nor by the earth, for it is the footstool of His feet ; nor by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the great King. Neither shalt thou swear by thy head, for thou canst not make one hair white or black. But let your speech be yea, yea ; nay, nay,” *cf.* 2 Enoch xlix. 1 : “ I swear not by any oath, neither by heaven nor by earth, nor by any other creature which God created.”

“ The Lord said : ‘ There is no oath in Me, nor injustice, but truth.’ If there is no truth in men, let them swear by the words ‘ yea, yea,’ or else, nay, nay.’ ” Isa. lxvi. 1.

With v. 44 : “ Love your enemies, and pray for them that persecute you,” *cf.* T. Jos. xviii. 2 : “ If

## THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST

anyone seeketh to do evil unto you, do well unto him, and pray for him."

With vi. 19 : " Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon the earth," etc., *cf.* T. Levi xiii. 5—

" Work righteousness, therefore, my children, upon the earth,

That ye may have it as a treasure in heaven."

2 Bar. xiv. 12: " They have with Thee a store of works preserved in treasuries."

With vi. 22 : " If thine eye be single," *cf.* T. Iss. iii. 4 : Walking as I did in singleness of eye," and T. Dan. ii. 5.

With vi. 24 : " No man can serve two masters," etc., *cf.* T. Jud. xviii. 6—

" He is a slave to two contrary passions,

And cannot obey God,

Because they have blinded his soul,

And he walketh in the day as in the night."

With vii. 2: " With what measure ye mete, it shall be measured unto you," *cf.* T. Zeb. v. 3 : " Even as a man doeth to his neighbour, even so also will the Lord do to him."

With Matt. x. 28 : " Him which is able to destroy both body and soul in hell," *cf.* 1 Enoch xxii. 13 : " Their spirits shall not be slain in the day of judgment."

## THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST

With Matt. xi. 2 ff., the question of St. John Baptist through his disciples, whether Jesus were the Messiah or no, and His reply,<sup>1</sup> *cf.* 2 Bar. xxix. 6: “Those who have hungered shall rejoice: moreover, also, they shall behold marvels every day”; and 4 Ezra xiii. 50: “And then shall he show them very many wonders.”

With Matt. xi. 29: “Take My yoke upon you,” *cf.* 2 Enoch xxxiv. 1: “They have rejected . . . my yoke”; and 2 Bar. xli. 3: “The yoke of Thy law.”

With Matt. xii. 35: “The good man out of his good treasure bringeth forth good things: and the evil man out of his evil treasure bringeth forth evil things,” *cf.* T. Asher i. 9: “The treasure of the inclination is filled with an evil spirit.”

With Matt. xii. 36, 37: “Every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment. For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned,” *cf.* 1 Enoch xcvi. 6: “All the words of your unrighteousness shall be read out before the Great Holy One.”

With Matt. xv. 14: “If the blind guide the blind, both shall fall into a pit,” *cf.* T. Reub. ii. 9: “Leadeth the youth as a blind man to a pit.”

---

<sup>1</sup> *Cf.* John vii. 31: “When the Christ shall come, will He do more signs than those which this man hath done?”

## THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST

With the list of sins given in Matt. xv. 19, *cf.* similar lists in Gal. v. 21; Rom. i. 29; Wisd. xiv. 25; T. Reub. iii. 3; T. Judah xvi. 1; 2 Enoch x. 4; 3 Bar. iv. 17, viii. 5, xiii. 4. Charles, *Pseudep.* II., p. 528, says that such lists were part of the stock-in-trade of Jewish as of all ancient writers.

With Matt. xvi. 26: “For what shall a man be profited, if he shall gain the whole world and forfeit his life? or what shall a man give in exchange for his life?” *cf.* 2 Bar. li. 15—

“For what then have men lost their life,

And for what have those who were on the earth exchanged their soul?”

But the sentiment is not confined to Judaism; see Plat. Rep. 589E, 505B; Hom. Il. 9. 401; Eurip. Orest. 1156.

In Matt. xvii. 11 ff., Our Lord accepts the disciples’ query about the coming of Elijah, and declares that St. John Baptist was “Elijah.” This return of Elijah was also a current doctrine among the Jews, Mal. iv. 5; *cf.* 4 Ezra vi. 26 (see note): “The men who have been taken up, who have not tasted death from their birth, shall appear” (*i.e.*, Enoch, Gen. v. 24, and Elijah, 2 Kings ii. 11), and vii. 28: “My Son the Messiah shall be revealed together with those who are with him.” The same acceptance of current doctrine underlies the appearance of Moses and Elijah at the Transfiguration; and *cf.* Matt. xvi. 14.

## THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST

In Matt. xviii. 10, Our Lord lends countenance to the doctrine of guardian angels; *cf.* 1 Enoch c. 5: "Over all the righteous and holy He will appoint guardians from amongst the holy angels." Ps. xci. 11.

With Our Lord's answer to the Scribe about the great commandment in the Law:<sup>1</sup> "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind . . . Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself" (quoting Deut. vi. 5, Lev. xix. 18), *cf.* T. Dan. v. 3—

"Love the Lord through all your life,  
And one another with a true heart."

T. Iss. v. 2—

"Love the Lord and your neighbour."

vii. 6—

"I loved the Lord;  
Likewise also every man with all my heart."

T. Benj. iii. 3: "Fear ye the Lord, and love your neighbour."

For the influence of the Testaments on Our Lord's teaching, see Charles's edition of this work.

With Our Lord's teaching about humility in Matt. xxiii. 1 ff., Lk. xiv. 7, xviii. 9, *cf.* 4 Ezra viii. 48 ff.: "On this account thou shalt be honourable before the Most High; because thou hast humbled thyself, as it becomes thee, and hast not assigned thyself a place among the righteous; and

---

<sup>1</sup> Matt. xxii. 36 ff.

## THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST

so thou shalt receive the greater glory." For the "woes," *cf.* Isa. v. 8; Hab. ii. 6; 1 Enoch xciv. 6; xcix. 11.

With Matt. xxvi. 24: "Good were it for that man if he had not been born," *cf.* 1 Enoch xxxviii. 2: "It had been good for them if they had not been born"; and 2 Enoch xli. 2; 4 Ezra iv. 12; 2 Bar. x. 6. (A not unusual expression.)

With Mark xii. 40: "Beware of the Scribes, . . . which devour widows' houses, and for a pretence make long prayers," *cf.* Ass. Mos. vii. 6: "Devourers of the goods of the poor, saying that they do so on the ground of their justice, but in reality to destroy them, complainers, deceitful, concealing themselves lest they should be recognised." Zad. Frag. viii. 13: "And in respect to robbing the poor of His people, so that widows may be their spoil."

The title "Chosen" given to Our Lord by the heavenly voice at His Transfiguration,<sup>1</sup> is found in 1 Enoch xxxix. 6: "Mine eyes saw the Elect One of righteousness and faith"; xl. 5: "The second voice I heard blessing the Elect One"; xlv. 3, 4, 5: "Mine Elect One"; xlix. 2, 4; li. 3, *cf.* Isa. xlvi. 1: "Behold My servant, whom I uphold; My chosen, in whom My soul delighteth"; Ps. lxxxix. 3: "I have made a covenant with my chosen." See p. 33.

---

<sup>1</sup> Luke ix. 35, *cf.* xxiii. 35.

## THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST

With Luke xii. 16 ff. (the parable of the Rich Fool), *cf.* 1 Enoch xcvi. 8 ff.—

“ Woe to you who acquire silver and gold in unrighteousness and say :

‘ We have become rich with riches and have possessions ;

And have acquired everything we have desired.

And now let us do what we purposed :

For we have gathered silver,

And many are the husbandmen in our houses,

And our granaries are full as with water.’—

Yea, and like water your lies shall flow away ;

For your riches shall not abide

But speedily ascend from you.”

Ecclus. xi. 18—

“ There is that waxeth rich from self-denial,  
And this is his allotted reward :

What time he saith : ‘ I have found rest,

And now I will enjoy my goods ’—

He knoweth not what lot shall befall ;

He shall leave them to others and die.”

Wisd. xv. 8 : “ The soul which was lent him shall again be demanded.”

But the sentiment is common elsewhere ; *cf.* Job xxvii. 17 ; Ps. xxxix. 6, xlix. 16, lii. 7 ; Eccles. ii. 18, 21, v. 10 ; Jer. xvii. 11 ; Sir. xi. 19 ; Wisd. xv. 8 ; Hor. Od. ii. 3. 17.

With Luke xiv. 5 : “ Which of you shall have an ass or an ox fallen into a well, and will not straightway draw him up on the Sabbath Day ? ”

## THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST

*cf.* Zad. Frag. xiii. 23 : " And if it fall into a pit or ditch, he shall not raise it on the Sabbath."

With Luke xv. 10 : " There is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth," *cf.* 1 Enoch li. 4 : " The faces of all the angels in heaven shall be lighted up with joy" ; 2 Bar. lxvii. 2 : " Dost thou think that there is no anguish to the angels in the presence of the Mighty One ? "

One of the most striking of all the parallels is that between Luke xvii. 2, Our Lord's teaching on forgiveness,<sup>1</sup> and T. Gad. vi. 3, 7 : " Love ye one another from the heart ; and if a man sin against thee, speak peaceably to him, and in thy soul hold not guile ; and if he repent and confess, forgive him. . . . And if he be shameless and persist in his wrong-doing, even so forgive him from the heart, and leave to God the avenging."

*Cf.* Eccl. xxviii. 2—

" Forgive thy neighbour the injury done to thee, And then, when thou prayest, thy sins shall be forgiven."

With Luke xviii. 7 : " Shall not God avenge His elect, which cry to him day and night, and He is long-suffering over them ? I say unto you, that He will avenge them speedily. Howbeit, when the Son of Man cometh, shall He find faith on the earth ? " *cf.* 1 Enoch xlvi. 1, 2—

---

<sup>1</sup> *Cf.* Matt. xviii. 21.

## THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST

“ And in those days shall have ascended the prayer of the righteous,  
And the blood of the righteous from the earth before the Lord of spirits.<sup>1</sup>  
In those days the holy ones who dwell above in the heavens  
Shall unite with one voice  
And supplicate and pray  
On behalf of the blood of the righteous which has been shed,  
And that the prayer of the righteous may not be in vain before the Lord of Spirits,  
That judgment may be done unto them,  
And that they may not have to suffer for ever.”

Sir. xxxv. 12 ff.

4 Ezra v. 1 : “ The land shall be barren of faith.”

With Luke xix. 44 : “ The time of thy visitation,” *cf.* Ass. Mos. i. 18 : “ The day of repentance in the visitation wherewith the Lord will visit them in the consummation of the end of the days.”

With Luke xxii. 27 : “ I am among you as he that serveth,” *cf.* T. Jos. xvii. 8 : “ I was among them as one of the least.”

With Luke xxii. 31 : “ Satan asked to have you, that he might sift you as wheat, but I made supplication for thee, that thy faith fail not,” *cf.* T. Benj.

---

<sup>1</sup> *Cf.* Matt. xxiii. 35 : “ All the righteous blood shed on the earth.”

## THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST

iii. 3: "Even though the spirits of Beliar claim you to afflict you with every evil, yet shall they not have dominion over you." Job i. 6 ff.

With John iv. 14, vii. 37: "Whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall become in him a well of water springing up unto eternal life. . . . If any man thirst, let him come unto Me, and drink. He that believeth on Me, as the Scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water," *cf.* 1 Enoch xlvi. 3, xlvi. 1, where wisdom is compared to rain and dew and an inexhaustible fountain, which is also a fountain of righteousness; Isa. xii. 3: "With joy shall ye draw water out of the wells of salvation"; lv. 1: "Ho! every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters."

With John v. 41: "I receive not glory from men," *cf.* T. Benj. vi. 4: "The good inclination receiveth not glory nor dishonour from men."

In John viii. 58, Our Lord asserts His pre-existence: *cf.* 1 Enoch xlvi. 3—

"Yea, before the sun and the signs were created,  
Before the stars of the heaven were made,  
His name (*i.e.*, the Son of Man) was named  
before the Lord of Spirits."

With John x. 12: "He that is a hireling, and not a shepherd, whose own the sheep are not,

## THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST

beholdeth the wolf coming, and leaveth the sheep, and fleeth," *cf.* 4 Ezra v. 18: "Do not desert us as a shepherd does who leaves his flock in the power of noxious wolves"; Ezek. xxxiv.

With John xiv. 23: "We will come unto him and make our abode with him"; xvii. 22: "That they may be one, even as We are one; I in them and Thou in Me, that they may be perfected into one," *cf.* 1 Enoch cv. 2: "I and My Son will be united with them for ever"; Isa. vii. 14, viii. 8, 10: the name and meaning of Immanuel, "With us is God."

With John xvi. 21: "A woman when she is in travail hath sorrow," *cf.* 1 Enoch lxii. 4: "Then shall pain come upon them as on a woman in travail" (and, of course, Isa. xiii. 8, xxvi. 17; Ps. xlvi. 6; etc.).

With John xvii. 3: "This is life eternal, that they should know Thee, the only true God," *cf.* Wisd. xv. 3—

"To know Thee is perfect righteousness,  
Yea, to know Thy dominion is the root of  
immortality."

Dr. Charles has noted some interesting parallels, also, with the Story of Ahikar, a tale found in the *Arabian Nights* and elsewhere, of which a fifth century B.C. MS. was discovered at Elephantine in 1906-8. He compares Matt. xxiv. 18, Lk. xii. 43, with iv. 14, an account of the ill-treatment of

## THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST

menservants and maidservants ; the words of the Prodigal Son with viii. 34 : “ Forgive me this my folly ; and I will tend thy horses and feed thy pigs which are in thy house ” ; viii. 24 : “ Father, I have sinned against thee. Forgive me, and I will be a slave unto thee henceforth and for ever.”

Luke xiii. 6, with a similar parable of an unfruitful tree in viii. 35.

## CHAPTER II

CONSIDERABLE attention has been given to the parallels to Our Lord's eschatological teaching found in the Jewish Pseudepigrapha, and quotations have been given fully, because these are of unusual interest, and in order to emphasise, what is not always realised, the essentially Jewish character of Our Lord's teaching. His Personality, and the impression which it has made on mankind, and the growth and activities of the Christian Church, have been so unique and so remarkable, that men have tended to look upon His teaching as something altogether new and unique. They have allowed that much of it was based upon the Old Testament, but ignorance of the current teaching and ideas of His own times has prevented men from realising how much He was a "child of His own age"; and, consequently, much of His teaching has been wrongly regarded as unique and original, and has thereby been invested with an authority which is hardly warranted.<sup>1</sup> Not that Our Lord's teaching is not unique, or that it shows no improvement or advance on current Judaism; because in various ways it both differs from what was held and believed by the men of His own time, and also raises and spiritualises it. To take one example alone, there is a saying of the Rabbis, "Do not unto others

---

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Schweitzer, p. 222.

## THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST

what ye would not that they should do unto you" ;<sup>1</sup> and what a contrast is here between their negative and Christ's positive precept : " All things whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, even so do ye also unto them" ! Other examples may be noted in Savage, *Gospel of the Kingdom*, and Edersheim has emphasised the same contrast at some length.<sup>2</sup>

But, after allowing for the contrast and the advance made by Christ on the teaching of His own age, we must acknowledge that both His language and His conceptions were rooted and grounded in Judaism, a fact which Dr. Sanday,<sup>3</sup> considers proved by the eschatological attitude of the early Church.<sup>4</sup> Dr. Winstanley considers that the eschatological element was original in Our Lord's mouth.<sup>5</sup> It is not intended that His words are actual quotations ; they are not, for several of the books referred to above are of a later date ; but His familiarity with and dependence upon these writings are only too obvious, a fact which Muirhead hardly seems to allow sufficiently.<sup>6</sup> And

---

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Tobit iv. 15.

<sup>2</sup> *Life and Times*, I, p. 531 ff.

<sup>3</sup> P. 112.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. Kennedy, p. 96; Winstanley, p. 383.

<sup>5</sup> P. 380.

<sup>6</sup> Cf. Burkitt: " In saying this [that the background of Enoch shows the Synoptists in their true perspective] I have no intention of detracting from the importance of what the Gospels report to us. On the contrary, it puts familiar words into their proper setting. . . . Some of the best-known sayings of Jesus only appear in their true light if regarded as *Midrash* upon words and concepts

## THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST

the later date of many of the parallels does not invalidate them, or imply that they are echoes of Our Lord's teaching ; because literary use of any terminology always presupposes previous popular use, sometimes over a lengthy period. It should be borne in mind, also, that questions as to the literary *provenance* of the Gospel narratives do not affect the question at issue. There is undoubtedly more eschatology in St. Matthew (the Jewish Gospel), but there is sufficient in all four to substantiate the assertion that Our Lord used both the ideas and the language of His day, and no theories, correct or incorrect, about the mutual dependence or origin of the Gospels materially affect it. And could it have been otherwise ? To some minds it may seem derogatory to the Son of God that so much of His teaching should be shown to have been borrowed, that He should be called a " child of His own age " ; but is not this a necessary corollary from the Incarnation, a part of the " self-humiliation " to which He submitted ? If it be granted that He was Perfect Man, could He have been anything else than a " child of His own age " ? And if he were to share human life at a definite time and in a certain place and among certain men, must He not have accepted the limitations and the details of current thought, as well as those of current manner and custom, polity

---

taken from Enoch, words and concepts that were familiar to those who heard the Prophet of Galilee, though now they have been forgotten by Jew and Christian alike."—P. 21.

## THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST

and geography and civilisation? If he were to teach men, must He not use the intellectual and theological counters with which they were familiar? <sup>1</sup> Had He used these and not improved on them we might well have queried His uniqueness and authority; but the differences between the two go to corroborate the other evidence that He was Perfect God as well as Perfect Man. And if we are able to distinguish between the husk and kernel of His teaching, it will help us considerably to accept His authority. We shall not feel obliged necessarily to accept as matters *de fide* such statements as are made by the writers of Advent Hymns already alluded to; and we shall feel that the progress both demanded and experienced by the human race is not precluded by any dogmatic *dicta* of His. In other words, we shall be able to both thankfully realise and confidently assert that while He was child of His own age, He is also child of every age, not only Son of Mary, but also Son of Man. <sup>2</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> Cf. MacNeile, *St. Matt.*, p. xxvi.

<sup>2</sup> The fact that eschatology is so prominent in all the New Testament writers, who were men of very varied capacities and experience, not only goes to show that it was an essential element in Our Lord's teaching, but also that it contained an element of essential truth. And it should be remembered that no amount of excision of texts in the Synoptists, as being not original and as belonging to a later recension of the original text, and no amount of destructive criticism of the Fourth Gospel, can affect the question at issue. These books are saturated with eschatology; and even if this be largely due to the mind of the Church of the earliest days, it represents what the first disciples taught; and they would not have taught anything

## THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST

Yet it cannot be too confidently asserted, or the caution too carefully emphasised, that Our Lord's thoughts were not solely grounded in Jewish Eschatology. Terry<sup>1</sup> prints references to show how practically the whole of the central passage, Mk. xiii. and parallels, is expressed in the phraseology of the Old Testament ; and it only need a reference Bible and patient working out to show how both Our Lord and the Jewish writers drew from the Old Testament.<sup>2</sup> It is this fact that goes to substantiate the assertion that Apocalypse is the successor of Prophecy ; and in the Old Testament we can trace the mingling of eschatological elements in the prophetical writings, and the gradual development of the one into the other. And it is most significant, and a material guide in our estimate of the value of the apocalyptic writings, that the judgment of both the Jewish authorities and the Christian Church reduced the apocalyptic element in their canons of Scripture to a minimum. Nor will the casual reader question this decision. The apocalyptic writings, as may be seen partly from quotations already given, stand on a very different level to the Old Testament ; they are poor and tasteless for the most part, and wander off on to

---

as part of Christ's teaching for which they had not His authority and example. The doctrine was there in germ, and it developed as their experience grew. (*Cf. Foundations, Essay iv; Rashdall, Conscience and Christ, Lect. V, p. 167.*)

<sup>1</sup> P. 239.

<sup>2</sup> Dalman and Muirhead rightly call attention to this, and show how much Our Lord's teaching derives from Daniel; *cf. Sanday, Hibbert Journal, Oct., 1911, p. 84.*

## THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST

side-issues and non-essentials ; the gold is mixed with so much dross. Indeed, the details of them do much to detract from their splendid faith and courage, and the spiritual element is obscured and tainted with much that is gross and unworthy,<sup>1</sup> and the resemblances between them and Our Lord's teaching do not necessarily imply actual dependence and quotation and approval, only that He used the general conceptions common to the subject.<sup>2</sup>

It is sufficiently clear from the passages already quoted, that Jewish eschatology centres round certain well-defined conceptions. Born of adversity and disappointment, and despair of ever seeing the hope of Israel realised on this material plane, it placed the scene of the consummation only too devoutly wished, further and further into the future. The early prophets had painted in glowing colours the future of the nation, as a world-empire under one of the Davidic line ; but the Captivities belied them. A later generation pictured the return of the Exiles to Zion, and the restoration of the Davidic kingdom, with the Gentile races tributary and submissive ; but only a few of the Exiles ever did return, and their fortunes were anything but encouraging. Contact with other peoples and with world-movements widened the horizon of Jewish thought and outlook ; and experience of suffering deepened and purified their conceptions ; holiness

---

<sup>1</sup> See pp. 87[ff.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Burkitt, p. 23.

## THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST

and righteousness took the place of physical descent and a legal covenant-relation. So that nationalism gave place to a humanism, and legal conceptions to moral, and material to spiritual. All men were regarded as within the sphere of God's love ; the distinction between them was one of character, not of blood ; and the sphere of God's operation was in the things of the spirit, not of matter ; this world was too gross and too evil for the realisation of God's promises ; it would, therefore, be entirely renewed, or superseded.

A study of Jewish Eschatology reveals a wide variation and disagreement between the various writers and the various periods in their notions of the last times.<sup>1</sup> Thus, the present time is viewed as passing and temporary ; what is to be is determined in the fore-knowledge and counsel of God ; and this will be realised when the age is consummated. The form that the realisation will take is conceived as a kingdom, and the King is to be either God's Son or special messenger, called His Messiah (*i.e.*, anointed, Christ), whose kingdom is in some cases temporary, and in some permanent. It will be inaugurated by a resurrection, sometimes of all men, sometimes only of the righteous ; and this will be followed by a judgment, presided over by this Messiah, called Son of Man, assisted by angels. The Israelites' and Gentiles' respective fates also vary ; with some writers all Israel shall be saved and all Gentiles punished ; with others,

---

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Charles, *Eschatology*, p. 366.

## THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST

the righteous only of either will be saved, and the wicked of both punished. The scene varies between a renewed heaven and earth, and heaven itself.<sup>1</sup>

In estimating the value of the forms of the apocalyptic writings, due allowance must be made for this variation (*i.e.*, there was no one authoritative form of teaching about the future as regarded its details ; the writers were convinced that God was good and that His will and the right would ultimately prevail, but their notions as to how and when and where the end would come varied with their experiences and with their own temperaments and intellectual equipments). No appeal can be made to the *form* of any one apocalyptic writing as authoritative above the rest ; we can only note the *principles* which they endeavoured to uphold, and the *development* which may be traced in their teaching. And we must note, also, the dilemma that the writers were placed in, by their having to treat of transcendentals, with only material concepts at their disposal in which to express them, and by their having to be "popular" and understood of the people ; (for *Apocalypse* was not academic or esoteric merely ; it was intensely practical, and aimed at meeting a very pressing need, the support of men's faith in dark days). Philosophical abstractions would have meant nothing and availed nothing for the "men in the street" ; they could only understand things with which they were already familiar.<sup>2</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> Cf., the author's *Cradle of Christianity*, pp. 55 ff.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Tyrrell, *op. cit.*, p. 137.

## THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST

Hence, the triumph of right over wrong was expressed in the form of earthly kingship, with God or His Chosen for King ; divinity was expressed by alarming portents, by a visible appearance from the material heavens, and an audible trumpet summons ; resurrection was in some cases of body as well as of spirit (for how can the popular mind conceive of existence apart from the body ?) ; judgment was conceived under the form of a "Great Assize," with all the paraphernalia of a legal court, the books, the attendants, the guilty prisoners, the verdict, and so forth ; punishment was expressed in terms of bodily suffering and physical corruption, fire, frost, torment, pain, thirst, darkness, chains, worms (*i.e.*, on the analogy of earthly prisons and the Valley of Hinnom), and by remorse ; and the future joys expressed in terms of familiar earthly bliss, gardens, sunshine, rest, banquets, power, freedom, and so forth, on an extended scale, and freed from the limitations at present experienced by men.<sup>1</sup>

This dilemma was very real, and it has been through failure to appreciate it and through unintelligent conceptions of reality, that men have gone astray and landed themselves and others in difficulties and absurdities in their interpretation of eschatology. Concepts must be taken for what they attempt to express, not for what they actually say ; and the same principle must be followed in estimating Our Lord's teaching (*i.e.*, it must be recognised and allowed for that He spoke primarily

---

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Kennedy, pp. 19, 26, 36, 42.

## THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST

as a first-century Jew to first-century Jews, and used the words and thoughts of His own age through which to convey the eternal truths that formed His message and revelation to humanity ; it is not His actual language and expressions that matter so much, as the thoughts and truths of which they are the medium. It is these latter which we need to discover, and we do so by comparison with other places where similar expressions are used, and not least by comparison with other portions of His teaching.<sup>1</sup> Dr. Burkitt, in his preface to Schweitzer, p. vii., has some good words about the permanent value of *Apocalypse* : “ It may well be that absolute truth cannot be embodied in human thought, and that its expression must be always clothed in symbols. It may be that we have to translate the hopes and fears of our spiritual ancestors into the language of our new world. We have to learn, as the Church in the Second Century had to learn, that the End is not yet, that New Jerusalem, like all other objects of sense, is an image of the truth rather than the truth itself. But at least we are beginning to see that the Apocalyptic vision, the New Age which God is to bring in, is no mere embroidery of Christianity, but the heart of its enthusiasm. The Apocalyptic conceptions are not ‘ regrettable accretions foisted on by superstition to the pure morality of the original Gospel.’ These ideas are the Christian Hope, to be allegorised and

---

<sup>1</sup> See below, p. 140 ; and *cf.* Winstanley, pp. 362 ff.

## THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST

‘spiritualised’ by us for our own use whenever necessary, but not to be given up so long as we remain Christians at all.” Or. again, *cf.* Porter, p. 72: “It remains true that the sense of the reality of eternal things is inseparable from the belief in their future manifestation and evident dominion. In other words, eschatology has its essential worth in religious faith. Religious history supplies abundant proof how constantly eschatology furnishes the motive that gives faith its victory over the world, and truth and justice their kingship over the heart.”<sup>1</sup>

Let us look again at some of the central passages and terms of Our Lord’s eschatology, and see what estimate we can form of them, in the light thrown on them by the Jewish writings. They are mostly to be found in St. Matthew’s Gospel, which is natural in a book showing so many other Jewish characteristics; a book written by a Jew for Jews would give a large place to Our Lord’s eschatological teaching.

The chief terms and phrases of an eschatological character in Our Lord’s mouth are these: Son of Man, Kingdom, Consummation of the Age, Judgment, Last Day, Coming, Eternal Life. Let us glance at these.<sup>2</sup>

“Son of Man.” This has been the subject of

---

<sup>1</sup> *Cf.* below, p. 140.

<sup>2</sup> See also below, pp. 125 ff.; and Sanday, *Hibbert Journal*, Oct., 1911, pp. 100 ff. The leading thoughts of Jewish Eschatology are well summarised by Schürer, II. 2, pp. 154 ff., and Oesterley, pp. 61, 124.

## THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST

great and prolonged controversy, chiefly as to what the phrase represented in the current Aramaic, what it meant to the hearers, and what Our Lord intended by it. Undoubtedly, it derives from Dan. vii. and reappears in Enoch, and bears a Messianic colouring.

In Daniel it is used of a supernatural personage who appears "with the clouds of heaven," is brought "unto the Ancient of Days," and is given a kingdom which is universal, perpetual, and indestructible. This kingdom is the kingdom of God, and is given to "the Saints of the Most High"; so that the "Son of Man" is hardly more than a symbol of the saints (*i.e.*, Israel). The title is not distinctive; he is "one like unto a son of man."

By the time of Enoch, the concept has crystallised, and represents a definite individual. It is noteworthy that in xlvi. 1, where he first appears, he is "like one of the holy angels," as well as having "appearance of a man," and bearing the title Son of Man. Moreover, with him "dwelleth righteousness," and he "revealeth all the treasures of that which is hidden. Because the Lord of Spirits hath chosen him, and whose lot hath the pre-eminence before the Lord of Spirits in uprightness for ever." He is to judge the world. That is to say, already the concept is rising to the higher plane, and ethical and spiritual qualities are entering it, and a stage towards super-humanity is reached.

Similarly, in 4 Ezra xiii., the man flies with the clouds of heaven; all tremble at his presence, and

## THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST

all who hear his voice melt away. He cuts out a mountain (the “great stone” of Dan. ii. 45), but no place can be seen whence it is taken. His weapons with which he conquers his enemies are fire and storm and the breath of his mouth (*i.e.*, semi-non-material things. Again, the concept is supra-mundane, idealistic.

By the time of Our Lord it denotes a supernatural being ; but He, in reviving its use, brought back into it the notion of humanity ; so that both notions were implied side by side, humanity with its attendant ills and limitations and humility,<sup>1</sup> super-humanity with its transcendence, its dignity, and its power. In His day it was not a recognised title of the Messiah,<sup>2</sup> so that His use of it “purposely furnished them with a problem which stimulated reflection about His person, and gave such a tendency to this reflection that the solution of the problem fully revealed the mystery of the personality of Jesus.”<sup>3</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> See the refs. quoted by Oesterley, p. 158.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. John xii. 34.

<sup>3</sup> Dalman, p. 259; cf. Sanday, p. 126: “A great part of the time when He spoke of the Son of Man, His hearers probably did not understand that He was speaking of Himself” ; and Dewick, p. 161. Driver, in Hastings *DB*, iv., p. 586: “The title . . . did not suggest to those who heard it Messianic associations, until it came to be connected with predictions of the Second Advent; it thus did not reveal, but veil, His Messiahship. . . . By His adoption of it, He found a means, on the one hand, of not denying even in public His consciousness of His unique mission, and, on the other hand, of lending no countenance to the crude and illusory hopes which attached to popular ideas of the Messiah.”

## THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST

There is little doubt that He used it of Himself, and with a Messianic import ; so that all passages in which it occurs may be taken as referring to Him. But the point to notice here is that it bears a supra-human, supra-material, idealistic colour, even if He emphasised the human aspect.

In just the same way was the concept of the Kingdom spiritualised. Originally, it goes back to 1 Sam. xii. 1<sup>1</sup> and the quite early thought of Jehovah as the King and Overlord of His people. The Old Testament use naturally varies, and in several of the writers (prophetic) it intends a world-empire, with the Gentile races subsidiary and tributary to Israel, and Jerusalem the metropolis and centre of all, of which Isa. ii. 2-4 may be taken as typical. Even if worship and the recognition of God be its supreme aim, its sphere is this earth ; and the sufferings and restrictions of the Exile rather enhanced the ideal than dimmed it.<sup>2</sup> The Maccabean age still further upheld it, and it was not until the first century B.C. that Jewish writers despaired of this earth, and placed the scene of the kingdom in a new heaven and earth.

But it is necessary to notice that the mere fact that the “kingdom” was a “Kingdom of God,” that God was the King (or His representative), at once stamped the concept with an other-worldly character ; so that the ideal of Israel as a theocracy was present from the first, even if its scope was in

---

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Judg. viii. 23.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Isa. xl.-lxvi.

## THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST

this world. And the Old Testament leaves no doubt that the Kingdom of God was to be of both a moral and a spiritual character. The very exalted and ethically beautiful descriptions of the Messianic King in Isa. xi. and xxxii., with their emphasis on righteousness and equity, the seven gifts of the Spirit of Jehovah, and the knowledge of Jehovah, show how far removed beyond and above the thought of mere earthly power were the pioneers of Jewish religious belief.<sup>1</sup>

No less spiritual was the teaching of the apocalypticists. Emphasis on ethical values is a marked feature of the Testaments ; the “consummation of the end of the days” is to be preceded by a “day of repentance” ;<sup>2</sup> the issue of the Resurrection turns more and more on the question of righteousness ; it is the righteous who attain to it, or receive a better reward, rather than the “Israelites after the flesh” ; when the kingdom appears, Satan shall be no more, and sorrow shall depart with him.<sup>3</sup>

And this ethical and spiritual side of the concept has been allowed in our popular use to fall almost entirely into the background. It is partly that the current popular notion of the kingdom in the New Testament was sensuous and this-worldly ; and partly that the word “kingdom” with us is used mainly to denote the sphere of a king’s rule, the territory and the people over whom he rules ; and

---

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Riehm, p. 89.

<sup>2</sup> Ass. Mos. i. 17.

<sup>3</sup> Ass. Mos. x. 1; cf. Drummond, p. 323.

## THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST

partly that we have accepted these easy interpretations and have not troubled ourselves to enquire whether Biblical use justifies them or otherwise. We are not bound to pay overmuch attention to philological considerations (though they may not, indeed, be neglected) ; but in this case they might have saved us a bad error. For the Greek *βασιλεία* and the Hebrew *מֶלֶךְ* are both abstract terms, denoting the principle or fact of ruling rather than the thing ruled ; this latter meaning is secondary. Cremer gives the order of meanings as : power, form, and sphere of government. So that “ sovereignty ” would be a better word to use ; or, better still, “ kingship,” as connoting the fact that God possesses the supreme authority, and exercises it among men, and that they acknowledge it and willingly own and serve Him as King.<sup>1</sup> Of this, Wisd. xv. 3 is a good illustration : “ To know Thee is perfect righteousness, yea, to know Thy dominion is the root of immortality.”

We must beware, then, of reading any spatial or local meaning into this very deep and comprehensive concept. Such use, says Dalman, is rare in the Old Testament and never occurs in the later Jewish literature ; and in the teaching of Jesus it means the life of the future age. (Cremer also identifies it with salvation.) “ We may assume that He borrowed the term . . . as an eschatological designation from the Book of Daniel, and that He

---

<sup>1</sup> See Dalman, pp. 91–94, 134; Robertson, p. 58 ; MacNeile, *St. Matt.*, p. xix; Hast. *D.B.* ii, pp. 619, 844.

## THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST

used it by preference for the reason that regard for the honour of God took precedence in His view of all else, and also because He considered it certain that the chief end of mankind was to find their salvation in the most intimate relation to God, and in full obedience to His will. He was further convinced that the purpose of God was directed principally to the bestowal of blessing on men, and not to the mere exaltation of the divine majesty over the world. Hence, in His view, the completed establishment of God as sovereign implied, for those who experienced it, absolute happiness.”<sup>1</sup>

It will naturally include the “subject-matter” of the kingdom—the reign must have its realm. The kingdom of heaven was “essentially *the community in which the divine will was to be realised* on earth as it is already in heaven. . . .”<sup>2</sup> “The kingdom of God . . . is throughout conceived by Our Lord as a social organism.”<sup>3</sup> But the original and leading idea is theoretical and abstract, and refers to the essence of kingship, rather than to the objective means of its expression and exercise. Dr. Robertson’s words are here to the point: “By the words ‘kingdom of God,’ then, Our Lord denotes not so much His disciples . . . as something which they receive, a state upon which they enter.

---

<sup>1</sup> P. 136.

<sup>2</sup> Charles, *Eschatol*, p. 370, *cf.* 83 ff., as against Dalman’s purely abstract notion; *cf.* Dr. Abbott’s preference for the idea of “family relations,” *Fourfold Gospel*, III, pp. 177, 424 ff.

<sup>3</sup> Von Hügel, p. 62.

## THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST

For its ultimate fulfilment the term indicates an *order of things* final and absolute, in which God is all in all. But the kingdom of God is also spoken of in another sense, descriptive of the *order of events*, the sum total of the methods and processes which, under the guidance and rule of God, go to bring about that final state of Perfection.<sup>1</sup> This rule is, of course, a moral and spiritual, as well as physical control; hence, "the reign of Christ signifies the reign of ethical purity and true religion, the establishment of moral order."<sup>2</sup> Dr. Sanday quotes Dr. Hort as saying that "the kingdom of God is: 'the world of invisible laws by which God is ruling and blessing His creatures'"<sup>3</sup> and *cf.* his own words: "What is the essential meaning of the Kingdom of God? Is it not the asserted and realised sovereignty of God, Divine influence, and Divine power felt as energising in the souls of men?"<sup>4</sup> and "The reign of Divine Love exercised by God in His grace over human hearts believing in His love."<sup>5</sup> Walpole emphasises the presence of the Kingdom, but notes the incompleteness of the Church and the distinction between the two.<sup>6</sup> The Church is a "home in which the mysteries of the Kingdom of Heaven may be learned. She is a school in which the children of the kingdom

---

<sup>1</sup> P. 86.

<sup>2</sup> Toy, p. 377.

<sup>3</sup> In *Hast.* ii, p. 619b.

<sup>4</sup> *Recent Research*, p. 115.

<sup>5</sup> Bruce.

<sup>6</sup> *Kingdom of Heaven*, Ch. II.

## THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST

may be trained. She is a spiritual hospital in which the healing powers of the Kingdom of Heaven may be felt. She is, further, a state and kingdom in which the social principles of the kingdom may be manifested.”<sup>1</sup> “Le royaume des cieux est proprement le règne ou la royauté de Dieu, l’ère Messianique.”<sup>2</sup> It should be further noted that the kingdom is in all cases regarded as a gift from God.

That the kingdom was taught, both by Christ and His Apostles, as in a measure and sense at least as already present and operative, is shown below (pp. 90 ff.).

“Consummation of the Age.” Much trouble would have been saved if the A.V. expression “end of the world” had been avoided. The latter gives to nine people out of ten the thought of a catastrophic termination of the world-order, of the physical universe; a thought entirely foreign to the original. It is noticeable that in Matt. xiii. 38, the word *κόσμος* is rightly used to denote the sphere of activity, in distinction to *άιών* used of time. There the reference is to the well-known Jewish concept of “This age” or “epoch,” and “the age to come,” a contrast of the present state of affairs and the days of the Messiah. “Consummation” rightly translates *συντέλεια* as the accomplishing of a process, not its sudden termination; the end, indeed, may come suddenly, but it is led up to by

<sup>1</sup> P. 45.

<sup>2</sup> Loisy, *Evangiles Syn.*, p. 229n.

## THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST

many contributory causes ; and it is the development and result of these that is intended by the word “consummation.”<sup>1</sup>

The contrast of the two ages occurs in 4 Ezra viii. 1 : “This age the Most High has made for many, but the age to come for few” ; but the thought is similar to the Stoic concept of the “mighty aeon,” which occurs in Sib. iii. 92. It is a very natural contrast between the actual and ideal, the unrealised hope and its fulfilment, the unsatisfying present and the faith for the future.

Parallel to this use of age is its adjective, *ἀιώνιος*, translated sometimes “everlasting,” but better, “eternal.” It implies the qualities belonging to the ideal age ; and its commonest use is the phrase “eternal life,” although we find “eternal sin” ;<sup>2</sup> “eternal punishment, fire” ;<sup>3</sup> “eternal God”<sup>4</sup> ; “eternal judgment,”<sup>5</sup> etc.

Whatever meaning is given by the Jewish and New Testament writers to the phrase “Kingdom of God” will, therefore, attach to the phrases, “the age, eternal” ; for the hope and ideal of Judaism found its expression and description in various forms and similes. We need not, in consequence, spend further time on its content. But the derivation of the word needs a few lines. This is uncertain, but the lexicographers are unanimous

---

<sup>1</sup> See below, p. 125.

<sup>2</sup> Mk. iii. 29.

<sup>3</sup> Matt. xviii. 8, xxv. 46.

<sup>4</sup> Rom. xvi. 26.

<sup>5</sup> Heb. vi. 13.

## THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST

in connecting it with the thought of life, and the span of life ; and the same meaning is given in the Hebrew **אָמֵן**, which is its Old Testament counterpart.<sup>1</sup> Consequently, the thought of time is wrapped up with it ; and as human life and all good things familiar to man have an ending, the thought of never-endingness attached itself to the thought of perfection, of ideality ; so that **ἀιών** = life, first a definite space of time, and then its infinite course (Cremer) ; **ἀιώνιος** = "perpetuus," constant, abiding, not transitory. "In general, the word depicts that of which the horizon is not in view, whether the horizon be at an infinite distance —or whether it lies no further than the span of a Caesar's life."<sup>2</sup>

It is most necessary that this time-element should be recognised, in order that it may receive its proper valuation ; but a just estimate of both Jewish and New Testament conceptions of the "Kingdom" will cause us to place this time-element far in the background, and regard it as an unessential and misleading element in the notion of perfection, due to the natural inability of the writers to entirely eliminate time from their thoughts, and to the equally natural claim that

---

<sup>1</sup> Cf. E. Bibl. 1147.

<sup>2</sup> Moulton & Milligan, cf. Pusey, pp. 38 ff.; Liddon, *Clerical Life and Work*, p. 136; Dahle, p. 437; T. W. Fowle, *Essay on ἀιών and ἀιώνιος*, (1877); Rashdall, *op. cit.*, p. 297; Gayford, *The Future State*, p. 95; Hastings, *D C G*, i, pp. 787, 788.

## THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST

what is ideal shall be indestructible and permanent. The one writer who comes nearest to the ideal conception, St. John, cannot avoid using the current terms: but, as Dr. Kennedy says, for St. John *ἀιώνιος* “means primarily that which belongs to the Coming Aeon, the higher order of things, and thus is virtually equivalent to ‘supra-earthly.’” (*Cf.* Dalman, p. 148: “The idea of the sovereignty of God filled the place of that of the future age. The correlative of ‘this age’ is properly not ‘that aeon’—but eternal life.”)<sup>1</sup>

So that, arguing from the use of *ἀιών* and *ἀιώνιος*, we may safely say that the time-element must be abandoned, in favour of that which “time-lessness” was intended to represent. The true meaning will be perfection, ideality, genuineness, reality; a meaning which is enforced by the use in such passages as Isa. xl. 28, Mk. iii. 29, Matt. xviii. 8, xxv. 46, etc., which implies “intensity” (*i.e.*, quality rather than quantity, forcefulness rather than duration)<sup>2</sup>. “Eternal life” is thus truly described by St. Paul as “life indeed, ἡδύτως ζωή.<sup>3</sup>

The term “Last Day” need not detain us, for it is clearly an offshoot of the preceding. (It is

---

<sup>1</sup> And we would enter a strong plea that both our Prayer Book Revisers and all teachers and preachers will substitute for the misleading “everlasting” the larger and far more satisfactory word “eternal.”

<sup>2</sup> *Cf.* Dewick, p. 188.

<sup>3</sup> 1 Tim. vi. 19; Dalman, p. 161. The phrase “eternal life” is not limited to the New Testament; it occurs in 1 Enoch xxxvii. 4, xl. 9, lviii. 3; and Ps. Sol. iii. 16.

## THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST

equivalent to the Day of the Lord, first met with in Amos, Isaiah, and Joel, see p. 21.) If life is conceived in terms of time and space, and life at least includes these ; and if life is divided into ages, periods, epochs, which are successively introduced, developed, wound up, and consummated ; then each of these will have a “last day” ; marking the transition of one to the other. And when the most important epoch of all is brought to its conclusion, this day will rightly be regarded as the Last Day *par excellence*.

This day is in any case decisive, with whomsoever the decision may rest. It is in the full sense “critical” (*i.e.*, involves a judgment, a *κρίσις*). And if the background and essence of human life include moral and spiritual elements ; if free will be a faculty of man ; then judgment is essential, sooner or later ; there must be a time of reckoning, of giving and taking account ; this is involved in the very nature of things. We find, therefore, as we should expect to find, that the coming of the Messiah in the Last Day is a coming to judgment ; this is expressed crudely in the Jewish writings, and implied in Our Lord’s parables of the Pounds, the Talents, the Draw Net, the Unfaithful Servant, the Vineyard, etc.

This coming of the Messiah is, usually, expressed by the Greek *παρουσία*, now transliterated into the technical term “Parousia.” It is instructive to note the use of this word. In itself it is clearly abstract, and means rather “presence” : but as this involves a previous coming, it includes the

## THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST

thought of coming as well as being present. Yet the fact that Parousia is used, rather than a word denoting mere arrival, is significant as implying that it is continued presence after arrival that is foremost in the conception.<sup>1</sup> Also the phrase is quite general; no qualifying words are used with it; the phrases "Second Coming," "Second Advent," are not scriptural; the New Testament gives no categorical indication as to whether the Coming is single, or to be indefinitely repeated. Rather, the inference is that when Our Lord has come, when the Kingdom has been inaugurated, this Presence will be continuous and uninterrupted. If much reason can be shown for regarding the kingdom as having already arrived, Our Lord certainly speaks of a future coming, when the present influence of the kingdom and its King will be both revealed and greatly intensified and extended.

Turning now from these typical words and phrases of current eschatology and their interpretation, let us look at Matt. xxiv., xxv. (Mark xiii., Luke xxi.), the central and most difficult passages, and see what meaning they have. In the first section (vv. 3-14) the application seems quite general, and the teaching is expressed in the usual current language;<sup>2</sup> the passage might have come from any of the Jewish apocalypticists, with the exception of

---

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Hastings, iii., p. 674; Plummer, *St. Matt.*, p. 329.

<sup>2</sup> Parallels have been noted above, pp. 4 ff.

## THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST

v. 14: "And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in the whole world for a testimony unto all the nations ; and then shall the end come." (St. Mark xiii. 10 has : "The gospel must first be preached unto all the nations" ; St. Luke omits the words. *Cf.* Matt. x. 23 : "Ye shall not have gone through the cities of Israel, till the Son of Man be come.") That is to say, Our Lord teaches that before the "end" comes there will be portents and wars and tumults and strife and divisions and suffering and cruelty and false teachers and lapses and fallings away ; these things are but the beginning, but the end is not to come until the Gospel has been preached in the whole world ; when this has been effected, the end will come. We notice that Our Lord's details are expressed in very general terms, and that He gives no appalling and unnatural portents, such as are found in the Jewish parallels ; this is, of course, an instance of how He purified and spiritualised current conceptions. Also that His words about preaching the Gospel are entirely in accordance with the tenor of the Old Testament, which implies the evangelisation of the nations as a preliminary to the establishment of the Kingdom of God, in itself a spiritual conception.<sup>1</sup>

But in vv. 15 ff., His words take on a definiteness unmistakable, and are seen to refer to the destruction of Jerusalem, which took place some forty years later. The conception is so material, and the

---

<sup>1</sup> *Cf.* Gen. xxii. 18; Ps. lxvii. 3, lxxii., ciii. 19; Isa. ii., lx. Zech. ix. 10; Mal. i. 11, etc. See Dahle, p. 273.

## THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST

references to Judaea and Jerusalem so obvious, that one cannot avoid the conclusion of a deliberate forestalling of an actual future event, and not a general reference to spiritual and moral matters, or words which might be applied to almost any crises of history. Difficulties increase with vv. 29 ff., in which He declares that "immediately, after those days" (*i.e.*, after the destruction of Jerusalem), there shall be fresh portents and signs, followed by His appearance on the clouds of heaven, with power and great glory; His coming is to be unexpected, and shall take men by surprise, and will be followed by a judgment of the nations, the separation of the good from the evil, and the allotting to them of their appropriate rewards. St. Luke adds (xxi. 32) that all these things are to happen within the present generation. (We may note here that in John xvii. 2, He speaks of returning to His disciples, and xxi. 22 implies that this will not be distant.)

That is to say that Our Lord's teaching, which is elsewhere expressed in such general language, and deals with eternal verities only, and noticeably avoids the copious and precise detail of the apocalypticists, here takes a definitely historical colouring, and alludes to a definite historical event; while at the same time reference is made to His own coming, and the final judgment and the "end of the age."

Were His words merely general, interpretation would not be so difficult; it is the mingling of the general with the particular that makes the difficulty, and the fact that some of His words were literally

## THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST

fulfilled, while the others seem to be still waiting for their fulfilment.<sup>1</sup>

We may take three lines of explanation. Either Our Lord was only a "child of His own age," and was mistaken as to His own Messiahship, and was speaking words some of which were falsified by the subsequent turn of events. If this were so, it implies that He was merely a man and nothing more, a conclusion put forward, indeed, by some, but a conclusion hard, if not impossible, to be reconciled with the subsequent history of Christianity. If it be the case that Jesus of Nazareth was a man and nothing more, it is hard to believe that the Christian Church and the Christian experience could have been founded and flourished on the basis of false claims and mistaken teaching. The dilemma *aut Deus aut homo non bonus* still holds.

An alternative is that of textual confusion, or at least fusing, *i.e.*, the theory of the "Little Apocalypse," suggested by Colani (1864) and developed by Weiffenbach and Wendt and others, *i.e.*, that with Our Lord's words on the Mount of Olives has been worked in a Jewish or Jewish-Christian Apocalypse, written about A.D. 40–70.<sup>2</sup>

But the authorities show no confusion or great variation in the text. If the narrative is "conflate," the process was very early; as Dewick says: "It

<sup>1</sup> Cf. the views of scholars are summarised in Hastings, *DB*, i, p. 750b, iii, p. 675b; Charles, *Eschatology*, pp. 379 ff.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Schweitzer, pp. 224 ff.; Kennedy, pp. 168 ff.; E. Bibl. 1857; Toy, pp. 360 ff.; Terry, pp. 213 ff.; Dewick, pp. 173 ff.; Salmond, pp. 300 ff.; Plummer, *St. Luke*, pp. 487.

## THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST

is on doctrinal, not on critical, grounds that the theory of the interpolated "Little Apocalypse" is really based."<sup>1</sup> (J. S. Russell, *The Parousia*, held that the application was solely to the destruction of Jerusalem, but his argument is forced and impossible; Terry, however, holds on other grounds a similar position, and makes out a much better case. Von Dobschütz, Lect. II, also upholds the literal interpretation.)

Another alternative is that Our Lord was from the first misunderstood by His hearers.<sup>2</sup> It would be natural that their minds should be full of eschatological thoughts, seeing how full of these was His own teaching, and their question on the Mount of Olives shows their eagerness. (Cf. Kennedy, p. 56: "No doubt the eschatological utterances of Jesus must have constituted a prominent element in the apostolic preaching and instruction.") It is at least possible that they read into His words thoughts that He at all events did not intend, and even that allusions to actual events, such as the fall of Jerusalem, found their way unconsciously into the narratives which were the basis of the Gospels. That they should have misunderstood Him is even probable;<sup>3</sup> and it is no less likely that He should have actually alluded to the fall of Jerusalem; it hardly needed supernatural knowledge to see the

---

<sup>1</sup> P. 176.

<sup>2</sup> This is well brought out by Muirhead, pp. 26 ff., and by Von Dobschütz, pp. 75, 79 ff.; cf. Winstanley, p. 3.

<sup>3</sup> See p. 148, and cf. Sanday, *Hibbert Journal*, Oct., 1911, pp. 94 ff.

## THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST

crisis into which the nation was drifting, and its probable fate. It is not so probable that the allusions to Jerusalem found their way into the narratives at a later date ; the evidence for the early date of the Gospels is good, and there is no MS. authority to uphold this suggestion. It is possible that they regarded His Resurrection as fulfilling His words, at least in a measure, from the portents which they record as happening at the time of the Passion.<sup>1</sup> If Our Lord's words seem to have been falsified by subsequent events, we must remember that elsewhere He stated deliberately that He did not know the day or the hour of the end,<sup>2</sup> and we must attribute the conflict between the two statements to His interpreters, who are more likely to have been in error than He. The great details of the Jewish apocalypticists are in marked contrast to His indefiniteness, and human curiosity would prompt the insertion of details ; He Himself seems to have been careful mainly to warn His hearers that the crisis was impending, and to counsel watchfulness and faithfulness. A similar mingling, however, of the general and the particular is noticeable in the Jewish writers, see 4 Ezra v. 1 ff.—

“ Behold, the days come when the inhabitants  
of the earth shall be seized with great panic,  
And the way of truth shall be hidden, and the  
land be barren of faith.

---

<sup>1</sup> Matt. xxvii. 45, 51, xxviii. 2; Lk. xxiii. 44.

<sup>2</sup> Matt. xxiv. 36.

## THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST

And iniquity shall be increased above that which thou thyself now seest or that thou hast heard of long ago. And the land that thou seest now to bear rule shall be a pathless waste ; and men shall see it forsaken : if the Most High grant thee to live, thou shall see it after the third (period) in confusion.

Then shall the sun suddenly shine forth by night,

And the moon by day :

And blood shall trickle forth from wood, and the stone utter its voice :

The peoples shall be in commotion,

The outgoings (?) (of the stars) shall change.

And one whom the dwellers upon earth do not look for shall wield sovereignty, and the birds shall take to general flight,

And the sea shall cast forth its fish.

And one whom the many do not know will make his voice heard by night ; and all shall hear his voice.”

Sib. iv. 49 ff.—

“ First of all, the Assyrians shall rule over all mankind, holding the world for six generations under their sway, from the time when, since the heavenly God was wroth with the cities themselves and all mankind, the sea covered the earth with the outbreak of the flood.

“ Then shall the Medes subdue and vaunt themselves on their throne, yet their generations shall be but two. In their time shall be these mighty works.

## THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST

Darkling night shall fall at the middle hour of day : the stars and the moon's disc shall fail from heaven. And the earth shaken by the upheaval of a mighty earthquake shall cast down headlong many cities and works of men. And then islands shall peep forth from the depths of the sea.

“ But when great Euphrates shall run in torrents of blood, then betwixt Medes and Persians the dread din of battle shall arise in war. And the Medes, overthrown by the Persians' spears, shall flee over the broad waters of the Tigris. And the Persians' might shall be supreme in all the world ; yet they shall have but one generation of prosperous kingship.

“ Then there shall be all those evil works which men pray to be spared, wars and murders, schisms and exiles, the headlong crash of towers and the overthrow of cities, when proud Hellas shall sail to the broad Hellespont, bringing grievous doom to Phrygians and to Asia.”

Etc., etc.

By far the most likely and helpful solution of this admittedly difficult problem is that the disciples' minds were naturally coloured by the current apocalyptics ; that Our Lord used these current expressions and in a measure sanctioned the ideals and hopes contained in them ; that He did foresee and speak of the impending fate of Jerusalem ; that the disciples remembered His words faithfully and recorded them honestly, even to the putting side by side the ill-agreeing statements that the Coming should be before the evangelisation

## THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST

of the villages was complete, and that He did not know the time of the end;<sup>1</sup> but that they did not really understand what He meant, and that their record was marred by both their general mystification and their previous mental attitude. (It is possible, also that He was designedly vague in His words, in order to make them think and to avoid being dogmatic, in accordance with His usual practice.) Critics are able to show fairly clearly, at all events in the case of St. Matthew's Gospel, different *strata* of teaching, representing the interpretations of different generations or groups of Christians of the original Gospel; and the acceptance of the Fourth Gospel, with its marked advance on the cruder eschatology of the Synoptics, shows that early Christian thought on this matter was confessedly fluid; they felt that they had not properly understood Our Lord, and were working out an interpretation in the light of experience and with the help of the Holy Spirit.<sup>2</sup>

But, important as it is, we may not take this passage alone; there are several other utterances of an apocalyptic nature elsewhere in the Gospels, so many that they must have been original to Him, and not put into His mouth by His disciples; and His teaching on this matter has to be compared and conditioned by the nature and general trend of His teaching on other subjects. We may not

---

<sup>1</sup> Mk. xiii. 30, 32.

<sup>2</sup> See, further, Hastings, *DCG*, i, p. 342b, ii, pp. 149, 150, 322, 439.

## THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST

separate His eschatological teaching from His whole revelation, of which it forms part ; the part must be interpreted in the light of the general character of the whole. The eschatological element by no means exhausts the whole content of His preaching, as Schweitzer allows. And it is well to remember that Our Lord's authority does not stand and fall with His eschatology ; this is not the main subject of His teaching, rather is it the form in which it is clothed. His authority and claim upon men's allegiance rest upon the exalted and satisfying nature of His ethical teaching,<sup>1</sup> and upon His living presentation of this ideal in His own Person. The value of His eschatology, therefore, turns upon the value of Himself, and not *vice versa*.

Thus it is very noticeable that, while Our Lord purifies and raises the tone of the teaching which He took over from Judaism, He also spiritualises it. We see instances of it in the Synoptists, where the writers would not have been so likely to record and emphasise it ; and it is most noticeable of all in St. John. And this latter is a remarkable fact ; because if the tradition of Johannine authorship be true,—and the evidence against it is not overwhelming, when confronted with the evidence in its favour (the problem is admittedly difficult)—then it were only reasonable to suppose that the disciple whom Jesus loved has preserved for us more of the inner mind and meaning of his Master, than those who had not known Him so intimately.

---

<sup>1</sup> See Rashdall, *Conscience and Christ*, pp. 25 ff.

## THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST

In any case, the date of its composition would reflect the mind of the Church after several years of experience, when the expectation of an immediate return had been tested and found wanting. (*Cf.* Dewick, pp. 203 ff., and see further, pp. 51*n*, 102 ff.)

For instance, in the Synoptists we find Him claiming the power to forgive sin, refusing to be treated as a Messianic king, as a wonder-worker, as merely a healer and philanthropist.<sup>1</sup> The parables of the kingdom turn on the inner analogy, not the outer. He claims, and exercises, authority over the spiritual world, and conveys the same to His disciples<sup>2</sup>—to Him the spiritual world is intensely real, and the spiritual confessedly transcends the material and temporal. He calls physical death “sleep”; He says that any who do God’s will are His relations; that a man is defiled by the thoughts of his heart, and not by what he eats or does not eat.<sup>3</sup> He emphasises the need of repentance, particularly on the first announcement of the nearness of the Kingdom, and as implying an essential relation between the two (*i.e.*, He qualifies the current eschatological concept with an assertion of the need and importance of moral values); everywhere He condemns legalism and formalism (Matt. ix. 14, xii. 1, 9, xv. 1, xviii. 2, 8, xix. 13, 16, xxi. 32, xxiii. ; Mk. xii. 34 ; Lk. x. 25, xi. 28, 37, xii., xiii. 1, 10, xiv. 1, 7, xv., xvi., xvii. 1–10, xviii. 9, xxi. 19, xxiv. 47). He tells the disciples that they

---

<sup>1</sup> Matt. ix. 6, xiii. 58; *cf.* Jn. vi. 26.

<sup>2</sup> Matt. viii. 28, x. 1; Lk. x. 17.

<sup>3</sup> Matt. ix. 24, xii. 46, xv. 11.

## THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST

are to be superior to earth and to physical sufferings ; that life is realised by spending and not by saving.<sup>1</sup> In His answer to the Sadducees' question, He raised the matter to an altogether higher plane.<sup>2</sup> He said that Elijah had already come in the person of St. John Baptist.<sup>3</sup> He declares that development and progress take place in man's apprehension of the truth, and growth in moral and spiritual things.<sup>4</sup> He explains the words " Thy kingdom come " by " Thy will be done " ; and declares that entry into the kingdom is conditioned by the possession of a childlike character and attitude.<sup>5</sup> As regards His own Person, His teaching and revelation is ever in the direction of the spiritual ; witness the transfiguration ; the nature of His Resurrection Body ; His Ascension ; His words to the Magdalene, and to the disciples : " Cling not to Me, for I am not yet ascended unto the Father." " Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them." " I am with you all the days, even unto the end of the age."<sup>6</sup>

Passages in St. John's Gospel are too numerous to quote ; it must suffice to refer to the conversation with Nicodemus about the new birth of water and the Spirit ; the discourses on the Bread of Life, and the Water of Life ; to such pregnant and

---

<sup>1</sup> Mat. x. 9, 39; xvi. 21, xvii. 12, 22, xx. 18, 28, xxiv. 3.

<sup>2</sup> Matt. xxii. 15.

<sup>3</sup> Matt. xi. 14; xvii. 12; *cf.* John i. 21.

<sup>4</sup> Matt. xi. 11, xiii. 52.

<sup>5</sup> Mk. x. 15.

<sup>6</sup> Matt. xvii, xviii. 20, xxviii. 20; Lk. xxiv; John xx. 17.

## THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST

illuminating *dicta* as "He that believeth on the Son hath eternal life"—"I am the Resurrection and the Life"—"This is life eternal, that they should know Thee" (*i.e.*, immortality is moral and spiritual, not spatial and temporal).<sup>1</sup>

The whole tendency of Our Lord's teaching is to raise and to purify and to spiritualise. This is evident when speaking on other subjects; and it is as evident in those other passages and remarks, not yet considered, which bear an eschatological nature; for the chapters and passages already dealt with do not exhaust His eschatological teaching.

For instance, when the Scribe made a wise comment on His answer to the question about the great commandment of the Law, He replied: "Thou art not far from the Kingdom of God";<sup>2</sup> implying thereby that the Kingdom was not something in the uncertain future, but a spiritual force realisable in the present.

In Lk. xvi. 16, He says: "The law and the prophets were until John: from that time the gospel of the kingdom is preached, and every man entereth violently into it."<sup>3</sup> The allusion here is to the violent wave of feeling which swept over the land and drove men to become Christ's adherents; but it implies, like the preceding passage, that the

---

<sup>1</sup> Ch. iii., iv., vi., xi. 25, xvii. 3; cf. Matt. xi. 27; and see, further, pp. 30, 45.

<sup>2</sup> Mk. xii. 34.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. Matt. xi. 12.

## THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST

kingdom has at all events begun, if it be not completed ; it is an influence in men's hearts, not an outward organisation.

Still more clearly is this implied by Lk. xvii. 21 : "The Kingdom of God is within you," whether the meaning be "in your midst," or "within your hearts." In either case it is an influence, and already present and at work.<sup>1</sup>

In St. John, as we might expect, such passages are more frequent, *cf.* iv. 35 : "The fields are white already unto harvest," which implies that the harvest, which is the end of the age,<sup>2</sup> is already present, in the spiritual condition of men's hearts.<sup>3</sup>

In v. 24, He asserts that eternal life may be had here and now, on the basis of belief in Him : "He that heareth my Word, and believeth Him that sent me, hath eternal life, and cometh not into judgment, but hath passed out of death into life" ; *cf.* vi. 47 (*i.e.*, it is according to a man's inner spiritual condition that he has eternal life or not, and not according to his outward status or condition).

In vi. 54, 56, eternal life is conveyed through the eating and drinking of His flesh and blood, and by "abiding in" Him (*i.e.*, it is by a personal, spiritual relation of the most intimate kind, and not through any legal status, still less through any changes in the natural world). And it is to be had here and

---

<sup>1</sup> The passage is well discussed by Von Dobschütz, p. 129; and Dalman, pp. 139, 143.

<sup>2</sup> Matt. xiii. 39.

<sup>3</sup> *Cf.* Lk. x. 2.

## THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST

now, even if a “last day” is mentioned in the same breath.<sup>1</sup>

In xii. 31, xvi. 11, He declares that a “judgment” has already taken place (a familiar thought in St. John) and of the ruler of this “age” (a clear allusion to the apocalyptic Beliar). No cataclysm had taken place, neither had any unusual portents been noted, and the events foretold in Matt. xxiv. had not occurred; the judgment that had taken place was in the moral and spiritual sphere, in the acceptance and denial of Him by His hearers, and the moral and spiritual crisis occasioned by His coming and teaching.

In xvii. 15, He prays not that they may be taken out of the world (*κόσμος*), but that they may be delivered from the evil one (*i.e.*, it is a spiritual blessing which He desires for them). (Allusion is not made to the passage iii. 16 ff, as this may be a comment of the evangelist’s own.)

We may note also that Our Lord in His predictions of the coming of the kingdom never foretold material blessings; His promises are conveyed in symbolic language;<sup>2</sup> His disciples receive “life”; the Twelve may sit on Twelve Thrones, but it is to judge the twelve tribes (*i.e.*, it is authority that they are to receive, and authority is a non-substantial entity). The sons of the kingdom “sit at endless feast” with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob;<sup>3</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> Cf. xiv. 20.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Muirhead, p. 51.

<sup>3</sup> Matt. viii. 11; and cf. His words at the Last Supper, xxvi. 29.

## THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST

but it is not intended that these words should be taken in the crude literal sense of the traditional Messianic Banquet ; they are a symbol of eternal bliss. The penitent thief is to be with Him in " Paradise " ; but no hint is given as to the meaning of this. Our Lord takes the thought and allows the thief to put his own meaning into it. Those who have renounced material blessings in this world are to receive the same in an enhanced degree, but He says expressly that these are to be superseded by eternal life in the age to come.<sup>1</sup> To quote Muirhead, He presented the Kingdom of God as "*the sum of all the good things* belonging to the *supernatural life of God's children*, and that these good things are, primarily, powers of *holy truth and love* acting on the *human conscience and will* ;<sup>2</sup> "He preached God's reigning will in grace and judgment" ;<sup>3</sup> His view of the Kingdom as something transcendent is shown by the very fact that He used the apocalyptic imagery in which to describe it.<sup>4</sup> Cf. Dalman : "The theocracy about to make its entrance into the world was something more than a gratifying realisation of the hopes entertained regarding it ; it was a creative force bringing new ideas in its train."<sup>5</sup> His idea of the kingdom, says Dr. Bruce, was "a kingdom of grace in order to be a kingdom of holiness."<sup>6</sup>

Again, we cannot help marking the contrast

---

<sup>1</sup> Matt. xix. 29.  
<sup>4</sup> P. 104.

<sup>2</sup> P. 114.  
<sup>5</sup> P. 139.

<sup>3</sup> P. 64.  
<sup>6</sup> P. 54.

## THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST

between His teaching and that of other apocalypticists.<sup>1</sup> Whether it be in Daniel, or in Enoch, or elsewhere, we notice that they give the most precise details as to time and place and condition ; they mention angels, good and bad, by name ; they describe the visions and experiences which they have been favoured with ; they describe strange beasts and monsters, which symbolise events or people in current history ; occasionally, as in 2 Enoch, there is a great deal of information given about the material universe, and the heavenly spheres, a kind of primitive physical and astronomical science. These are noticeably absent in the mouth of Our Lord. He gives no periods of "seventy weeks," or days or aeons. It is true that He clearly exhibits a determinism in His teaching (e.g., Matt. x. 30 : "The very hairs of your head are all numbered" ; Lk. xiii. 32 : "I cast out devils and perform cures to-day and to-morrow, and the third day I am perfected" ; xxii. 22 : "The Son of Man indeed goeth, as it hath been determined" ; 37 : "This which is written must be fulfilled in Me" ; 53 : "This is your hour, and the power of darkness" ; John vii. 6, 8 : "My time is not yet come, fulfilled" ; xi. 9 : "Are there not twelve hours in the day ? If a man walk in the day, he stumbleth not, because he seeth the light of this world. But if a man walk in the night, he stumbleth, because the light is not in

---

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Kennedy, p. 18; Dewick, p. 225; *Foundations*, p. 112; Oesterley, p. 190.

## THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST

him"; *cf.* vii. 30, viii. 20, xii. 23, xiii. 1, xxiv. 26, 44); but He gives no indication of when or where, excepting in Matt. xxiv., which only represents a partial side of His eschatology, and possibly misrepresents His actual teaching, and where the "general" and the "particular" are strangely intertwined; His usual attitude is that "of that day and hour knoweth no man, not even the Son, but the Father only," the whole future is shrouded in obscurity; "The kingdom of God cometh not with observation" (*i.e.*, cannot be calculated or brought within known periods of time). Yet, as regards the future, He does not dream vaguely of a new heaven and earth in despair of this. For Him, in contrast to others, this world is a perfectly possible world, and only needs that men should acknowledge His kingship; His conception of the kingdom presupposes this present earth; and He came to save sinners, not to destroy them.<sup>1</sup>

He tacitly accepts the angelology and demonology of His day (as in Matt. xii. 25 ff.), neither affirming nor denying its truth; but only one spirit does He ever name, and that sparingly (*i.e.*, Satan).<sup>2</sup> He gives no highly-coloured version of His experiences; the nearest approach to these are the Temptation, the story of which must have come from His own mouth; the Transfiguration, which was shared by some of the disciples; and the passage, Lk. x. 18:

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Rashdall, *op. cit.*, p. 200; Hastings, *D C G*, ii, p. 145a.

<sup>2</sup> Matt. xii. 26, xvi. 23; Mk. iv. 15; Lk. x. 18, xiii. 16, xxii. 31.

## THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST

“ I beheld Satan fallen as lightning from heaven,” which may be merely a symbolic way of announcing the beginning of His triumph, and is an echo of Isa. xiv. 12 (in any case, it implies the actual presence of the kingdom). The rarity and the moderation of such expressions is very much the reverse of what we find elsewhere.

He gives no allegorical versions of history, portrayed under the form of fantastic and composite and transmogrified creatures, as in Daniel and Enoch ; He only alludes to the “ abomination of desolation,” a traditional conception, and part of the current terminology, originating in Daniel. And there is nothing in the nature of physical science or astronomy ; here, as in all else, His teaching studiously avoids concrete details, and deals with abstract principles ; it is the eternal and absolute, the spiritual and unchanging, that He handles and emphasises ; the temporal and transient, the changing and the material, that He either neglects or passes over. His teaching about eschatology is parallel to that on other subjects. He accepts and uses current conceptions and terms (how else could He have taught ?), but does not commit Himself as to their actual truth or untruth, as when He accepts the Davidic authorship of the Psalms and the traditional authorship of “ Daniel,” and the Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch,<sup>1</sup> which we in our day have seen reason to modify (and we believe without either disrespect

---

<sup>1</sup> Cf. also John x. 35 : “ The Scripture cannot be broken.”

## THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST

to His Person or detriment to His Divinity). He expressly allows for growth and development in man's apprehension of eternal truth, and, therefore, for the discarding and changing of the forms in which it is apprehended ; *cf.* Matt. xiii. 52 : " Every scribe who hath been made a disciple of the kingdom of heaven is like unto a man that is a householder, which bringeth forth out of his treasure things new and old " ; John xvi. 12, 13 : " I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. Howbeit, when He, the Spirit of Truth, is come, He shall guide you into all the truth—and He shall declare unto you the things that are to come."

This is, perhaps, the best place in which to point out yet another, and a perplexing feature of His teaching. When speaking of the kingdom and its effects, He both asserts and implies that it is already present, and that its blessings may be had here and now by those who comply with its conditions. One or two passages already quoted have revealed this,<sup>1</sup> and there are many others. For instance, His first utterance was that the kingdom of heaven was at hand, a phrase clearly implying at the least, nearness, if not actual presence (the Greek is *ἥγγικε* = " has drawn near " ) ; and His application of Isa. lxi. to Himself in the Synagogue of Capernaum conveys the same implication, that " the time has been fulfilled," and the promised Golden Age is

---

<sup>1</sup> Cf. pp. 83 ff.

## THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST

already present.<sup>1</sup> The same message were the Twelve and the Seventy commissioned to deliver;<sup>2</sup> and the Twelve were told that the Son of Man should have come before the evangelisation of the cities of Israel were completed.<sup>3</sup> In Mk. ii. 19, He describes Himself as the Bridegroom, and asserts that this is not the time for fasting, implying that the time for rejoicing has rather come. And the following verses, about the new wine and the new patch of cloth imply equally clearly that a new era had commenced. When St. John Baptist sent to enquire if Jesus were the Messiah or no, Our Lord directed his attention to the healing of the sick and the other good works which it was held that the Messiah would perform, adding the significant words : “Blessed is he that shall not be offended in Me.”<sup>4</sup> Just as, later on, He said : “Blessed are your eyes, for they see ; and your ears, for they hear. For verily I say unto you, that many prophets and righteous men desired to see the things which ye see, and saw them not ; and to hear the things which ye hear and heard them not” ;<sup>5</sup> and He declared that St. John Baptist was Elijah come again, in accordance with the traditional belief.<sup>6</sup> In Matt. xii. 28, He makes an unequivocal statement that the Kingdom has

---

<sup>1</sup> Lk. iv. 18.

<sup>2</sup> Mt. x. 7; Lk. x. 9.

<sup>3</sup> Matt. x. 23.

<sup>4</sup> Matt. xi. 4, *cf.* John vii. 31.

<sup>5</sup> Matt. xiii. 16; *cf.* John viii. 56 : “Abraham rejoiced to see my day.”

<sup>6</sup> Matt. xi. 14, xvii. 12.

## THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST

come: "If I by the Spirit of God cast out devils, then is the Kingdom of God come upon you." A similar statement is found in John v. 25, prefaced by His solemnest asseveration: "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 shall live." In Matt. xxiii. 13, He rebukes the Pharisees for not entering the kingdom themselves, and for keeping others out; just as in Mk. xii. 13, He hints that there is no necessary antagonism between the kingdom of Caesar and His own, a man may be a loyal subject of both at one and the same time (exactly as St. Paul teaches in Rom. xiii). Of similar import are the passages in which He claims that all authority has been given unto Him, words which both imply His Messianic claims and His present possession of Messianic prerogatives; (see Mk. i. 22: "He taught men as one having authority"; Mk. xi. 27: "All things have been delivered unto me of My Father"; xxviii. 18: "All authority hath been given unto me in heaven and on earth"); the entry on Palm Sunday, where, even if His action had no Messianic import (it is denied by some commentators), at least He accepted the greetings of the people, and asserted that the stones would continue them if the people ceased;<sup>1</sup> the use of the present tense in His parables—"The Kingdom is like, *ὅμοια ἐστιν*." The (only) categorical words claiming to be the Messiah have the same import: "From henceforth

---

<sup>1</sup> Lk. xix. 40.

(ἀπ' ἀρτι) ye shall see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of power, and coming on the clouds of heaven.”<sup>1</sup> The words “sitting” and “coming” clearly imply a present and final and conclusive act, together with a perpetual exercise of the authority and power which that act denotes. Cf. Gould, in Internat. Critical Commentary on St. Mark: “The coming is not a single event, any more than the sitting on the right hand of power; and it was a thing which was to begin with the very time of Our Lord’s departure from the world. Moreover, the two things, the sitting on the right hand of power, and the coming, are connected in such a way as to mean that He is to assume power in heaven and exercise it here in the world. The period beginning with the departure of Jesus from the world was to be marked by this assumption of heavenly power by the Christ, and by repeated interferences in crises of the world’s history, of which the destruction of Jerusalem was the first.”<sup>2</sup>

And it was not only verbal teaching—He upheld it in deed; because His power over nature, over disease, over evil spirits, even death itself, as well as the power of His preaching and personal influence, showed the reality and the present possession of His “kingship”; the authority was not only claimed but it was demonstrated.

St. John’s Gospel is full of passages which imply

---

<sup>1</sup> Mk. xxvi. 64.

<sup>2</sup> P. 252.

## THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST

the present existence of the kingdom. Some of these have already been mentioned, and the whole section xiv.—xvi. implies that it may be experienced by men ; no hint is given that they will have to wait, save the words about the Holy Spirit, and “ that day,” where it is clearly implied that the kingdom, if already present, is not yet complete ; but, “ He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father.” We may note also that the satisfaction received from the Water of Life and the Bread of Life is both complete and permanent, and no hint is given that either must be waited for.<sup>1</sup> In v. 40, it is implied that life may be had now by “ coming to Christ.” In xviii. 36, He declares “ My kingdom is not of this world,” clearly implying its present reality.<sup>2</sup>

In Muirhead’s words : “ To Jesus indeed, in His filial knowledge of God, His consciousness of a unique call and a corresponding endowment, and the perfect repose of His Spirit upon the holy and loving will of His Father in heaven, the Kingdom that was His Father’s gift was a present reality ; but we must not overlook the fact that all through His preaching—not simply in eschatological discourses delivered towards the close of His life—He presented the Kingdom in a futuristic aspect.”<sup>3</sup>

Or, to quote Von Dobschütz, whose work is clear and sane and well-balanced : “ The evidence

---

<sup>1</sup> iv. 14; vi. 35.

<sup>2</sup> On this point, see Von Dobschütz, pp. 125 ff.

<sup>3</sup> P. 80, *cf.* Hastings, I. 750b.

## THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST

collected is quite sufficient to prove that in the teaching of Jesus there is a strong line of what I would call *transmuted eschatology*. I mean eschatology transmuted in the sense that what was spoken of in Jewish eschatology as to come in the last days is taken here as already at hand in the lifetime of Jesus ; transmuted at the same time in the other sense that what was expected as an external change is taken inwardly ; not all people seeing it, but Jesus' disciples becoming aware of it. . . . . Now we must compare this with the first group of sayings dealing with pure eschatology : Jesus the Messiah to come on the clouds of heaven ; the Messianic judgment to be held at the end of the days ; the Messianic meal to take place after this glorious event, and so on. Both groups are quite distinct and to be kept separate. Neither of them may be reduced easily to the other one without violence being done to the tradition, nor can we put aside one of them as a later addition or transformation, both being attested by our best sources.”<sup>1</sup>

It should be also noted how the parables relating to the kingdom vary in their implication. Some are of the “catastrophic” kind, such as the Draw Net, the Pounds, the Talents, the Unfaithful Servant, the Virgins, although even these imply considerable delay before the Return and the final reckoning or end. But others are evolutionary, and present the kingdom not as an event or series

---

<sup>1</sup> Pp. 150 ff., *cf.* Charles, *Eschatology*, pp. 371 ff.

## THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST

of events, so much as a process, which may be long or short in itself, but, when applied to the world of which it is asserted, must be indefinitely long. The parables of the Sower, the Seed growing secretly, the Mustard-seed, the Leaven, the Tares, the Unjust Judge, the Selfish Neighbour, when viewed in the light of history and human experience, give no countenance to the thought of a speedy consummation of all things, or of one single definite event. (His teaching about the many false Christs who are to appear before the end both requires a long period of time in which to be realised, and may equally imply that there will be many "ends" and many crises, in which the same phenomenon will be repeated.)

The upshot of the preceding argument, then, is this: Our Lord's eschatology is based on the conceptions of His own day, and can be traced through the Jewish Pseudepigraphic writings back to the Old Testament, of which they were the legitimate and natural successors. This current Judaism varied widely and materially in its ideas and teaching, and it developed steadily from the physical conception of the kingdom to the spiritual, from the legal to the ethical, from the national to the human, in exactly the same way that the Old Testament prophets were concerned mainly with moral considerations; so that the details are considerably less reliable than the principles which they try to express. In Our Lord's teaching we notice the same tendency, *i.e.*, a development of

## THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST

the preceding conceptions, a raising of them, a purification of their grossness, a spiritualising of them, with an elimination of familiar detail, and a growing vagueness and generality. (Some writers, indeed, trace a development in His own actual teaching, but this is precarious ; as Schweitzer says [p. 7] there are equally good grounds for denying as for asserting it.) In one place only, the crucial discourse on the Mount of Olives, does He go into any great detail : and here it is possible that His hearers misunderstood Him, and have mingled His words with others with which they were familiar, and thought appropriate, and even intended by Him. The general character of His eschatological teaching is similar to that on other subjects, *i.e.*, it tends away from the particular to the general, from the concrete to the abstract, from details to principles, a feature which precludes a *literal* interpretation. As His teaching was a development, so He allowed for further development in man's apprehension of the Truth. And the inference is that He regarded the principles as perpetually expressing and re-expressing themselves in human history and experience ; the outward form and detail and grouping were always varying, but the inner conflict of good and evil was always present, and it was this that occasioned the doings of mankind. There was to be a consummation, but no one but God the Father knew when it would be ; His own coming had caused a crisis in human history, it was the turning-point, marking the commencement of the overthrow of evil ; and His call to men marked the crisis in

## THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST

the lives of each, their future being determined by the way in which they responded and by their attitude towards Him. The kingdom was "at hand," and "eternal life" could be had here and now, even if the end was not yet.<sup>1</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Robertson, p. 75, 99; Worsley, p. 50; Bruce, pp. 273.

### CHAPTER III

THIS account of Our Lord's eschatological teaching would not be complete without some mention of the way in which it was received by His disciples, and understood by them. Already we have seen something of this, in the Gospels, where it is difficult, not to say impossible, to distinguish between the actual utterances of Our Lord, and the form or colouring in which His hearers have clothed them. But, at any rate, we have seen two clearly-marked groups of His teaching, one dealing with temporal and historical details, and one dealing with eternal and spiritual truths, and showing development and progress and growth in conception. It is not otherwise with the rest of the New Testament ; that is to say that the various writers show development in their own eschatological ideas, and represent the Return of Christ and the coming of the Kingdom, now as yet to come, and now in a measure at least as already realised ; now in material terms, now in spiritual, now as static, now dynamic.

The teaching of Acts is all on one side, and looks forward to a future coming. The angel tells the watching disciples on the Mount of the Ascension that " this Jesus . . . shall so come in like manner as ye have beheld Him going into heaven."<sup>1</sup> St. Peter declares<sup>2</sup> that Christ has been received into

---

<sup>1</sup> i. 11.

<sup>2</sup> iii. 21.

## THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST

heaven "until the times of restoration of all things," foretold by the age-long line of prophets;<sup>1</sup> that He has been "ordained of God to be the judge of quick and dead."<sup>2</sup> St. Paul says that this judgment is yet in the future, on a fixed day;<sup>3</sup> and that "through many tribulations we must enter into the kingdom of God";<sup>4</sup> the rest of the ideas are what we should have expected in the mouth of a Jewish convert in a very early stage of the Christian consciousness, before either time or experience had been able to modify or illuminate the traditional notions, and when persecution made it only too clear that evil was not yet subdued, or the good consummated. Yet it is noteworthy that the present tense is used of those who are "in the way of salvation."<sup>5</sup>

The Epistle to the Hebrews takes, on the whole, the same line, again as would have been expected. Thus, the Jewish-Christian readers are exhorted to hold their hope and profession firm unto the end.<sup>6</sup> They have, indeed, tasted the "powers of the age to come," but it is clear that the latter is not fully realised;<sup>7</sup> the Sabbath-rest "remaineth," yet to be entered into,<sup>8</sup> the promise is yet to be received;<sup>9</sup> all things have been subjected unto the Son, but

---

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Dalman, p. 178.

<sup>2</sup> x. 42; but no time is here indicated.

<sup>3</sup> xvii. 31, cf. xxiv. 25.

<sup>4</sup> xiv. 22; for St. Paul's teaching see below, pp. 102 ff.

<sup>5</sup> ii. 47, etc.      <sup>6</sup> iii. 6, 14.      <sup>7</sup> vi. 5, 18-20.

<sup>8</sup> iv. 9.      <sup>9</sup> x. 36.

## THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST

now we see not yet all things subjected to Him.<sup>1</sup> He is “expecting till His enemies be made the footstool of His feet”;<sup>2</sup> Christ is to “appear a second time . . . to them that wait for Him”;<sup>3</sup> the “day” is still “drawing nigh.”<sup>4</sup> On the other hand, they have come to “Mount Zion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to innumerable hosts of angels, to the general assembly and church of the first born who are enrolled in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, and to Jesus”;<sup>5</sup> they have received “a kingdom that cannot be shaken.”<sup>6</sup> Clearly something has already been realised, even if the next chapter states that “we have not here an abiding city, but we seek after the city which is to come.”<sup>6</sup>

St. James and St. Peter and St. Jude teach similar views, and for the same reasons. St. James exhorts his readers to be “patient until the coming of the Lord,” and says that this is imminent.<sup>7</sup> St. Peter, writing at a later date, speaks of “a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time,” “the revelation of Jesus Christ,”<sup>8</sup> but declares that “the end of all things is at hand,” that “the time is come for judgment to begin at the house of God”;<sup>9</sup> yet believers already “rejoice greatly with joy unspeakable and full of glory; receiving the end

<sup>1</sup> ii. 8.

<sup>2</sup> x. 13.

<sup>3</sup> ix. 28.

<sup>4</sup> x. 25 ff.

<sup>5</sup> xii. 22-24, 28.

<sup>6</sup> xiii. 14.

<sup>7</sup> v. 7, 8.

<sup>8</sup> i. 5, 7, 13; *cf.* v. 1, 4, Jude 21, 24.

<sup>9</sup> iv. 7, 17.

## THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST

of your faith, even the salvation of your souls," even if they do not actually see Christ.<sup>1</sup> 2 Peter (dating from *c. A.D. 150*, Chase; a century earlier, Pullan) is characteristically Jewish; it looks for a future revelation of Christ; the "day of judgment" is yet to come, and the "day of the Lord" will come without warning.<sup>2</sup>

The teaching of the Johannine Epistles, dating from the end of the first century A.D., is similar to that of the Fourth Gospel; and both strains of teaching are evident. "The true light already shineth," and "we have passed out of death into life."<sup>3</sup> "The Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding, that we know Him that is true, and we are in Him that is true, even in His Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God, and eternal life."<sup>4</sup> Yet, in spite of the rapture and the satisfaction which this consciousness and experience may bring, we are to look for another manifestation of the Son of God: "It is not yet made manifest what we shall be. We know that if He shall be manifested we shall be like Him; for we shall see Him even as He is."<sup>5</sup> This manifestation is not far off; for it is now "the last hour."<sup>6</sup>

In the case of St. Paul, we notice a very marked change in his conceptions, between the earliest and the latest of his writings, as well as a mingling of

<sup>1</sup> i. 8.

<sup>2</sup> ii. 9, iii. 7, 10.

<sup>3</sup> 1 ii. 8, iii. 14; *cf.* v. 11.

<sup>4</sup> 1 v. 20.

<sup>5</sup> 1 iii. 2, *cf.* ii. 28.

<sup>6</sup> 1 ii. 18.

## THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST

the material with spiritual conceptions, the mystical and moral with the historic and physical.<sup>1</sup> In the earliest (1 and 2 Thess.) he clearly expects a speedy return of Christ, and he describes it in the sensuous imagery of the popular thought of his day. The coming (Parousia) is still in the future,<sup>2</sup> and its time is unknown "as a thief in the night."<sup>3</sup> It will be attended with the visible cloud, the audible voice and trumpet of the archangel, the bodily descent of Christ out of the sky, and the levitation of believers "to meet the Lord in the air,"<sup>4</sup> and a flaming fire for the destruction of the ungodly.<sup>5</sup>

In the next group of letters, as chronologically accepted, we find the sensuous literal conceptions still put forward. Thus, in 1 Cor. iii. 13, the Judgment Day is to bring a test by fire. In xv. 52, he again mentions the trumpet; and, from the popular inability to dissociate personality from the physical case which clothes it, he is driven to invent the self-contradictory conception of a "spiritual body."<sup>6</sup> He holds that a definite stage was reached by the Resurrection and Ascension of Christ, and that the kingdom so inaugurated is yet to be made complete; and "when all things have been subjected unto Him," "when He shall have abolished all rule and all authority and

---

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Charles, E. Bibl., p. 1381, Kennedy, pp. 158 ff.

<sup>2</sup> 1 ii. 19, iii. 13, v. 23.

<sup>3</sup> 1 v. 2.

<sup>4</sup> 1 iv. 13 ff. This he claims to have been revealed to him by Christ.

<sup>5</sup> 2 i. 7, ii.

<sup>6</sup> Cf. Tyrrell, p. 147.

## THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST

power," Christ shall appear the second time and surrender His Kingdom to the Father.<sup>1</sup> "The time is shortened," "the fashion of this world passeth away"; upon us "the ends of the ages are come."<sup>2</sup>

But after this letter his ideas undergo a change. He still believes in a future return of Christ, but it is not so immediate, and he drops the traditional view of a visible appearance with clouds of glory and attendant hosts of angels. His thoughts turn more into a moral and spiritual groove. Christ's return is for judgment,<sup>3</sup> as in 1 and 2 Thess. and 1 Cor. iii. 13, v. 5, but nothing is said as to the how or when or where. (*Cf.* xiv. 10: "We shall all stand before the judgment-seat of God," where the words are metaphorical rather than intended literally; as in 2 Cor. v. 10.) The verdict will turn on the character of those judged,<sup>4</sup> and he exhorts his readers to grow in grace and to be transformed into a new man. This new man is the image of the Lord, and the glory to be finally revealed has already been partially received.<sup>5</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> xv. 20 ff. In some of the Jewish books the Kingdom of the Messiah is regarded as temporary and preliminary to the final age of bliss; 2 Bar. xxx. 1: "And it shall come to pass after these things, when the time of the Advent of the Messiah is fulfilled, that He shall return in glory"; xl. 3: "His principate will stand for ever, until the world of corruption is at an end, and until the times aforesaid are fulfilled"; *cf.* lxxiii., lxxiv., 1 Enoch xcii.-civ. In 4 Ezra vii. 29, the Messiah dies before the final age. (*Cf.* Schürer, II, 2, p. 176.)

<sup>2</sup> vii. 29, 31, x. 11.

<sup>3</sup> Rom. ii. 5.

<sup>4</sup> ii. 6 ff.

<sup>5</sup> xii. 2, 2 Cor. iii. 18.

## THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST

He is concerned more with present duties than with future rewards ; these latter are dependent on the former, and the development of character and life in the spirit are things which take time ; so that the future is not so immediately important ; indeed, if the present is cared for adequately, the future will take care of itself. We have the help of the Holy Spirit for present needs and duties, and for the transformation of character ; and for the future we may leave all to God's love, in full and perfect confidence.<sup>1</sup> Moreover, he has given up the thought of a great cataclysm and the "falling away" and the destruction of the wicked which is found in Thess. ; instead he looks forward to the gradual conversion of the Gentiles and the ingathering of all nations into the kingdom, for God has mercy upon all.<sup>2</sup> This is a very different thought, and its consummation manifestly will be very far distant ; the Return cannot be immediate. (At times, however, the earlier thoughts recur ; *cf.* xiii. 12 : "The night is far spent, the day is at hand" ; and in the third group, Phil. iv. 5 : "The Lord is at hand," also in 1 Cor. xvi. 22.) And the passage 2 Cor. iii. 12-v. 10, manifestly reveals a spiritual ideal ; things seen are temporal, but the unseen are eternal ; we have a house not made with hands, eternal, in the heavens ; we walk by faith, not by sight ; if we have known Christ after the flesh, now we know Him so no more ; if any

---

<sup>1</sup> Rom. viii.

<sup>2</sup> Rom. xi.

## THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST

man be in Christ, there is a new creation ; the old things are passed away and have become new ; dying, we live ; we have nothing, and yet possess all things. *Cf.*, too, Phil. iv. 8 ; Rom. ii. 29, vii. 6 ; 2 Cor. iii. 6.

In the third group of letters we notice a further advance made, and on the same lines. In 1 Cor. xv. 24, he said that Christ is to surrender His kingdom to the Father, "that God may be all in all" ; but in Eph. and Col., it is Christ Himself Who is the be-all and end-all of creation, as He was the prime agent in its commencement, and is that in which all things cohere ; the consummation is His "fulness." (See Eph. i. 10 : "To sum up all things in Christ" ; iv. 13 : "Till we all attain . . . unto a full-grown man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ" ; Col. i. 16 : "In Him were all things created . . . all things have been created through Him and unto Him ; and He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together" ; i. 18 : That in all things He might have the pre-eminence. For it was the good pleasure of the Father that in Him should all the fulness dwell" ; iii. 11 : "Christ is all, and in all.") It follows from this that God intends the salvation of all men,<sup>1</sup> and the tone and thoughts of these letters clearly imply the reconciliation of evil spirits as well as of wicked men : nothing and no one is to be left out of the kingdom. It is obvious that no immediate return of Christ is looked for ; but

---

<sup>1</sup> 1 Tim. ii. 4.

## THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST

that the consummation is conceived more as a raising of men to Him, a summing up and completion of all things in Him, than as a return of Him to them. And he repeatedly uses the expression "heavenly sphere" of the medium through which the development is to be realised.<sup>1</sup>

Side by side with this development of thought and changing conception we notice the concurrent presentation of two attitudes towards life. As already stated, St. Paul regards the coming of Jesus Christ as marking a turning-point in human history, a crisis in the eternal conflict between good and evil. The kingdom has come, but it is not yet fully realised. We have received the "earnest of the spirit,"<sup>2</sup> and this is an abiding joy, a never-failing help (*cf.* Rom. viii. 37: "In all these things we are more than conquerors"; viii. 1: "There is therefore now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus"; 1 Cor. iv. 20: "The kingdom of God is not in word but in power"; xiv. 17: The kingdom of God is righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit"; Gal. ii. 20: "I live, and yet no longer I, but Christ liveth in me"; iii. 14: "That upon the Gentiles might come the blessing of Abraham in Christ Jesus; that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith"; Phil. iv. 13: "I can do all things through Him that strengtheneth me"; Eph. i. 18: "That ye may know what is . . . the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, and what the exceeding

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Eph. *passim.*, and the Dean of Wells's note.

<sup>2</sup> 2 Cor. i. 22, v. 5; Eph. i. 14.

## THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST

greatness of His power to us-ward who believe"; iii. 16: "Strengthened with power through His spirit in the inward man"). The Christian has received something which has transformed him and transfigured his life, so that he is proof against anything, and is always rejoicing; his joy is intangible, "no man taketh it" away from him; he lives already in a different sphere, and his life is "hid with Christ in God"; he has realised his Lord's words about their mutual indwelling and abiding.<sup>1</sup>

What more could a man want or expect, it might be asked; but there is another side to the picture. The treasure is "in earthen vessels"; St. Paul has not already attained, or been already made perfect; the prize of his calling is still before him, unreached as yet; sin is only too real a power in his own life; evil is only too prevalent in the world; he still looks for his Saviour, and longs to be "clothed upon" with his "heavenly habitation."<sup>2</sup> His joy, his share in the kingdom, his oneness with Christ, if real and true and indestructible, are at least qualified. If Christ is in us, this presence is still only a "hope" of glory;<sup>3</sup> and the Church, as is evident from the passages already quoted, is neither pure nor complete. Eph. and Col. clearly imply growth and progress, and not until the Church is co-extensive with the whole of humanity, not to say the whole of creation, will

---

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Robertson, p. 54.

<sup>2</sup> See 2 Cor. iv. 7, v. 2; Phil. iii. 12, 20; Rom. vii., viii.; Gal. v. 19; 1 Cor. iv. 9; 2 Cor. i. 8, xi. 23.

<sup>3</sup> Col. i. 27.

## THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST

the end have been reached ; Christ is still a " Christ that is to be."

In the last group of letters he still looks forward to " that day " ;<sup>1</sup> there is a life " to come,"<sup>2</sup> and it is " life indeed," " eternal life " ; Christ will " appear " again, although he does not say how or when ;<sup>3</sup> he desires the younger widows to marry,<sup>4</sup> and to take their proper share in the world's life and activities ; and he rebukes those who say that the Resurrection has already taken place.<sup>5</sup>

In his old age, he looks forward to his release from the world, and this is so close that the prospect of it and the hereafter tend to obscure his consciousness of present joy and power ; perhaps the weakness of age and his continued sufferings have made him realise more intensely the fact that the promises have not yet been fulfilled. Christ is yet to come.<sup>6</sup>

The one professedly apocalyptic book, which closes the New Testament (dating from the end of the first century A.D., but probably embodying some earlier work), shows similar characteristics to Our Lord's teaching, though in varying degrees ; *i.e.*, it uses the usual language, and if it is more

---

<sup>1</sup> 2 Tim. i. 12, iv. 8.

<sup>2</sup> 1 Tim. iv. 8, vi. 19 ; Tit. i. 2, iii. 7.

<sup>3</sup> 1 Tim. vi. 14 ; 2 Tim. iv. 1, 8, 18 ; Tit. ii. 13.

<sup>4</sup> 1 Tim. v. 14, in striking contrast to 1 Cor. vii. 26.

<sup>5</sup> 2 Tim. ii. 18, but contrast Eph. ii. 6 ; Col. ii. 12, iii. 1, where he interprets their conversion and baptism as a " raising."

<sup>6</sup> Cf. Von Dobschütz, pp. 24, 25.

## THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST

symbolic and imaginative, describes visions, defines historic events and periods of time, it is also sane and moderate both in conception and expression ; we find the same mingling of actual event and abstract principle, where it is not always easy to tell which is which, *i.e.*, whether the writer's words are intended as a historical reference, or merely as an illustration of eternal truth, whether by them he wishes to teach history, or religion.

With regard to the Second Coming of Christ, his teaching varies, like that of the Fourth Gospel ; sometimes he looks for a final return on traditional lines, sometimes he alludes to other comings, of a periodical nature, and on spiritual and mystical lines. A final return is looked for, and speedily,<sup>1</sup> and the revelation is of " things which must shortly come to pass " ;<sup>2</sup> in xx. is described the " first resurrection " of martyrs only, who live and reign with Christ a thousand years. After this comes the general resurrection and the final judgment, followed by the consummation of all things in the " new heaven and the new earth " ; it is not stated, but it is implied, that this is part of the events which will accompany the return of Christ. On the other hand, in the Letters to the Seven Churches, Christ speaks of coming under the form of visitations, and not in terms applicable to the Second Advent. (See ii. 5 : " Repent . . . or else I come to thee, and will move thy candlestick out of its

---

<sup>1</sup> Cf. iii. 11, xxii. 12, 20 : " I come quickly."

<sup>2</sup> i. 1, xxii. 6.

## THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST

place, except thou repent" ; *cf.* ii. 16, iii. 3.) And He comes where He is welcomed, as well as in visitation ; *cf.* iii. 20 : "Behold, I stand at the door and knock ; if any man hear My Voice and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with Me." This is thoroughly in the spirit of John xiv. 23, and the Messianic Banquet may be at least anticipated by the faithful soul. That is to say, the conception is spiritual and ethical and mystical, and this interpretation fits the two concluding chapters at least as well as the historic and physical. It is hardly the replacing of one material universe by another which is either needed or likely to be welcomed. The disabilities of this present one may well be removed, either by destruction or transformation, they need to be so removed before man's bliss can be assured ; but it is life on a higher plane which he longs for, and this is just what xxi. 1-7 implies. The symbolism of xxi. 10-21 denotes perfection, not actual literal detail ; and xxi. 22-xxii. 5, 11-15 are couched in terms of ethical and spiritual import (it is said expressly that sun and moon will be no longer needed ; just as in xix. 8 the Church is clad in the righteous acts of the saints).<sup>1</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> For the teaching of the Early Church on this matter, see Dewick.

## CHAPTER IV

LET us again summarise the points which these descriptions and quotations of the teaching of Our Lord and His followers about the Second Advent have brought to the fore.<sup>1</sup> Their ideas were naturally those of their own day, and were taken from the teaching of the apocalyptic writers of the first and 2nd centuries B.C., who in turn drew their inspiration from and developed the teaching of the writers of the Old Testament. In the case of both Our Lord and His disciples we can trace a spiritualising and a refining process, and two clearly defined lines of thought. One of these is parallel to the current thought of the day, and speaks of a physical or semi-physical return at a given though unknown date, with a final judgment and inauguration of a reign of bliss for the righteous and of unending punishment for the wicked ; the other regards the kingdom as having already, in a measure at least, arrived, and describes it in terms ethical, spiritual, and mystical ; one concept is catastrophic, the other evolutionary. It is not easy to mark development in the different periods of Our Lord's teaching,<sup>2</sup> and the matter is complicated by questions of criticism as to the record

---

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Hastings, *DB*, iii, p. 679b ; Charles, *Eschatology*, p. 366.

<sup>2</sup> Muirhead hints at this, pp. 190 ff., 204 ff. ; cf. Sanday, p. 96 ; MacNeile, pp. xxiv, xxv.

and transmission of His words ; but with the rest of the New Testament this development and change of thought is clearly marked, notably in the case of St. Paul. In neither case can it be stated that there is a definite doctrine of the Second Advent in the New Testament, other than in the most general terms ; it was certainly taught that Our Lord would come again, but the details as to how and when and where vary greatly. In this respect, the teaching is parallel to that of the Jewish writers, where similar variations and contradictions are evident.<sup>1</sup>

Before we come to estimate the respective values of these two divergent lines of thought, it is well to enquire what led to the gradual rejection by the New Testament writers of the traditional material view, and to the development of the spiritual and mystical interpretation.

In the first place, it was due to the renewed emphasis which Our Lord placed on ethical considerations. This emphasis was evident enough in earlier days, and the Old Testament prophets had long given to the world their magnificent conception of God as a God of Righteousness, and urged the moral claim ; but the legalism of the Pharisees and the scholasticism of Rabbinic lore and the new Nationalism had done much to deaden it, and to obscure its force. The Kingdom of Heaven, said Christ, was not a national matter ; it was not the exclusive privilege of the Sons of Abraham : neither

---

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Davidson, p. 155 ; but most writers emphasise this.

## THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST

was it to be entered and realised by the keeping of the precepts of the Torah, and the fulfilling of many ceremonial prescriptions : it was the pure in heart who should see God, and it was by a man's response to God's call, and by his service of God and his neighbour that he should be judged and rewarded.

In the second place, the spiritualising process was due to the increasing pressure of evil and the heathen world on the consciences and lives of believers. Like their predecessors among the Jewish apocalypticists, they found this world so increasingly evil and unsatisfying, and persecution so constant, that they also were driven to conceive the kingdom as supra-mundane, and to regard what was spiritual as the only good. They had only sensuous and material figures in which to clothe their thoughts, and only earthly experience upon which to draw ; so that their teaching is confusing and uncertain, because the eternal cannot be comprised within the limits of the temporal, and all analogies are partially untrue and therefore misleading. But we can see, in a general way, what they meant ; they were trying to show that life was essentially ethical and spiritual, that the real was not material, that the ethically and spiritually good would survive all efforts made to destroy it, and that the man who was ethically upright and in love with what was spiritual would be upheld in his choice, and rewarded by being united to the source of all life and goodness, with God.

It was clear, moreover, that the spiritual transcended the material. In theory they must have

## THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST

perceived this ; and in experience there was no doubt. Our Lord Himself lived perpetually in the spiritual sphere ; it was this, and His unfailing sense of God's Presence and Power that made Him proof against the attacks of sin and the opposition of the world. It was this truth that He illustrated by His Transfiguration, Resurrection, and Ascension, in which His Person showed Its superiority to limitations of time, space, and physical corruption. When His disciples were with Him, they were doubtless conscious of a Power which they had not and could not find elsewhere ; it was power which He at times transmitted to them at a distance, as when the Seventy performed cures ; but they could not bear the thought of His leaving them, and would have kept Him from risking His life among the Jews, and from returning to Heaven. This, their need, He realised, and expressly sent the Holy Spirit, as He said, to take His place ; in the Holy Spirit, He said, He would come again to them.<sup>1</sup>

His promise was soon fulfilled. Within seven weeks of His Resurrection, within ten days of His departure from earth in the Ascension, the Spirit came and possessed them at Pentecost. This experience was undeniably real and convincing to them ; it was attested outwardly by the noise, the tongues of fire, the "gifts of tongues" (whatever these were), and by the inception and growth of the Church. It is worth while dwelling a little

---

<sup>1</sup> John xiv. 18.

## THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST

on this phenomenon, the coming of the Holy Spirit ; because in it we shall find a good deal to elucidate the problem before us. The Book of Acts has been rightly named the "Gospel of the Holy Spirit," and it reveals how intensely real to the Early Church were His Person and Power, a fact seen also from time to time in the Epistles. Our Lord had spoken of His, the Spirit's, coming in terms of present and actual experience, and as to be realised in the immediate future,<sup>1</sup> and His words were fully upheld by events.

The description of the Day of Pentecost in Acts ii. clearly shows the reality of the experience, both to the body of the disciples themselves, and also to their hearers. And frequently are events and actions ascribed to the Holy Spirit's influence. St. Peter is "filled with the Holy Spirit" before he makes his explanation to the Sanhedrim ; and after their trial and release, as the disciples were assembled for prayer, "the place was shaken wherein they were gathered together ; and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit."<sup>2</sup> And following on this experience, the writer describes how great was the effect on their lives, so that they instituted a voluntary communism, and the Apostles gave their witness "with great power," power seen most notably, to take an oft-quoted instance, in the transformation of the impetuous and uncertain Simon into Peter, the Rock, and in the miracles of healing frequently recorded. Over and over again

---

<sup>1</sup> John xiv.-xvi.

<sup>2</sup> iv. 8, 31.

## THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST

is it said "He was filled with the Holy Spirit," as of St. Stephen,<sup>1</sup> St. Paul,<sup>2</sup> the disciples,<sup>3</sup> or that an action was commanded by the Holy Spirit; as when He tells St. Philip to join himself to the Ethiopian Eunuch, and later takes him away;<sup>4</sup> tells St. Peter to go to Cornelius, making no distinction between Jew and Gentile;<sup>5</sup> reveals to Agabus the coming of a great famine, and the imprisonment of St. Paul;<sup>6</sup> orders St. Paul and St. Barnabas to undertake a tour of missionary work;<sup>7</sup> guides the council at Jerusalem to their decision on the thorny question of the Mosaic Law;<sup>8</sup> directs St. Paul on his route;<sup>9</sup> testifies to him that everywhere "bonds and afflictions" await him;<sup>10</sup> helps him in solving the current difficulties of his work;<sup>11</sup> appoints the bishops to their charges.<sup>12</sup>

Not only was the power of the Spirit revealed in beneficence and changed lives and daily guiding; it was seen, also, in judgment. Ananias and Sapphira are struck dead for their dishonesty, for "lying to the Holy Spirit" and for "tempting the Spirit of the Lord";<sup>13</sup> and Elymas is struck with blindness;<sup>14</sup> at Corinth one offender is formally delivered "to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the Spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus," by "the power of the Lord Jesus."<sup>15</sup>

<sup>1</sup> vii. 55.

<sup>2</sup> ix. 17, 21, 22, *cf.* ix. 31. <sup>3</sup> xiii. 52.

<sup>4</sup> viii. 29, 39.

<sup>5</sup> xi. 12. <sup>6</sup> xi. 28, xxi. 11.

<sup>7</sup> xiii. 2.

<sup>8</sup> xv. 28. <sup>9</sup> xvi. 6, 7, xxi. 4.

<sup>10</sup> xx. 23.

<sup>11</sup> 1 Cor. vii. 40. <sup>12</sup> xx. 28.

<sup>13</sup> v. 1-11.

<sup>14</sup> xiii. 9. <sup>15</sup> 1 Cor. v. 4.

## THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST

The same power and Presence was revealed visibly, both to believers and unbelievers alike. St. Peter can appeal in the Sanhedrim to the Holy Spirit as evidence for the truth of the Christian claim;<sup>1</sup> at Confirmations it is evident that some outward sign was given as well as the inward grace,<sup>2</sup> doubtless the same phenomena to which St. Paul alludes in Rom. xv. 19 (those things "which Christ wrought through me . . . in the power of the Holy Spirit"), and those discussed at length by him in 1 Cor. xii.-xiv.

It was this newly-found power which so transformed the lives of Christians, and transformed life for them. They proved in actual experience the truth of their Master's words; they were "born again from above"; there was "a new creation"; the "Bread of Life," and the "Water of Life" were both constant and more than satisfying; He gave them above all that they dared ask or think. And this fresh, novel, and absolutely convincing experience they ascribed solely to the coming of the Holy Spirit; He was, indeed, to them an ever-present companion and guide, the source of their knowledge and inspiration, but, above all, the giver of that power which enabled them to face, resist, and overcome the world, and the mediator of a life which was "life indeed."<sup>3</sup>

Is it permissible to identify this coming of the

---

<sup>1</sup> v. 32.

<sup>2</sup> viii. 18, xix. 6, *cf.* x. 44.

<sup>3</sup> *Cf.* Von. Dobschütz, pp. 21, 22.

## THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST

Holy Spirit with the Parousia of Christ, to see in Pentecost the fulfilment of His words about the coming of the Kingdom? Evidence has already been adduced<sup>1</sup> for giving a present instead of a future meaning to those words, and if the suggestion can be upheld it would provide a welcome relief from weary longings and discontent, do much to rebut the charge of "other-worldliness" levelled against the Church by the world, and also provide Christian people with, in many cases, a much needed stimulus, as well as resolving the difficulties connected with our Advent Hymns.

Let us again recall and emphasise what has been said already about growth and development. It can be traced steadily throughout the teaching of the prophets in the Old Testament, in the Apocalypticists; and in Our Lord's case there is a remarkable development and refining of the traditional teaching. His tendency is from the particular to the general, from the material to the ethical and spiritual, from small issues to great ones, from narrow to world-wide. The same tendencies are clearly traceable in the rest of the New Testament, side by side with the gradually weakening conceptions of traditional Judaism. And it must be remembered also, what the traditional Judaism really implied. We do it great wrong if we interpret it as intended *au pied de la lettre*. The strange terms and fancies of Jewish apocalyptic were due to the desire to express unworldly and non-material

---

<sup>1</sup> Pp. 81 ff.

## THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST

conceptions ;<sup>1</sup> they themselves imply and desire a spiritual and transcendental interpretation. Such thoughts like the 1,000 years, the regular cycles, the pre-determined periods, the mathematical element, such as are met with frequently—(*cf.* Ezek. iv. 6 ; Dan. ix. 2, 24, xi. 29, xii. 7, 11 ; 4 Ezra iv. 36 (and note), vii. 30, 43, xiv. 11 (12 “periods”) ; 1 Enoch xc. 1, 5, xci. 12–17 (10 “weeks”), xciii. ; 2 Bar. xxvii. 1, liii. (12 “clouds”) ; T. Levi xvii. 11 (7 “weeks”) ; Sib. iv. 47 (“generations”). In 1 Enoch the world lasts 10,000 years ; in 2 Enoch, 7,000 years)—all imply perfection, eternity : and the notions of a new heaven and a new earth clearly mean that of a universe fashioned on a higher plane than this, above the usual limits of matter and space. There is no doubt that the Kingdom of Heaven, both in Jewish thought and Our Lord’s teaching, is something transcendental.<sup>2</sup> Neither may we neglect the ethical element which is no less prominent. A religion which could assert, at a later date : “If Israel repent but for one day, forthwith will the Messiah come,”<sup>3</sup> cannot be charged with the accusation of materialism or legalism as its sole characteristic. Jewish thought was itself growing more refined, more ethical, more spiritual, when Our Lord came to crown it. The contradictions and absurdities of apocalyptic proved that its development was still going on ; and as

---

<sup>1</sup> See pp. 55 ff.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Tyrrell, *Christianity at the Cross Roads*, p. 114.

<sup>3</sup> Pesikta, 163b.

## THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST

Dr. Charles says,<sup>1</sup> apocalyptic passed over into and was superseded by Christianity, while legalism developed into Rabbinism. The dryness of the latter proves the existence in apocalyptic of a permanent value, and its (the latter's) need of further development and progress.

This development and progress were not denied to either Christ's Gospel or Judaism.

At Pentecost, and in the days subsequent to it, was a manifestation of divine power, unparalleled and unsuspected, which influenced men and women of all ages, races, grades, capacities. It conveyed to them a sense of power, and of joy, which they had not experienced before, and never entirely left them. It was proved in the same sort of way as it had been in the Person of Jesus of Nazareth : they were able to work miracles of healing, in some cases to raise the dead : they were able to face torture and death for the sake of their Master ; their preaching had marvellous results ; men's lives were transformed. The presence of the kingship of God was no less real now than in the days of Jesus ; and it was of infinitely greater and wider extent. There was no re-organisation of human society, no over-throwing of human authorities, no shifting of the "balance of power" ; there was no cataclysm of nature, and no visible throne of judgment, with its attendant angels. But a new authority was recognised, and honoured, which transcended human authorities ; nature bowed her

---

<sup>1</sup> *Pseudep.* II, p. vii.

## THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST

head to this Power: there were actual outward signs of His Presence, and still more of His working; and each man's heart and conscience became his court of trial, and he registered his own verdict, when he faced and answered the question: "Is Jesus Lord, or Anathema?"<sup>1</sup>

This was, indeed, a reality; and entirely in keeping with Our Lord's words. Not only was it the direct and speedy fulfilment of His words about the Holy Spirit, but it gave the answer to others, that those who stood by should not taste death until they had seen the kingdom of God come with power,<sup>2</sup> and that "all these things" should happen within the present generation.<sup>3</sup> Still more was it a distinct advance, the logical and natural outcome of His teaching; it was a spiritual phenomenon, which completed the process of the transference of man's interest in life from the material to the spiritual, of which His Resurrection Body was the stepping-stone. "It is expedient for you that I go away; for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you," *i.e.*, it was the life of the soul, and His Presence and Rule there, that Christ would teach as the one essential. Not that man had neglected the spiritual; but it was part of Christ's mission to demonstrate that the spiritual was the only reality, transcending if utilising the

---

<sup>1</sup> 1 Cor. xii. 3.

<sup>2</sup> Mk. ix. 1; the variations in the other Gospels do not affect the point.

<sup>3</sup> Matt. xxiv. 34, *cf.* x. 23: "Ye shall not have gone through the cities of Israel, till the Son of Man be come."

## THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST

material ; His Resurrection Body was, humanly speaking, necessary in order to convince His disciples of His identity and uninterrupted existence ;<sup>1</sup> His Ascension demonstrated to them (in the simple obvious way which they were alone able to comprehend) that He had returned to "Heaven," the spiritual sphere ; and Pentecost showed them and the world that His Kingdom, which He had already claimed as present, was no less present or effective, even if He were not Himself visibly and bodily present, rather even that it was more widely spread and more effective than it had been heretofore.

It may be objected that this means a "confounding of Persons" ; but we must bear in mind that Our Lord practically identified the coming of the Holy Spirit with His own coming, as reported by St. John, *cf.* xiv. 16 ff. : "I will pray the Father, and He shall give you another Helper, that He may be with you for ever, even the Spirit of truth ; . . .

---

<sup>1</sup> It is a mistake to argue that Our Lord's Resurrection Body implies that we shall have similar bodies "in heaven." We have not the same necessity as He, and His Body was a temporary expedient, partaking of both the material and the spiritual elements, designed to help the disciples pass from the one to the other. That it was only a temporary expedient is seen by His non-appearance after the Ascension. The "Resurrection Body" of St. Paul in 1 Cor. xv. means a medium of self-expression and self-manifestation in social intercourse. That life in the Kingdom is social is evident from many passages ; and as we cannot conceive intercourse without a "body," he is driven to use the contradictory phrase "spiritual body" in order to express this truth. A purely spiritual existence we cannot, of course, as yet understand. (Tyrrell, *op. cit.*, p. 150.)

## THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST

He abideth with you, and shall be in you . . . I will not leave you fatherless (*lit.*, orphans), I come unto you." This passage and others in the same section clearly bring out the unity of the Trinity, so that whatever can be predicated of the Godhead can be predicated of each, and the working of the Spirit is as much a part of the kingship of God as were Christ's miracles or His Resurrection.<sup>1</sup>

If it be objected, again, why did not the Early Church, then, hold that the kingdom had already come, it must be answered that they did so hold (see the passages quoted above Ch. III) ; the fact of the Church's acceptance of the Fourth Gospel shows the same ; and the reason why they still looked for the visible return of Christ with the clouds of Heaven was that He had used those and similar words, and they had not yet been able to dissociate His inner thought from the language in which He clothed it ; their experiences were too overwhelming, their problems too urgent, for them to reflect as yet deeply as to what He really meant ; and the traditional views were too deeply rooted in their minds to be lightly laid by (*cf.* the importance given to eschatology in the Gospels, and the materialist background of the question in Acts i. 6).<sup>2</sup> And it ill becomes us to blame or despise them, if it has taken us so many centuries to separate husk from kernel.<sup>3</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> Cf. *Foundations*, p. 159.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Hastings, *D C G*, ii., p. 438a.

<sup>3</sup> On the question whether the fall of Jerusalem marked the end of the pre-Messianic age, see Terry, p. 248.

## THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST

For that is the task of every student of the Gospels, to discover if he can what was the inner thought in Our Lord's mind, and the permanent truth which His words were meant to express. Literalism has often been condemned, but its opposite has not always been carried out as thoroughly or as consistently as it should be.

And what is the kernel of Our Lord's teaching about His Second Coming? The husk we have already seen much of (in Ch. I). Let us repeat the traditional concepts; a Day of the Lord, the coming of a Son of Man who is also the Son, or at least the representative, of God, a judgment, rewards and punishments, the kingship of God, a renewed heaven and earth, bliss and torment.<sup>1</sup> Clearly, the Day of God<sup>2</sup> stands for a crisis, when the never-ending conflict of good and evil comes to a head, and events take a definite turn, God asserting and upholding His sovereignty. (The portents predicted in the natural world are meant as evidences of God's power and presence, and as signs of the importance of the times.) Normally, one would not think of more than one "Day of God"; but experience shows that all human life may be divided into "ages, epochs, eras," in which the tendencies which reveal themselves in human nature and history work and develop and grow, until matters come to a head, and two conflicting ideals (not always one entirely right and the other entirely

---

<sup>1</sup> See above, pp. 58 ff.

<sup>2</sup> The concept is discussed by Kennedy, p. 175; and E. Bibl., pp. 1348 ff.

## THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST

wrong) stand face to face, and in conflict the issue is settled one way or the other, for good or for evil. In Israelitish history there are the Patriarchal Period, the time of the Sojourn in Egypt, the Exodus and Wandering, the Judges, the Single and the Dual Monarchies, the Captivities, the Return, the Persian, Greek, and Roman rules, and so on. In English history we talk of the Saxon and Norman periods, the Plantagenets and the Tudors, the Caroline and Jacobean periods, the Georges, the Victorian Era. The *termini* are not always easily definable, and the issues are not always clear (as when the Norman period commences with the Battle of Hastings in 1066, or the liberties of the people with Magna Carta in 1215, or the breach with Rome in 1537) ; but the tendencies are clearly marked when viewed over a wide period, and it may be truly said that each of these "ages" are "consummated" or wound up to their conclusion, by some definite act or acts on the part of the leading men of the time. These acts, whether they be battles, or statutes, or speeches, or books, or deaths, or the inauguration of societies, are the landmarks of history, and each in a sense is a Day of God. Not that necessarily any moral issue is involved, or to any unusual extent. Sometimes there is ; the moral issue of August 4th, 1914, will never be forgotten, or of June 15th, 1215. Undoubtedly, as Dr. Muirhead says,<sup>1</sup> the destruction of Jerusalem marked the ending of a world-order,

---

<sup>1</sup> Pp. 135 ff.

## THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST

because then Christianity challenged and superseded Judaism, and a new development supervened, Judaism having its last chance, failing, and going off into the barren tracts of Rabbinism. Whenever eternal principles of right and wrong are at issue, it is, of course, a Day of God. But in all human activity God has His interest ; and whether the decision be for human welfare or the reverse, He is no less concerned in the " Day." The phrase is most appropriate where the issue is clearest, as a matter of right and wrong, and where the result is to uphold the right, to the subsequent progress of the world.<sup>1</sup>

We must not be too literal in our application of the word "day" ; but what could have been a greater Day of God than the time when His own Son accepted the limitations of human life, faced evil and conquered it, faced the world and its persecution, faced death and triumphed, and vindicated Himself by sending His Spirit, with the transforming of human beings into His own likeness and the transferring to them of His own power ? Humanity has accepted His version of the " Day of the Lord " by dating her history by the traditional date of His Birth.

A Judgment. Jews and Christians are not alone in this conception. All the world over, among primitive peoples as well as advanced, are found notions of a final judgment, when the good shall be

---

<sup>1</sup> Cf. the interpretation of history given by Bp. Walpole, Ch. iv ; *Foundations*, p. 121.

## THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST

rewarded and the wicked punished. In Egyptian religion, Osiris is judge ; in Buddhism, Yama is king of righteousness, and before him men give an account of their lives ; in the Classics, we have Minos and Rhadamanthus ; and the thought appears in Zoroastrianism, in Borneo, among the North American Indians, in Brahmanism, in the Greek Mysteries, and in the teaching of Pythagoras. It is implied in the conceptions of the Aeschylean drama. It is involved in the fact of human free-will, for there can be no responsibility without a calling to account. But why should we deem ourselves limited to a single final judgment ? Of course, we unburden ourselves of the apocalyptic details of the Great Assize ; it is the fact of the judgment that the Church is committed to, not to any particular mode of its administration. As a matter of fact, we know from experience that there are many days of judgment in human lives, both of nations and of individuals. When a people commit themselves definitely to a policy, then and there they pass judgment on themselves as wise or foolish, as right or wrong ; and on such a decision may turn the whole future of the nation ; it will be rewarded or punished according to its decision ; what it receives may be either material or moral loss or gain, or it may be both ; in any case, something will happen to it ; it will reap the harvest which it has sown. There is more than one crisis in the life of a man (and does not crisis, *κρίσις*, mean judgment ?). He judges himself, and his verdict is recorded (if not by a Doré angel in a material

## THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST

book, at all events by the Power who controls affairs and traceable in the working out of those affairs), when he chooses his profession, his wife, his home, his friends, his recreations ; and, still more, when he decides on the moral issues of life, and takes sides, as he is compelled to do repeatedly, with right or wrong.<sup>1</sup>

Is it permissible to assign the title of the "Last Day" to the time when he, or a nation, make the decision which finally decides the tone and tendency of their life, when they definitely choose right or wrong, when they face clearly and honestly the issue : "Christ, or Self and the World" ? There is such one day of decision ; there is such one turning-point in life, even if there be other lesser decisions which lead up to or confirm it. There is a time when a man first becomes aware, clearly and without any possibility of mistake, that he has got to choose, and does choose, between right and wrong, and by this one decision his whole life is governed. Is not this the counterpart to the preaching of the Gospel to all nations, and the coming of the end ? (*i.e.*, a man hears the call and challenge of Christ, either in the moral law, or the message of the Church [if in a Christian country], and some time or other he makes the decision).

Once to every man and nation comes the challenge  
to decide.

In the strife of Truth with Falsehood, for the good  
or evil side ;

---

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Kennedy, p. 198 ; Winstanley, p. 373.

## THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST

Some great cause, God's new Messiah, off'ring each  
the bloom or blight,  
Parts the goats upon the left hand, and the sheep  
upon the right,  
And the choice goes by for ever 'twixt that darkness  
and that light.<sup>1</sup>

He may have other chances, and he generally does ; but must there not be one deciding opportunity, to which all others are subservient ? Perhaps this helps us to understand the difficult passages, Heb. vi. 4 ff., 1 John v. 16 ("As touching those who were once enlightened and tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Spirit, and tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the age to come, and then fell away, it is impossible to renew them again unto repentance."—"There is a sin unto death : not concerning this do I say that he should make request ") ; and perhaps this final decision, when made against the right (that is, if a man is really capable of making such a decision ; its possibility is undoubted, but hardly its probability), is the sin against the Holy Spirit, and unforgivable. *Cf.* : "The 'end' whensoever it may come, means for Him the time when the process of historical development is complete, when characters have become fixed, and men are what they will be."<sup>2</sup>

Thus, Christ's coming is perpetual. The actual Second Coming was at Pentecost (the Early Church called the Holy Spirit Christ's "Vicar;" *cf.* Tert.

<sup>1</sup> J. R. Lowell.

<sup>2</sup> Bruce, p. 318.

## THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST

de Praescr. xiii., following John xiv. 16, 26) ; but He comes repeatedly to men in all the crises of life. He comes in the moral challenge then presented ; He comes when the heavens are opened to a man's soul and he has visions of God ; He comes in the ideals of youth, and, indeed, of all ages ; He comes whenever the conditions of Pentecost are repeated, when a man receives or realises the receipt of the Holy Spirit, either conveyed non-Sacramentally, or in Baptism and Confirmation ; He comes in the Holy Communion ; He comes in answer to prayer, when His presence and power are claimed by the devout soul ; He comes in visitation and in opportunity, in vocation and in trial ; He comes when He upholds, working through history and the normal events of life, the man's judgments of himself, and awards reward or punishment accordingly, whether material or spiritual, leading to bliss or the reverse.<sup>1</sup> Not always is the coming foreseen or expected ; it is usually the reverse. "In an hour when ye think not the Son of Man cometh." Those who have made history have seldom been aware of it at the time ; so that the warning is always needed—"Be ye ready, and watch."

And in all these coming He asserts His kingship ; for He could not come and operate thus unless all power were given Him in heaven and earth. Cf. Stevens, *American Journal of Theology*, Oct., 1902, p. 677, quoted by Dr. Kennedy, p. 187 : "As the kernel of the teaching about the Parousia is the

---

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Winstanley, pp. 363 ff. ; Westcott, *Historic Faith*, pp. 9 ff. ; *Encycl. Britannica*, ix, p. 764.

## THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST

assurance of the triumph of Christ's kingdom, and that concerning the Resurrection is the certainty of immortality, so the teaching concerning judgment centres in the principle that human life and action bring forth fruit after their kind, and that every man shall receive from God his just recompense of reward." (And Charles, *Eschatology*, pp. 387, 8.) Kennedy, p. 171, aptly quotes J. Weiss: "The essential point in the preaching of Jesus is not the greater or lesser nearness of the crisis, but the thought that the Kingdom of God now comes with absolute certainty."

The kingship is implied in the portents foretold in the natural world, and in the concept of a new heaven and earth. The human mind can hardly conceive, or at least cannot express, existence except in terms of the visible universe; and the notion of a renewed heaven and earth was put forward to denote life on a higher plane and to a fuller degree, and freed from obvious current limitations; this was life as ascribed to God, and as revealed in Christ; His coming conveys this life to men; hence the "conditions" of life are transformed.<sup>1</sup> So that the same thought really underlies the figures in which Christ's "coming" is presented; it is called a kingship, and salvation, and heaven, and life; and it means happiness for the good and unhappiness for the bad; it is necessarily expressed in terms and concepts familiar to man's experience; but the central thought is the same, and perhaps the

---

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Beet, p. 106.

## THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST

most satisfying description is that of the Fourth Gospel: "Life."

There was no doubt of Christ's supremacy at Pentecost, or in the days of the Early Church;<sup>1</sup> and in every age since have men owned Him as King, and His kingship has been shown in the conviction of sin by the Holy Spirit, in changed lives, in lives devoted to His work of healing and preaching "the Gospel of the Kingdom." If the Church and the Kingdom cannot be identified, if they are not coterminous, at least the kingdom is manifested in and is extended by the Church.<sup>2</sup>

This perpetual coming of Christ finds illustration in the well-known commonplace, that "History repeats itself," and in the equally common sentiment that there are no days like "the good old days." Examples are superfluous; but it is well to give the reason for these two persistent thoughts. And the reason is this: that human nature, and the subject-matter, so to speak, of human life, never vary, but are always constant. Their combinations and permutations are endless in their variety; the externals of life are for ever changing and developing, and are for ever being mistaken by the men of each generation for progress. But deep down the elements of life do not vary; there are good and evil, God and man, the divine will and human free-will, the divine nature and human nature, and what goes to make up the material world and human

---

<sup>1</sup> Cf. p. 108.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Robertson, p. 57.

## THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST

society, through which operate the divine purpose and human activities. And the eternal tussle of good *versus* evil never slackens ; God's purpose never varies, nor His Love and desire to draw man into it ; and man, although in situations and under conditions infinitely varying and never quite the same, has to face the same temptation and hear the same call. It is not strange that his responses to these should resemble each other, though outward conditions and times vary.<sup>1</sup>

And in every age there are those who come to the fore, and distinguish themselves for their excellence. And because they excel, they in many cases survive, and their influence is greater and more lasting ; while lesser men disappear and are forgotten. At bottom, no one is better necessarily than another, although some generations will always be better than others ; the *laudator temporis acti* merely remembers the good and forgets the inferior ; and comparing past with present, the inferior (always the more numerous) of his own day force themselves upon his notice, so that he argues (falsely) that in the old times the proportions were not so unequal. The praise of what is “old-fashioned” is based upon just the same mistake. The excellent in each age are remembered, and compared regretfully with the present imagined lack of excellence ; and because the outward setting of the two ages varies, the excellence is (falsely) ascribed to the previous age. As a matter of fact,

---

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Bp. Walpole, p. 38.

## THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST

the excellent of one age would excel in any and all ; and no age is without those who excel. They are always visible to those who have eyes to see, and they are seen, in great contrast, when their own age has passed or is passing away.

Progress, as generally understood, is sadly misconceived. "The European talks of progress because, by the aid of a few scientific discoveries, he has established a society which has mistaken comfort for civilisation."<sup>1</sup> "The great test of progress is not mechanical or scientific discovery, or even social conditions improved by legislation, but happiness resting on virtue."<sup>2</sup>

In the outward things of human culture and civilisation, in the organisation of human affairs and the development of bodily powers and activities, the twentieth century cannot, of course, compare with the eighteenth, let alone the first. But has any advance in the spheres of religion and ethics ever been made upon the *dictum* of Samuel : "To obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams ; for rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as idolatry and teraphim" ;<sup>3</sup> upon Micah's words : "What doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God ?" ;<sup>4</sup> or upon Deut. vi. 4 : "Hear,

---

<sup>1</sup> Disraeli.

<sup>2</sup> *The Faith and the War*, p. 69, *cf.* 110, 120 ; and *cf.* Wordsworth, Sonnet 46.

<sup>3</sup> 1 Sam. xv. 22.

<sup>4</sup> vi. 8.

## THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST

O Israel: the LORD our God is one LORD: and thou shalt love the LORD thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might"? Such standards cannot be bettered, and any age can rise to the same height, and any man, just as history has recently shown it possible for even nations to revert to the level of the days of the Book of Judges. Progress is not a matter of age or time; it is a matter of inward attitude; and consists in the approach of men and of peoples to the standards laid down for all time; they progress according as they approximate to these standards, and in proportion to the number of those who do so individually.

This explains why the Bible maintains its force and its power; why, in spite of its obvious limitations of time and space, of civilisation and culture, it still retains its appeal and its hold on men's minds; why it is a Book for all time, as well as the record of many ages. It is true of it what William James said of mystical classics, that they "have neither birthday nor native land; their speech antedates language, and they do not grow old." This is why Jesus Christ is truly Son of Man, and why Christianity is the truly Catholic faith, for all men, all times, and all places; because He bears witness to and upholds eternal standards and values, which find their response in the heart and conscience of men.<sup>1</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Rashdall, *Conscience and Christ*, Lecture I, esp. p. 30.

## THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST

And the same truth explains another strange phenomenon, which bears closely on our subject, the fact that prophecy and apocalyptic are for ever being viewed as fulfilled in the present generation. Human ingenuity must have gone near to exhausting itself in its endeavours to show how the Book of Daniel or the second chapter of 2 Thessalonians have been fulfilled in each successive age of Christian history. The desire to obtain precise fulfilment first found expression in the Synoptists' application of Our Lord's words to the destruction of Jerusalem, and their mention of the portents at His death, and the last two years have seen a large recrudescence of the same endeavour. The "Man of Sin" has been successively regarded as Nero, Julian the Apostate, Mahomet, Luther, Calvin, the Pope, Napoleon I, and, doubtless, the Kaiser of to-day. The "thousand years" of Rev. xx. has given rise to the wildest chilisatic speculations.<sup>1</sup> Dan. xii. 4 ("many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased") has been interpreted in terms of motor-cars and Education Bills. And, indeed, it often needs no ingenuity to see the application of a prophecy. Attention has been called recently to 4 Ezra xi. (the vision of the Eagle coming up out of the sea, and condemned by the Lion speaking with a man's voice), and its curious and striking appropriateness to the two European nations represented in current symbolism by those two animals; *cf.* vv. 40 ff.—

---

<sup>1</sup> See Dahle, p. 230.

## THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST

“ Thou hast wielded power over the world with great terror,  
And over all the inhabited earth with grievous oppression ;  
Thou hast dwelt so long in the civilised world with fraud,  
And hast judged the earth (but) not with faithfulness ;  
For thou hast afflicted the meek, and oppressed the peaceable ;  
Thou hast hated the upright, and loved liars ;  
Thou hast destroyed the strongholds of the fruitful, and laid low the walls of such as did thee no harm—  
And so thine insolence hath ascended to the Most High and thy pride to the Mighty One.  
Then the Most High regarded his times— and lo ! they were ended;  
And his ages— (and) they were fulfilled.  
Therefore shalt thou disappear, O Eagle, and thy horrible wings, and thy little wings most evil, Thy harm-dealing heads, Thy hurtful talons, and all thy worthless body !  
And so the whole earth, freed from thy violence, shall be refreshed again, and hope for the judgment and mercy of Him that made her.”

## THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST

Another passage, of painful fitness, is Sib. iii. 520 ff. : "But whosoever a numerous barbarian race shall fall upon the Greeks, it shall destroy many heads of picked men, and many of men's fat flocks shall they ravish, and herds of horses and mules and lowing oxen. And well-built houses shall they lawlessly burn with fire. And many miserable wights shall they carry by force as slaves to another land, children and tender deep-girdled women, snatched from their chambers and with delicate feet falling forward. They shall see them in bonds at the hand of strange-tongued foes suffering every horror of outrage."

And apart from passages of this character and the curiosities of their historical adaptations, who will deny the perennial appropriateness of the words of Isaiah and Amos and others, when dealing with the social and political problems and shortcomings of their own age? They have supplied preachers in every age and country with themes, and reformers with inspiration, because they deal not only with local conditions but with eternal verities.

Such prophecy is easily applied in most ages, because "history repeats itself," because human nature is what it is, because the eternal conflict of good and evil never slackens, and from time to time breaks out and convulses the world, evil impersonating itself in some human leader, and the evil passions of men being let loose in war and all its attendant horrors. The passages are always

## THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST

applicable (in general terms), because man's conviction that right must win never fails, nor does his faith in God ever desert him. And herein lies the permanent value of eschatology, that it arouses and fixes man's attention on these essentials of life, the Supremacy of God, man's Responsibility and consequent Judgment, the sole reality of the transcendental and spiritual, the possibility of perfection, of the realisation of ideals, of "eternal life," and of the final victory of good over evil. Eschatology is, therefore, a necessary part of the Christian creed, as both a stimulus, a warning, a hope, an encouragement, and an inspiration.<sup>1</sup> (Note.—It is man's instinctive sense of this that has given rise to another commonplace: "Things must get worse before they are better"; *i.e.*, men realise that "both must grow together until the harvest," that evil and good must each run their course, and that a crisis is necessary before the issue is decided. "When these things begin to come to pass, look up, and lift up your heads; because your redemption draweth nigh." "The darkest hour is just before the dawn.")

---

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Tyrrell, *Christianity at the Cross Roads*, pp. 173, 205-6; and above, p. 57.

## CHAPTER V

ALTHOUGH hinted at,<sup>1</sup> we have not yet reached that which will solve many of the difficulties connected with this question. The New Testament speaks of the kingdom as both present and future ; and undoubtedly at Pentecost and subsequently the kingship of Christ was evident in a very marked degree. It has been suggested that the Parousia is a perpetual process, conditioned by moral and spiritual factors more than by time and historic sequence. Is not the time-element the stumbling-block and the hindrance to our interpretation of Christ's words ? Undoubtedly, His disciples thought in terms of time ; witness their question : " When shall those things be ? " and it is this that has caused the seeming confusion in their writings, and the concurrent presentation of the kingdom as both present and future. They could not evade the moral and spiritual ; neither could they divest themselves of the limitations of time. But who can ? At least, who can do so entirely ? All our life is cut up into time-sequences ; if these periods grow longer as we get older, it is no less a fact that our thoughts and acts are dominated by time ; it is one of the dimensions which bound our life. At times there are those who, like St. Paul, are rapt, and dwell for a while in a higher sphere ; and St. John's teaching generally possesses the

---

<sup>1</sup> P. 68.

## THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST

feature of timelessness in a remarkable degree ; but even they are compelled to come to earth again and to submit to the limitations of time and space and matter.

Yet there is no doubt that if we can eliminate time from our thoughts, we get close to the heart of the matter ; we "see life steadily and see it whole," *sub specie aeternitatis* ; we approach very near to the point of view of God.<sup>1</sup> "We think too much of time and space in connection with eternal life. The I aims at elevation above all such conditions, so as to be more closely united with the eternal. Its development is in the feeling of such independence as tends to make it more and more a self-conscious entity beyond the reach of outward limitations."<sup>2</sup> Time is a limitation, undoubtedly, but we gradually pass beyond it. The child's outlook is bounded by lesson-time and playtime, school-time and holiday. The mature man thinks of youth and maturity and old age (*i.e.*, he uses longer periods, when thinking of himself) ; and he takes a wide view of history and human activity, extending even to such vague and vast periods like "Ice," "Stone," and "Protozoic" ages or epochs. There is no doubt that, as we get

---

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Muirhead, p. 107, who says that the ethical nature of Christ's teaching removes the time-element ; it is "for all time" and beyond and above time, and it is this fact which makes Our Lord's teaching more than an *internsethik* ; cf. Rashdall, *Conscience and Christ*, pp. 62 ff., 71 ; Foakes-Jackson, *The Faith and the War*, p. 200, Essay by Mr. Emmet.

<sup>2</sup> Davidson, p. 159.

## THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST

old, we become less sensible to the lapse of time ; it means less to us, we are less affected by it. And this because earth's joys are felt to be limited and unsatisfying, because we see deeper and rise higher ; we prove the truth of St. Paul's words that the things seen are temporal, but the unseen eternal ; we, in a sense, rise above and transcend time, because we both outgrow it as well as escape from its bondage. The truly devout soul, in contrast to the "natural man," who only outgrows time without escaping its bondage, experiences what he has probably already tasted in earlier days, and on a lower plane, and finds in the bliss of the divine love that time is no more—

With thee conversing I forget all time,  
All seasons and their change.

That is to say, time is no more, because we have risen above it ; it is ended by being transcended ; and what we call eternity has taken its place, a concept which includes all the phenomena and content of life, moral and spiritual and aesthetic, as well as material.

The days and hours are ever glancing by,  
And seem to flicker past thro' sun and shade  
Or short, or long, as Pleasure leads, or Pain ;  
But with the Nameless is nor Day nor Hour ;  
Tho' we, thin minds, who creep from thought to  
thought,  
Break into "Thens" and "Whens" the Eternal  
Now :  
This double seeming of the single world !<sup>1</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> Tennyson, "The Ancient Sage."

## THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST

Compare, for an example of this as a practical working faith as opposed to a mere theory or ideal, the remarkable words written home from France by Lieut. W. G. Gladstone, in his last letter before his death: "It is not the length of existence that counts, but what is achieved during that existence, however short"; a similar sentiment to—

A crowded hour of glorious life  
Is worth an age without a name;

and both implying the supremacy of what is immaterial over the time-element.

"Such familiar problems as the infinity of space and time, the nature of time-succession, and the relation of subject and object, suggest very cogently that the world as known to science must be only an abstract view of reality. More especially, perhaps, does our faculty for transcending time in our thoughts convince us that our minds are not in time, but, rather, time in them; and so we are led on to the idea of eternity. Our spiritual faculty, weak and fitful as it is, strongly supports the belief that the real world is an eternal, immaterial world which reflects the whole counsels of the Creator, while the world of space and time was created as a sphere for the working out of God's finite purposes—His thoughts shaping themselves as acts of will. So our hearts' true home is in a sphere where change and chance cannot hurt us."

"It is simply not the fact that, *in our experience of it*, one hour or one day is as long as any other.

## THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST

The "length" of time depends not on the clock, but, once more, on the inner self. 'It seemed an age,' 'It seemed no time'—these common phrases are admissions of the relative unreality of time as an element in the measure of life in the true human sense. . . . Life at its highest human level, which is the highest reality we know, can only be measured by intensity, not by what one might call 'area,' nor yet by mere duration. . . . Eternity is not an infinite extension of time, but, if you will, the existence without limit of a state of affairs in which time is forgotten. Imagine a set of circumstances in which, for sheer *joie de vivre*, you 'forget time'; imagine that all the factors in the situation thus created, yourself among them, remain constant, or constantly self-adapting to their whole environment, so that no change for the worse at any point can remind you that you have forgotten it, by 'calling you back to earth,' as the phrase is; and you get some faint idea of what is meant by 'Eternity,' and 'Heaven,' and 'Eternal Life.'"<sup>1</sup>

(It is worthy of note that the apocalypticists conceived of "a time when time should be no more"; 2 Enoch xxxiii. 2 speaks of "a time of not-counting, endless, with neither years nor months nor weeks nor days nor hours." Cf. 2 Baruch xvii. 1: "With the Most High account is not taken of much time nor of a few years"; xlvi. 13: "But with Thee hours are as a time and days as

---

<sup>1</sup> Foakes-Jackson, *The Faith and the War*, Essays by Dr. Inge, p. 108, and Mr. Burroughs, p. 169; cf. F. R. Barry, *Religion and the War*, pp. 58, 83.

## THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST

generations"; li. 9: "Time shall no longer age them." And there is in the attitude of the prophets generally an elimination of time, a foreshortening of view. So convinced are they of the ultimate triumph of righteousness and the supremacy of God that already they see these realised in the very near future. The brightness of their vision blinds them to the darker side of the picture, as when to the pilgrim Christian the glory of the Heavenly City hides the difficulties of the country which must be traversed before it can be reached. See Tyrrell, p. 172; A. E. J. Rawlinson, *Dogma, Fact, and Experience*, pp. 150 ff.)

For life includes time, even if life be subject in a measure to its limitations. The same kind of thing happens here as at the Incarnation of Jesus Christ—the unlimited becomes to a certain degree limited, and the non-material subject to the restrictions of earth; the transcendent is also immanent. Yet like the other paradox that nature is ruled only by being obeyed, life triumphs over time, and slips from its grasp. To God, the Supreme, even if there be progress, life must be in a sense static (with Him a thousand years are as one day); we cannot get behind the belief that God Is, and that His existence is one eternal Now. Cf. Philo, *Quod Deus Sit Immut.* 6: "God is withdrawn from both ends of Time. For His life is not so much Time as Eternity (*αιών*), the archetype and pattern of Time. And in Eternity there is nothing past and nothing future, but only present." If the simile may be pardoned, life and the world is like a vast

## THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST

witch's cauldron, parts of which are now bubbling up with tremendous energy, and parts quiescent ; yet the immature and the mature, the vigorous and the feeble, the active and the inactive, united in a single whole, both in thought and act, which is gradually reaching the desired condition intended for it by its owner and controller. (See above, p. 68.)

Man resents strongly being told to wait for an indefinite future, just as much as he resents the childish and puerile conceptions of a visible return on the clouds of heaven, as depicted by Jewish apocalyptic and his Advent Hymns. The problems of life are urgent ; they, at all events, are present, and he wants immediate relief, or at least power to meet and deal with them. His robuster nature refuses to allow that they must all be met with a quietism, and a pious hope that " in the next world " things will be put right. He feels instinctively, even if he does not accept St. Paul, that he is a fellow-worker with God ; and he feels sure that fellowship with God may be a present possession, and that this will necessarily mean a present possession of divine power and strength. Hence, the rise and popularity, in all ages, of mystery-cults ; and may we not confidently assert that the present day popularity of mysticism, the growth of " Christian Science," of philosophies bearing such names as Pragmatism, Vitalism, of concepts like " *élan vital*," " *evolution créatrice*," and the writing of books like Bishop Chandler's *Cult of the Passing Moment*, are due to this fundamental demand of human nature, and to the Church's

## THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST

mistaken policy of teaching people to look to the future (which ever recedes), instead of helping them to find the power and fellowship of God in the present?

If this suggestion, that Our Lord's Return, so clearly foretold and promised by Him, be understood as having taken place in the descent of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost—and the suggestion is not made solely on the writer's own authority: it is supported both by Dr. Sanday (p. 115: "What is the essential meaning of the kingdom of God . . . but the Apostolic doctrine of the Holy Spirit?"); p. 122: "I am inclined to believe—though this is speculation, that I would not express otherwise than very tentatively—that the real coming of the Kingdom—the fact corresponding to it in the field of ultimate realities—is what we are in the habit of calling the work of the Holy Spirit, from the Day of Pentecost onwards"<sup>1</sup>); and at least hinted at by others; if this suggestion be accepted, then most of the difficulties connected with both the interpretation of the "Second Advent" and its practical issue disappear.

In the first place, it entirely solves the difficulties about the non-fulfilment of Our Lord's words, that His Return and the Coming of the Kingdom were to be accomplished within the present generation.<sup>2</sup> We need not exercise ourselves because the disciples

---

<sup>1</sup> *Christologies, Ancient and Modern*, p. 183.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. p. 73.

## THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST

did not realise this at the time, or fully. The *βλακικὸν πάθος* is common all through life; men hunt for things long and fail to see them, though they be rolling about at their feet all the time.<sup>1</sup> *Virtutem incolumem odimus.* “He came unto His own, and they that were His own received Him not.” More than once the Evangelists record that His disciples “understood not the saying”; and it was some time before they actually realised what and who He was; up to the very last they could not shake off their prejudices and pre-suppositions.<sup>2</sup> We have already seen that a double strand of interpretation runs through the New Testament doctrine of the Kingdom, and it is in one of the latest of the New Testament writings, the Gospel of St. John, that we find the most idealised and least material and detailed interpretation of Our Lord’s words. This is all psychologically correct, and is just what we need.<sup>3</sup> Historically, we are far removed from the first disciples, and a long process of interpretation and a vastly different experience lies between us. If they were perplexed and mistaken at first, and later came to a fuller and clearer perception of the truth, it is for us to begin where they left off, not where they began; it is sheer blundering to make their early mistakes and then think there is no way out of the difficulty. Our modern way of thinking tells us that a “Second Advent,” in the literal,

---

<sup>1</sup> Plat. Rep. 432d.

<sup>2</sup> See Mark vi. 51, vii. 18, viii. 17, ix. 10, 32, x. 35; Luke xxii. 24, xxiv. 25, 38; John xii. 16, xvi. 17; Acts i. 6.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. Rashdall, *op. cit.*, Lecture V, and pp. 167, 196.

## THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST

sensuous, Jewish sense, is not needed, but would be a reversion, something retrogressive instead of an advance.<sup>1</sup> We do not want anything which would resemble a second Incarnation ; neither does the New Testament, when viewed and interpreted rightly, tell us to expect it. The contradictions, or, rather, the development, traceable in its pages, are among the most noteworthy and helpful of its features. The disciples who received and experienced the power of the Holy Spirit were led by Him nearer to the truth ; and if they did not in so many words identify His coming with the coming of the Christ in His kingdom, they did identify it in thought and idea. And that they did not think things out carefully and logically, and record their conclusions in a *Summa Theologiae*, need not surprise us ; a missionary Church has other, and for the time being more important, work to do ; and present enjoyment does not favour introspection and reflection.<sup>2</sup> Later ages are called upon for these, and the dispensation of the Spirit is not ended. We cannot, alas ! claim the purity of the Apostolic age, but we may claim that the number of Scribes who have been made disciples to the Kingdom of Heaven is not yet exhausted, or the power and liberty to bring forth out of the Scriptural treasury things new and old. Is not man's physiognomy suggestive in this connection ? He possesses two eyes and two ears, but only one mouth ; so that he can see both sides of any question, and hear

---

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Winstanley, p. 365.

<sup>2</sup> Dr. Kennedy rightly emphasises this point.

## THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST

two contradictory descriptions of it, but both are combined in the expression of truth which he utters. So often is the question raised "Which is true, this? or that?" And the only answer which will satisfy the claims of truth is "Neither, because both."<sup>1</sup>

Then, in the second place, this interpretation so aptly meets the need of this, and, indeed, of every age. No more practical doctrine could have been invented or put forward. No teaching could more attract and claim the allegiance of men, appeal to their imaginations, enlist their sympathies, and inspire their efforts. The coming of the Holy Spirit literally worked wonders; and the world could not fail to take notice of it, or be attracted to it. Even if we make allowance for the point of view and the pardonable enthusiasm of the writer, we cannot evade the impression given by *Acts of the infectious nature of Christianity*; it was a religion that "worked," and worked quickly and amazingly, and effectually; lives were changed, powers were conveyed, and false teaching collapsed and surrendered. For centuries the lives of Christians and the doings of the Church amazed mankind; and it is common history that the Gospel of Christ has been the inspiration of all philanthropy, social reform, and progressive civilisation. When the Church's devotion to Christ waned, her grip of the

---

<sup>1</sup> For the idea of a progressive revelation and the need of experience for the interpretation of Christianity, see *Essay VI*, by Canon J. M. Wilson, in *Cambridge Theological Essays* (1905); and Rashdall, *op. cit.*, Lect. V.

## THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST

Holy Spirit weakened ; and religion became religiosity, it withdrew from the world and became a thing apart, a thing either of mere speculation or of monastic practice. Instead of facing life boldly, and trying to leaven the world, men's devotion took a wrong turn, became intensive instead of extensive ; and despairing of this world, they dreamed of a " sweet and blessed country " elsewhere ; and they rightly incurred the just censure of being " otherworldly." Whereas in the first ages the activities of Martha and Mary were rightly combined, in a later time the Marys left the Marthas in the lurch, so that Martha frequently now goes on her useful way without regard to Jesus ; and Mary, lacking the corrective of Martha's discipline, is painfully worried about her own soul and the problems of eternity, and not infrequently finds that the presence of Jesus fails to satisfy and even irks.

For it must be carefully remembered that the Kingdom is described in ethical terms, and this of necessity pre-supposes human society, and, for the present, this world. In the Prayer of the kingdom, God's will is to be done on earth as it is in heaven ; and we have no suggestion that the Prayer or the efforts pre-supposed by it were to cease with Christ's Return.<sup>1</sup>

In all ages, men need a religion that " works " ; a religion that both bears fruit outwardly and also satisfies inwardly. Life and life's problems and necessities are only too urgent and real, and they

---

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Von Hügel, p. 62.

## THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST

will neither wait nor be silenced. And as Martha cannot really manage without Mary's way, so neither will Mary's way satisfy unless conjoined with Martha's. As Dr. MacNeile has so aptly pointed out,<sup>1</sup> Martha and Mary represent not two persons, but two essential sides of the same person, without either of which the person is not complete. And if we only realise the present and immediate call of Christ in the presence of His Holy Spirit ; if we only realise that every day, and every moment of each day, is in varying degree, a Last Day, a day of judgment, of decision, of crisis, the issue of which inevitably affects both our own souls and the human race for good or ill ; we shall neither find life dull or unsatisfying, nor incur the charge of being other-worldly. Men will tackle problems and face life boldly, shoulder its burdens and respond to its calls ; and, if history be any criterion, the power of the Spirit will be no less real than as at first ; and in the effort to "live dangerously," in the full and active service and facing of the moment, in the conscious power and presence of the Holy Spirit, will be found a *joie de vivre* that has no parallel.

No words can ever convince men of the reality of the Holy Spirit ; only experiment and experience can do this. The proof of religion, like that of puddings and everything else, is in the tasting. He who is convinced can only say : "O taste and

---

<sup>1</sup> *Self-training in Prayer*, p. 37.

## THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST

see that the Lord is good," knowing that if the test is made honestly and faithfully the answer will come: "Now we believe, not because of thy speaking: for we have heard for ourselves, and know that this is indeed the Saviour of the world."

Honestly and faithfully: because the Holy Spirit is not perceptible except to sympathetic natures, the Kingdom is not revealed except to those willing and desirous to become its subjects. "The natural (*i.e.*, earthly) man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, because they are spiritually discerned." The temper and attitude of the little child is the first requisite; and then "He that willeth to do His will shall know of the teaching." To the nature that is severely critical, or self-confident, or proud of its own attainments and powers, or self-seeking, or enslaved to things of earth, or impenitent, the ways of the Spirit are a sealed book. There must be true harmony before the responsive note is evoked. Christ's coming is visible only to those who wish to see, and from right motives. For "there are none so blind as those who won't see"; and all the efforts of prophet and teacher will only make their heart fat and their ears dull of hearing and close their eyes, so that they shall not turn again and be healed.

And this perception is with us, as with the disciples, progressive. We have to "follow on to know the Lord." At first the vision may be dazzling, and the conviction so forcible that the memory of it is ineradicable; but whether the vision of the kingdom come as to St. Paul, or

## THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST

whether it be but as the dawn, coming gradually and fitfully, the knowledge and the experience of Christ as come and coming in His Holy Spirit grows with each new experience of life, and as life unfolds its various possibilities, problems, and activities, "It shineth more and more unto the perfect day." None of us knows as yet "as he ought to know"; it is but "in part, and dimly"; but even such knowledge as we do possess warrants the conviction that some day we shall know fully, and "face to face." The divine lover finds that to-day's love is indeed "a little more than yesterday's, and a little less than to-morrow's." At all events, the kingship of Christ is evident, and that is the chief thing. It is evident from the pages of Acts and the rest of the New Testament. It is written and revealed all down the scroll of history; one stronghold of the world after another has given way before Christ; if a sufficiently broad and long view be taken of human activity, there is no doubt that progress in the true and right sense has been and is being made.<sup>1</sup> It is recorded in human biography, in the many "conversions" from the world, the flesh, the devil, and self, to the service of Christ, from giants like Saul of Tarsus, Augustine, Francis of Assisi, to the humblest in the ranks of the Salvation Army. It is for ever recurring in the mission field, where sin and error and misery recede before the armies of the Cross, as even the pages of

---

<sup>1</sup> See essays by Miss Gardner and the Editor, in Foakes-Jackson, *The Faith and the War*.

## THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST

Government Blue Books show. It is as evident in our own experience, the experience of those who have taken God at His Word, who have long resisted His voice, but have had to give in at the last, who have traced His Hand weaving the web of their lives—"the divinity that shapes our ends"—who have had their prayers answered, who have been delivered when nothing human could have availed them, who have taken His yoke, and "found it sweet to bear."

The "fellowship of the Holy Spirit" is not a thing only for the future; we need not wait for death before we can enter heaven. (Does not our catechism teach us that we are "inheritors of the Kingdom of Heaven"? and an inheritor is no longer an heir, expectant; he has received and entered upon his heritage.) Wordsworth's beautiful lament about heaven lying about us in our infancy, and the shades of the prison-house then closing in upon us, until the glory fades into the light of common day, is at bottom quite wrong. There is no essential need that the glory shall fade, and heaven lies about us all our life; it is only our own sinfulness and the evil in the world and others that drive away the glory—

Two worlds are ours; 'tis only sin  
Forbids us to descry  
The mystic heaven and earth within,  
Plain as the sea and sky.<sup>1</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> Keble, *Christian Year*, Septuagesima.

## THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST

Truth is many-sided ; she is free, and will not be confined. And already she has asserted her contraries, showing us that the kingdom is both past, and present, and future. The New Testament identifies the kingdom with " life," and life, in all its senses and applications, involves growth and progress and continuity. " The coming and kingdom of Christ are in their nature a *process*, which has definite historical beginning, but stretches on indefinitely into future ages of ages."<sup>1</sup> As we know it, life is subject to the time-element, even if life be not a matter of length, or number of days, a matter of *πόνος* not *πόσος*. Life is both in time and above it, conditioned by it, yet transcending it. " If we indulge in speculation, we may argue that the *static* view of God in Himself is mistaken, and that we ought to take a *dynamic*—God is not state but process, not nature but purpose ; our theology should be a *teleology* rather than an *ontology*."<sup>2</sup> Arist., *Metaphysics* xi, 1072b : " His activity, ever busy with itself, constitutes His perfect and eternal life. . . . God is an eternal perfect being, so that life, and continuous eternal duration (*αἰών συνεχῆς καὶ δίδιος* pertain to God, for God is indeed all this." And life knows nothing of catastrophes ; what seem to be such are but the sudden ripening of harvests long sown and developing, the culmination and effect of causes deep-seated and ancient. Life is all of a piece ; and such " catastrophes " immediately produce their effects, whose growth and

---

<sup>1</sup> Terry, p. 250.

<sup>2</sup> Garvie

## THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST

connections are clearly traceable before and after. *Natura nil facit per saltum*,  $\pi\alpha\nu\tau\alpha\ \rho\epsilon\iota$ , are sound axioms ; "nature never jumps"—"all is flux, nothing constant" ; and eternal life would not be life were the Christ to descend from heaven on the clouds, and inaugurate a new order of things, in which perfection were finally and instantaneously reached, irrespective of human endeavour, limitations, failings, and aspirations. "The future life is not a reward of obedience to a law now, but the continuing and completion of a vital process here begun, there ended."<sup>1</sup> "Eternal life with Jesus is not an artificial reward, but rather the consummation of personality which is determined by faith and relationship with God. . . . To be saved is something more than to win the blessings of an acquittal at the Judgment Day of Judaism. It is, rather, to possess a quality of life due to the soul's relation with God through faith, which will eventuate in those blessed results which are pictured by the Gospels in terms of the Apocalypse."<sup>2</sup> "A state of completeness excluding all imperfections absolutely and at once, violates the law of gradual evolution which conditions created existences. It is more philosophical to believe that the souls of the righteous pass into another state in the degree of advancement they have attained to in this ; their freedom from gross bodily bonds giving them

---

<sup>1</sup> A. E. Garvie, "The Christian Ideal," *Hibbert Journal*, July, 1916.

<sup>2</sup> Shailer Matthews, in Hastings, *D C G*, i, p. 423.

## THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST

a new facility in apprehending the Infinite Creator.”<sup>1</sup> “Our posthumous life, whatever there may be in it additional to our present, yet may not be entirely beginning anew, but going on. Death may in some sort, and in some respects, answer to our birth, which is not a suspension of the faculties which we had before it, or a total change of the state of life in which we existed when in the womb; but a continuation of both, with such and such great alterations.”<sup>2</sup>

If it be asked whether eternal life involves never-ending growth, and whether there be growth in the Godhead; we answer that there has been growth of a kind in the Godhead, in the sense of a progressive manifestation, and the Incarnation and Pentecost marked the stages in it, when the Second and Third Persons of the Holy Trinity were revealed. And the growth is still in progress in the “building up of the Body of Christ,” by which man, in his infinite diversity, is brought into the right relation to the one Unity, and is made part of it. It is, of course, true that growth can hardly be an attribute of perfection, but that when perfection is reached the energy previously exercised in growth is transferred to other forms of activity. If mathematical analogies be permitted, the Holy Trinity represent an equilateral triangle, or a perfect circle; and when all the wheels of the machine are true circles, when all impediments are removed, when all is tightened up and in place, and the true design

---

<sup>1</sup> Davidson, p. 158.

<sup>2</sup> Butler, *Anal.* I, i.

## THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST

and proportion reached, and all energised by the One Spirit in obedience to the Supreme Will after the example of the Eternal Son, then doubtless there is something for it to do, which will in due time be revealed.<sup>1</sup>

But we are a long way off that ; Christ may have “ abolished death, and brought life and incorruption to light through the Gospel,” but “ it doth not yet appear what we shall be ” ; and the New Testament, whether in Our Lord’s teaching or in that of His followers, never lets us forget that the Kingdom, though present and active and powerful, is not yet complete ; it is still future ; the “ measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ ” is not yet reached ; Satan may have fallen like lightning from heaven, but he is not yet finally subdued ; the Christian is still at war, a soldier on service ; the sphere of preaching, implied in Matt. x. 23, xxiv. 14, xxviii. 19, has widened vastly since those words were spoken, and the evangelisation of the world is not yet complete ; each day sees the advent of new lives into the world, and to them, too, must

---

<sup>1</sup> For the concept of Eternal Life, see the last chapter in Von Hügel’s remarkable book on that subject. He defines it as : “ An experience, requirement, force, conception, ideal which is, in endless degrees and ways, latent or potent in every specifically human life and act; which, in its fullest operativeness, and its most vivid recognition, is specifically religious; and which, in proportion to such fulness and recognition, is found to involve the consciousness, or possession, of all the highest realities and goods sought after or found by man, and the sense (more or less) of non-succession, of a complete Present and Presence, of an utterly abiding Here and Now.” (Pp. 1, 2.)

## THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST

the Gospel be preached. The Church, the Body of Christ, is still far from comprising the whole of humanity ; the wedding-robe of the Bride of the Lamb is neither complete nor spotless as yet ; so that Christ is still a “ Christ that is to be.” “ The Founder of Christianity came and promulgated principles capable of regenerating the world ; and no future coming can be expected, unless the increased efficacy which those principles exert be called so.”<sup>1</sup> And this is why so much place is given in the New Testament to the thought of hope ; why so much rebuke and exhortation are found in it ; so much praise and blame ; the tares still disfigure the wheat-field and mar its crop. We can confidently assert that Our Lord’s words were fulfilled at Pentecost, that His Kingdom came then in a manner and degree unparalleled before or since ; but all the time we know that we have not uttered the whole truth, that our experience tells us only too surely that His kingship is not complete. His power is too sadly conditioned by the weakness of our human wills ; His Presence is not easily kept ; and the world is not a nice place to live in, because it has not yet been won to Christ. If man records his own verdicts against himself, and if these are worked out in his own history and experience, there are also only too many wrongs and injustices, suspicions and misunderstandings, which are *not* set right in this world. Man’s experiences are often the verdicts of other

---

<sup>1</sup> Davidson, p. 31.

men as well as his own ; and these judgments, when not malicious, are necessarily biassed and based on limited knowledge. So that man must needs wait for "another world" before he can receive his final deserts and vindication ; and be it noted that vindication is more probable than condemnation ; as St. Paul says : " Judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come, who will both bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and make manifest the counsels of the hearts ; and then shall each man have his praise from God."<sup>1</sup> In a sense, we may liken the Early Church at its very infancy to Eden before the Fall ; for a brief moment and in a small sphere everything was perfect ; but perfection needed to be extended, the perfection was a limited perfection ; and only too soon was it made imperfect by human failure. The imperfection still obtains. Even the devoutest of saints, enjoying the fullest and most frequent of mystic visions, cannot find therein more than a temporary satisfaction ; for the words of Joseph are true in another sense and on Another's lips : " Ye shall not see my face, except your brother be with you," *i.e.*, the Beatific Vision is not to be enjoyed to the full, or fully realised, except in company with all the Saints, and the number of the "blessed company of all faithful people" is intended to comprise all mankind. So that until all humanity is won to Christ the Kingdom is not complete.

---

<sup>1</sup> 1 Cor. iv. 5.

## THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST

Science tells us, in the twentieth century, that at some far distant epoch this material earth and system will lose its heat and revert to a condition of cold and death ; and there is nothing more certain than that the material existence of the individual man is limited ; so that the spiritual, as far as we can tell, is alone permanent. It is even asserted that a succession of cycles is the only tenable explanation of the material universe, *i.e.*, that no progress may be looked for therein.<sup>1</sup> And the spiritual is alone unchangeable ; in this sense, that we are for ever changing our bodies, even sharing our thoughts, but our characters and our personalities are for ever our own. We seem inevitably to look forward to an existence purely spiritual, and, therefore, freed from the limitations of matter. We believe that when we die we pass to a state of existence far fuller and freer, and with our capacities greatly enhanced ; we come closer to God and realise more fully our divine destiny. We believe that life will still be social, with possibilities of mutual intercourse and service, with the old loving relationships and memories still continued and even intensified. We believe that there will be work for us to do, and that we shall realise more fully our ideals—

And only the Master shall praise us, and only the  
Master shall blame;  
And no one shall work for money, and no one shall  
work for fame,

---

<sup>1</sup> Foakes-Jackson, *The Faith and the War*, p. 105 ;  
Essay by Dr. Inge.

## THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST

But each for the joy of the working, and each, in  
his separate star,  
Shall draw the Thing as he sees It for the God of  
Things as they Are!<sup>1</sup>

But, just as humanity lies still partly in the power of the Evil One, so the “muddy vesture of decay doth grossly clothe it in,” and matter is still to be reckoned as an element in life. And so, as Dr. Burkitt truly says, Pentecost may have been indeed an early sheaf of first-fruits, the pledge of what is to be ; but it was not the harvest.<sup>2</sup>

It cannot be too greatly emphasised that the kingship of Christ is dependent on the co-operation of human will and effort for its realisation. It is an act of grace on God’s part ; the teaching of the apocalypticists leaves no doubt of that ; God sends His Messiah entirely of His own will, be it in pursuance of His Covenant with Israel (no less an act of grace) ; or because of the eternal law of righteousness, to judge or to save ; or out of pity ; man can neither cause nor occasion it, not can he alter the time or the manner determined by the Father. But it is nevertheless true that when inaugurated, as at Pentecost, it needs human co-operation for its completion and full accomplishment. The coming of the kingdom is the doing of God’s Will by men as by angels. Men must work out their own Salvation. The gifts given by the Saviour unto men at Pentecost were in their endless variety all intended for the same end and process, “The perfecting of the saints unto the work of ministering,

---

<sup>1</sup> R. Kipling, “L’Envoi.”

<sup>2</sup> P. 49.

## THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST

unto the building up of the Body of Christ ; till we all attain unto the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a full-grown man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ.”<sup>1</sup> It is the failure to realise this essential truth which has delayed and discredited the kingdom so long, has made the life of the Church so ineffective, and has deprived individuals of a much-needed stimulus. “ The purpose of God for us, in us, and through us, by the working of His indwelling Spirit, apprehended and interpreted by means of the highest revelation that has ever been experienced in humanity, is a grander thing to seek and know and to make the lode-star of our earthly conduct than any curious or morbid interest in the manner of this world’s disintegration, the end of the, to us, immeasurable universe, or even the ultimate issues of personal being.”<sup>2</sup>

What should be the attitude of the devout Christian towards God and his present life, in view of this belief, that Christ has already come, in His Holy Spirit, but that the Christian hope is not yet fully realised ? He can read it in 2 Cor. v. 2-9 :<sup>3</sup> “ For we know that if the earthly house of our tabernacle be dissolved, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal, in the heavens. For verily in this we groan, longing to be clothed upon with our habitation which is from

<sup>1</sup> Eph. iv. 13.

<sup>2</sup> Winstanley, p. 384.

<sup>3</sup> For the interpretation of which, see Charles, *Eschatology*, p 400. Cf. 2 Pet. iii. 11, 12 ; Dewick, p. 218.

## THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST

heaven, seeing that being clothed upon we shall not be found naked. For indeed we that are in this tabernacle do groan, being burdened ; not for that we would be un-clothed, but that we would be clothed upon, that what is mortal may be swallowed up of life. Now He that wrought us for this very thing is God, Who gave unto us the earnest of the Spirit. Being therefore always of good courage, and knowing that, whilst we are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord (for we walk by faith, not by sight) ; we are of good courage, I say, and choose rather to be absent from the body, and to be at home with the Lord. Wherefore also we make it our aim, whether at home or absent, to be well-pleasing unto Him."

Come, Holy Ghost, our souls inspire,  
And lighten with celestial fire ;  
Thou the Anointing Spirit art,  
Who dost Thy sevenfold gifts impart ;  
Thy blessed unction from above  
Is comfort, life, and fire of love.

Enable with perpetual light  
The dulness of our blinded sight ;  
Anoint and cheer our soiled face  
With the abundance of Thy grace ;  
Keep far our foes ; give peace at home ;  
Where Thou art Guide no ill can come.

Teach us to know the Father, Son,  
And Thee (of both), to be but one ;  
That through the ages all along  
This may be our endless song—  
Praise to Thy eternal merit,  
Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

# INDEX

AHIKAR, Story of, 46  
*alāv*, 66

“ BELOVED,” 33, 41

“ CHOSEN,” 33, 41

“ Consummation of the Age,” 66, 125

DAY of Judgment, 21, 69, 125, 127, 129

Dives and Lazarus, 28

ELIJAH, 39

“ End of the World,” 66, 125

Eschatology, value of, 57, 140

— of Acts, 99

— of Early Church, 49, 51*n*, 78, 124, 150

— of Christ, Ch. I, and pp. 71, 79, 96

— of Hebrews, 100

— of St. James, 101

—, Jewish, 53, 76, 87, 120

— of St. Jude, 101

— of St. Paul, 102, 165

— of St. Peter, 101

— of Revelation, 109

Eternal, 67, 145, 158, 160

FIRE, 19

GEHENNA, 18

“ Great Assize, The,” 13

Guardian Angels, 40

HOLY SPIRIT, The, Preface, 115, 119, 148, 153

JOHN, St., Teaching of, 30, 45, 82, 84, 102

Judgment, 21, 125, 127

KINGDOM, 61, 90, 120, 131, 152, 161, 164

“ LAST Day,” 69, 129

“ Little Apocalypse, The,” 71, 74

Luke, St., Teaching of, 27, 41, 71, 83

MATTHEW, St., Teaching of, 4, 32, 71

Messianic banquet, 20

PARADISE, 30

Parousia, 70, 119, 131, 141, 148

Pentecost, 115, 121, 130, 148, 164

Progress, 135

Prophecy, 137

“ REGENERATION, The,” 24

SON OF MAN, 58

Spiritualising, 80, 104, 110, 113

TARES, Parable of, 22, 84, 125 ff, 140

Time, 68, 141

“ Two Ways, The,” 19

WORM, 19

THE  
CRADLE OF CHRISTIANITY  
OR, SOME ACCOUNT OF THE TIMES OF CHRIST

*Foreword by the Rev. Canon Vaughan, M.A.*

Crown 8vo, cloth gilt, 178 pp. 2s. net.

FROM THE FOREWORD

THE little volume is admirably suited to its purpose. Nowhere, in so small a compass, do I know such a clear and scholarly account of the religious and social conditions under which Christ was born. The chapters on the Messianic Hope, on Hellenism, on Apocalyptic Literature are excellent; while the treatment of the sects and parties of the Jews reveals a full knowledge of the latest researches on the subject. I heartily recommend the little book.

**The Guardian:** "In point of size, in succinctness, and in graphic and accurate grouping of facts Mr. Prideaux's description of the conditions of the times prior to and circumstantial with the Gospel history will fill a real gap."

**The Challenge:** "Mr. Prideaux's book should be eagerly welcomed, for here is set down in small compass the main outlines of the Hebrew customs, religious sects, modes of thought, political, religious and social atmosphere of the day. The Biblical references are very full and the book is altogether most welcome."

**The Daily Graphic:** ". . . an admirable sketch of the geography and social manners and customs of Palestine in the time of Christ."

**The Church Monthly:** "It is a scholarly production, the result of great research and wide knowledge, and depicts the religious and social conditions under which Christ was born and lived. It should be eminently useful to teachers and students of training colleges."

**The Churchman:** "Written in a most readable manner, and specially useful to theological students, Sunday School teachers and Christian workers. . . . The book is marked by scholarship, lucidity and compactness."

**Church of Ireland Gazette:** "This is a capital little book. We have often felt the need of something of the kind to recommend to teachers."

**International Review of Missions:** "May be heartily commended to those who desire a careful guide to the chief points of interest in early Judaism."

**Caritas:** "Like his namesake of many years ago, the author has given us an excellent 'connexion between the Old and New Testaments,' full, lucid, well documented, and based on the best authorities. The book is intended chiefly for teachers and students of training colleges, but will be of much use also to the intelligent layman who wishes to understand his New Testament."

**The School World:** "Deserves to be very widely known. It attempts, with marked success, to give a clear glimpse of the Palestinian world into which the Messiah was born. . . . The work is scholarly and trustworthy, and at the same time clear and readable. Careful writing and painstaking research are evidenced in every chapter."

*Of all Booksellers*