



THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST THE  
**CHRISTIAN'S HOPE**

by  
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**I** WILL come again, and receive you unto Myself; that where I am, there ye may be also." John 14:3.

These words of Jesus were spoken by Christ about two thousand years ago, in that epochal, transitional period between the Jewish and Christian dispensations. Standing on this culminating summit of time,—the most memorable peak in human history,—He looked backward down the highway of the past to the birth of our world and the entrance of sin; He glanced forward down the winding road of future centuries to the end of sin and its tragic human history.

Christ was now completing the work in connection with His first advent. He was issuing final instructions to the leaders and the charter members of the newly organized Christian church, admonishing them to follow guardedly the blueprint He had committed to them for the upbuilding of His plan of salvation in this dispensation. He gently informed His followers that it was necessary for Him to leave them and return to His Father; and that after His ministry in heaven in their behalf should be finished, He would make good His promise, "I will come again."

The members of this early Christian church were a humble-minded people. They were very human in their emotions. Their hearts were agitated, sad with disappointed hopes. They were disquieted as they contemplated the future without the visible leadership of their Lord and Teacher. They grew apprehensive

of the outcome. It was under these circumstances and in this atmosphere of perplexity that Christ gave them the cheering admonition: "Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in Me. . . . I will come again, and receive you unto Myself; that where I am, there ye may be also." John 14:1-3.

This promise, and many others of similar import, is reinforced by definite lines of Bible prophecy concerning the second advent of Christ to this world. They have established landmarks—signposts—for the benefit of the Christian church, by which it might determine its position and its course in its journey through the land of the enemy.

These prophetic forecasts, embracing times and events, have been accurately fulfilled during the centuries since they were delivered. They measure and direct the course of human events, and their lines converge upon our own day. This present generation and civilization stand at the focal point of human history. The startling events and conditions of today are writing the most thrilling and sublime chapter in the story of mankind. Consequently it is quite appropriate that an increasing number of religious leaders and multitudes of laymen in all parts of the earth would be besieged by the abiding conviction that the Christian church is soon to reach the end of her pilgrimage, and that her ardent hopes are soon to be consummated in the second coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

### Ever Since Eden

Ever since the tragedy of Eden the human family have suffered under the iron heel of sin and have sought escape from its devouring tyrannies. So successful have been the ambitions of the prince of this world through the centuries that today the whole world is prostrated under the shattering weight of sin's deadly fruitage. We face at present a painful, deplorable state of human society.

But the prophetic scriptures of the Bible clearly indicate that these very conditions of moral and social decline would be especially widespread in the last days, that period just before the second coming of Christ. The apostle Paul says: "This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, traitors, heady, high-minded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God; having a form of godliness,

but denying the power thereof: from such turn away." 2 Timothy 3:1-5.

The Lord Himself declared that the moral and social plight and aspect of man just before the overwhelming Flood of Noah's day would have a counterpart in the temper and trend of morals in the days immediately preceding His return. He said: "As it was in the days of Noah, so shall it be also in the days of the Son of man. They did eat, they drank, they married wives, they were given in marriage, until the day that Noah entered into the ark, and the Flood came, and destroyed them all." Luke 17:26, 27. Amplifying His prediction, He spoke of the typical days of Lot. "Likewise also as it was in the days of Lot; they did eat, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they builded; but the same day that Lot went out of Sodom it rained fire and brimstone from heaven, and destroyed them all. Even thus shall it be in the day when the Son of man is revealed." Verses 28-30.

### Might Threatens Right

The political state and outlook of the world is equally ominous and interpretive, and also impressively foretold by Christ and the prophets. Never before in the recorded activities of man were the political conditions of the nations in such a tangle and ferment. Many of the nations are scuttling their traditional governing policies. Political philosophies are being revised and radically transformed. The glory of integrity and honor that once covered the pledged word of a nation has faded, and treaty obligations are broken and discarded with impunity. International law has fallen into impotency and disrepute. The rule of force is superseding the might of right.

This changed and changing viewpoint of the nations has created an unconcealed fear in the minds of rulers and ambassadors of state; and this fear is felt by all who share the responsibility of molding public opinion. These world leaders visualize a catastrophic conflict of war in the near future. The rule of international law—the law of the society of nations—is disappearing. The nations see that the rule of force is their only safety, and they are preparing to use it. If "the era of force has irrevocably arrived," we may be certain that each nation will make it as sure as possible that the dominant force shall be on its side. This fact furnishes the answer to the current disturbing question, Why this ruinous race of the nations for military and naval armaments?

There is a terrific strain of uncertainty and a consciousness of fearful hesitancy around the chessboard of world politics these

days. Each player is fully aware that the fate of his nation is trembling in the balance, and he is breathlessly seeking to maneuver it into a position of advantage so that when the time comes for the final moves, his nation will win in the climactic struggle that ends the game.

In reviewing world conditions a few weeks ago before a group of professional men and industrial leaders, the speaker, one of the keenest observers and editors in the United States, said, "The world is shedding its last trace of stability." This is a mournful statement, but it is Biblically true. Humanity is distraught and bewildered. It is in the grip of two mighty impulses, each striving to seize the mastery. It is about to be torn asunder between the two gigantic forces, the hope of peace and the fear of war.

Millenniums ago Christ forecast this unwelcome picture of the nations and outlined their course of thought and conduct. He revealed clearly that the general conditions of the world, and of the nations in particular, would continue unrelieved until the last days, at which time they would become so alarming and extensive as to constitute one of the very definite signs of His imminent return.

### What Christ Predicted

In presenting the tokens by which men might know when His coming is near, He declared: "There shall be signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars; and upon the earth distress of nations, with perplexity; the sea and the waves roaring; men's hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth: for the powers of heaven shall be shaken.

"And then shall they see the Son of man coming in a cloud with power and great glory. And when these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh." Luke 21:25-28.

Describing the unparalleled preparations for war and the astonishing and premonitory awakening of heathen nations for the final conflict, the prophet Joel made the following prophetic statement: "Proclaim ye this among the Gentiles ["the nations," Revised Version]; Prepare war, wake up the mighty men, let all the men of war draw near; let them come up: beat your plowshares into swords, and your pruning hooks into spears: let the weak say, I am strong. . . . Let the heathen be wakened. . . . Multitudes, multitudes in the valley of decision [or "cutting off"]: for the day of the Lord is near in the valley of decision." Joel 3:9-14.

John the revelator saw the sword swinging and the glowering

aspect of the nations in our day, just before the Lord was to return to bring the everlasting rewards to His waiting church. He said: "The nations were angry, and Thy wrath is come, and the time of the dead, that they should be judged, and that Thou shouldest give reward unto Thy servants the prophets, and to the saints, and them that fear Thy name, small and great; and shouldest destroy them which destroy the earth." Revelation 11:18.

The social and industrial unrest and discontent which contributes largely to the distress and perplexity of the nations, the tensing relations between capital and labor joined in bitter struggle for controlling power, are set forth in the Scriptures as among the specific signs that we have reached the last days, and that "the coming of the Lord draweth nigh." See James 5:1-9.

We, of course, do not concern ourselves with the merits of any issue involved in these industrial conflicts, but merely point out the truth that this class strife and animosity are but one more portent that we are rapidly nearing the great crisis of human history.

Doubtless the most significant and cheering token of our Lord's return is the world-wide preaching of the gospel of salvation under the powerful influence of the Christian church. And this glorious world evangelism is reinforced in a very particular sense by the great second advent movement carried forward by the Seventh-day Adventist denomination.

### The Gospel Into All the World

This movement is undergirded by sincere belief in the divine authorship of the Bible and a careful adherence to its teachings. Moved by the commanding impulse of the divine call and leadership to give the special message of warning and admonition that is due to all the world at this time, the heralds of this second advent movement are now sweeping mightily forward into every land and island of the globe. Everywhere, by thousands of voices and by every modern means of publicity, the signal of hope is being hoisted that Jesus is coming soon—the only hope for our disordered world, struggling with chaos, embroiled in tumult, and convulsed with fear.

This world-wide preaching of the gospel by the Christian church and the special emphasis of the second advent movement on heralding the early approach of the King of kings are also foretold by Christ and His prophets. Answering the anxious inquiry of the disciples concerning His return, and also concerning

the time when He might be expected, Jesus said: "This gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come." Matthew 24:14. See also Revelation 14:6-14. In view of these predictions this message and movement for this momentous hour are here. The trumpet call is sounding "to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people" to get ready; for "the great day of the Lord is near, it is near, and hasteth greatly." Revelation 14:6; Zephaniah 1:14.

In this short treatise we are referring only to a few of those signs which are finding vivid and distinct utterance in the current activities of the world about us; and our exposition even on these must necessarily be most brief. There are many other signs, both general and specific, that speak of the proximity of the day of the Lord, but we cannot unfold them here; for this "blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ" (Titus 2:13) is a large and inspiring theme. More than three hundred verses in the New Testament alone tell us of the return of Christ.

The only hope for this mad world and its chafing humanity is the second coming of Jesus Christ. All the panaceas and corrective treatments for the world's ills are only temporarily palliative, and can bring no permanent relief. Rulers of nations and leaders of state are discovering the insufficiency and futility of their cherished plans for national rehabilitation and safety. They are conscious that the present is oppressed with a growing pessimism, and that the future is clouded with blind diplomatic bargaining and dreadful uncertainty.

### Hopeful Despite Outlook

But the Bible Christian is sincerely optimistic despite these testing and contradictory times. He candidly admits the existing and unhappy conditions throughout the world and recognizes fully their gravity and peril. However, beyond the darksome clouds he sees a radiant hope, a hope that is as old as the morning star. This confidence of the Christian is not founded on a "blind faith in the eventual triumph of the good."

Down through the ages the believing Christian has kept his faith focused on this our day—the day when Christ would come and strike the fatal blow to sin and draw down forever the curtain on its baneful history. This hope has stirred the zeal of the church to pre-eminent accomplishments in gospel evangelism. It has fortified her loyal followers against the insidious germs of heresy and apostasy. It has eased the wearing burdens of her



valiant workers, multitudes of whom have labored, suffered, and died in obscurity in order to extend the knowledge of the cross of Jesus Christ. It has given reliance to the step of those who have had to descend into the valley of the shadow of death, and dispelled the terrors of the grave.

A grave danger, however, confronts the professedly Christian church of today — a danger that confronted and overcame the professed people of God in the days just previous to the first advent of Christ. That danger is disbelief in the scriptural view of the nature and time of His coming. Because of the prevalence of this disbelief, the large majority of His professed people were unprepared to receive the Saviour when He came. "He came unto His own, and His own received Him not," is the sad declaration of the Scriptures. John 1:11.

A similar tendency threatens a large number of professing Christians at the present time. They misunderstand, if they believe at all, the promises and prophecies that pertain to the second appearing of Christ.

### Men's Indifference Foretold

But this lamentable proneness to disregard the warnings and admonitions with reference to the end of this age of sin and the coming of the Lord was foretold, as well as the events themselves. We read: "As the days of Noah were, *so shall also the coming of the Son of man be*. For as in the days that were before the Flood, they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered into the ark, and knew not until the Flood came, and took them all away; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be." Matthew 24:37-39. "There shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts [desires, passions, ideas, opinions], and saying, Where is the promise of His coming? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation. For this they willingly are ignorant of ["willfully forget," R. V.; "willfully shut their eyes to the fact," Twentieth Century New Testament], that by the word of God the heavens were of old, and the earth standing out of the water and in the water: whereby the world that then was, being overflowed with water, perished." 2 Peter 3:3-6.

Because of the "scoffers," the "willingly ignorant," the misinterpreters of the word of God, many skeptical, unfounded, and delusive theories concerning the nature and time of Christ's second coming have appeared and are being spread broadcast over the

earth. Satan is determined to obscure the vision of seekers for truth by scattering before them theological dust, so that the real issue of the hour will be unrecognized.

Soon we shall have crossed the burning sands of time and come to the end of our pilgrimage. Soon we shall see "the sign of the Son of man . . . coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory." Matthew 24:30.

Then the angel host of heaven will strike the keynote of eternal victory and the saints of the Lord will break forth into rapturous song—the new song of lasting triumph. Revelation 14:3; 15:3. For Christ will have made good His promise: "I will come again, and receive you unto Myself; that where I am, there ye may be also." John 14:3.

And through eternal ages the redeemed will glorify the achievements of divine love and will shine forth as the everliving monuments of saving grace. This privilege is open to all who are willing to meet the terms of salvation,—to all who love the thought of the second advent of Christ and are looking with joyful expectancy to the day of His appearing. Hebrews 9:28; 2 Timothy 4:8.

As we tarry here yet a little while, we shall not grow weary in well-doing, for we have founded our hopes on the depths of God's mercy and are trusting in the verity of His promises. And while we linger, our hearts repeat the urgent plea:

*"Even so, come, Lord Jesus."* Revelation 22:20.

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