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THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST.

(A Postmillennarian View.)

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The last things in theology are really the first things in life. The woes of the European war are sending the world's mind back to eschatology. We were settling down into a naturalistic optimism. We were dreaming about some Utopia to be brought in by social programmes. The world to come was being relegated in favor of the world that now is.

Providence is driving us back to the old question, "After death, what?" What is to be the final *denouement* of this interesting world?

The Second Coming of Christ is, for Christian eschatology, the most momentous event which struggles in the bosom of the future. From the fall of man till the star stood still over Bethlehem, the First Coming of Christ was the sublimest object which loomed upon the horizon of human hope. Now all Christendom strains its eye for the return of him who once came, and has promised to come again.

About the fact and importance of the Second Coming, the Christian world is agreed. We all believe that Jesus will return

Editorial Comment

THE SECOND COMING OF OUR LORD.

The terrible war in Europe has caused men to speak and write of the last things and of the second coming of Jesus as they have not done for years. We have, therefore, thought it fitting that we should have several articles on this great subject in the present issue of the Review. There are two or three distinct views of the second coming held within our own Church, and with this in mind we invited men to write who we judged would represent these several views. These men are well-known for scholarship, conservatism and piety throughout the Presbyterian Church in this country. We believe that our readers will agree that they have written strong and helpful articles, and that they have rendered a very distinct service to the whole Church.

It is not our purpose to write still another article on the second coming, but it does seem entirely proper that we should gather up and set down here the great outstanding points in connection with the second coming which we think ought to be emphasized in our preaching and teaching. Many Scripture passages might be given in connection with each point, but we will mention only a few of the leading passages.

1. The Church needs to lay more stress upon the fact of his coming.

So far as we discover very few people seem to realize that Jesus is coming again. Very little is being said about it in the pulpit or elsewhere. It seems as if we had allowed a few extremists to frighten us away from the whole subject. Yet the New Testament makes much of it. We have only recently seen the statement in a good authority that the second coming is mentioned three hundred and eighteen times in the New Testament, and in two hundred and sixty different chapters. Are we rightly dividing the word of truth when

we neglect such a vital subject? Perhaps we need to emphasize the fact of his coming more and theories about his coming less. Under this head see Acts 1:11; Heb. 9:28; and John 14:3.

2. The unexpectedness of his coming. Ever since the Lord was upon earth men have been very busy figuring out the time of his coming. Some have fixed upon very definite dates. Others have been content to fix the time in a more general way. Still others are busy trying to interpret the signs of his coming. There are some who are trying to do it now in the light, or darkness, of the European war. All such attempts are futile. Jesus has made it very clear that no man can know the day or the hour. On the other hand, the vast majority of people are not thinking of his return in one way or another. They would probably smile if some one were to suggest to them that the Lord might return most unexpectedly at any moment. Yet it seems to us that this is precisely what the New Testament teaches. When we read the New Testament we get the impression that he may come tomorrow or that his coming may be long delayed, at the same time we get the impression that when he does come he is going to take the world and a large element in the Church by complete surprise. See Matt. 24:36-44; 1 Thess. 5:2-3; and Rev. 16:15.

3. We ought to be watching for him. He wants us to be in a constant state of expectancy. How often we are exhorted to watch. The great thought of the parable of the Virgins is that we should watch. The early Church caught that lesson. Many of the early disciples and great Church fathers were looking for him at any moment. See Luke 21:34-36. Luke 12:35-40; Matt. 25:13; Titus 2:13.

4. We should be ready for his coming. It is not enough to watch. The time is not to be spent in idleness. The very thought of his coming is to be an incentive to holy living and Christian service. If the parable of the Virgins urges the importance of watchfulness, the parable of the Talents, which immediately follows it, emphasizes the importance of readiness, and tells the Christian how to be ready. We are in a

state of readiness, when with hearts full of faith and love, we are making the largest use of every talent that he has committed to us. There is much being said about preparedness just now, and some of us are giving a very reluctant consent to the kind of preparedness of which the world is talking. How infinitely better it would be if we could have this true preparedness to which Jesus and his apostles continually urge us. See Matt. 24:44-46; Matt. 25:14-30.

5. The day of his coming is going to be a glorious day for the Christian and for the Church. We must confess that we have never been able to follow some of the elaborate programs which have been worked out in connection with the second coming. But of one thing we are perfectly sure, and that is that the day of his coming is going to be the crowning day for the Christian and the coming of the kingdom for the Church. See 2 Tim. 4:8; 1 Pet. 5:14; 1 John 3:2; Phil. 3:20-21; 1 Thess. 2:19; 1 Thess. 4:16-17; Rev. 11:15.

W. L. L.