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**The Second Coming
of Christ**

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The Second Coming of Christ

BY

ROBERT E. SPEER

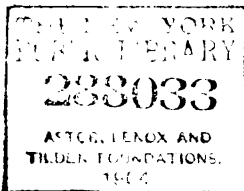
AUTHOR OF

"A YOUNG MAN'S QUESTIONS," "THE PRINCIPLES OF
JESUS," "STUDIES OF THE MAN PAUL," "STUDIES
OF THE MAN CHRIST JESUS," ETC.



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The Second Coming of Christ

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If we ask the question, What is Christianity? we get many replies. One party answers, A set of facts, of highly accredited historic facts. If we object that this sort of definition will apply just as well to geology or any similar science, they answer, Yes, but these facts cluster about a person. A second party would reply, A set of emotions. If we object that the feelings with which we look upon nature or with which we listen to music might be defined in the same way, they answer, Yes, but these emotions center upon a person and are in the nature of a personal love. A third party answers, A set of opinions. If we object that this definition would apply as well to materialism they answer, Yes, but these opinions are beliefs upon a

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person and cluster around a living spirit. A fourth party answers, A code of conduct. If we object that this definition will apply as well to any standard of ethics they answer, Yes, but this conduct is expressible only in the terms of service of a person. Each definition resolves in the end into Christ.

In what sense is Christianity Christ? Christianity is Christ, first, as the historic Saviour and Pattern. Christianity is Christ, second, as the present Lord and Life of man. Christianity is Christ, third, as the Ideal and Head of humanity. Is that all? We should have a truncated Christianity if that were all, a Christianity very rich and full, but incomplete. Christianity is Christ not alone as the historic Saviour and Pattern; not alone as the present Lord and Life of man; not alone as the Ideal and Head of a new humanity, the expression of God's desire for every

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creature—Christianity is also Christ as our coming Redeemer and King. The hope of Christ's coming again is an integral part of our Christian faith.

We must go back to each of the conceptions of Christianity which I mentioned at the beginning and include Christ's second coming therein. If Christianity is a set of facts, what are its facts? First, that Jesus Christ came into this world by way of the manger—the great fact of the lowly incarnation; (2) that Jesus Christ went out of this world by way of the cross and the open grave—the great truths of the atonement and the resurrection; (3) that the Holy Spirit came into this world as Christ's advocate to abide here as His representative, and (4) that Jesus Christ is coming back again. If Christianity is a set of emotions, what are those emotions? The constraint of the love of a perfect Saviour, but also the desire that He should

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come again, and the emotions the prospect of His return awakens. If Christianity is a set of beliefs, what are those beliefs? That Jesus Christ was our Lord; that Jesus Christ is our Lord; yes, and that Jesus Christ is to be our returned and victorious Lord. If Christianity is a code of conduct, what are the sanctions of that conduct? The constraint of Christ's love; the righteous fear of Christ's judgment, but also the expectation that the Master whom we serve is coming back again and may find us at our service, maybe faithful, maybe disloyal to Him for whom we are to watch and wait.

The hope of Christ's second coming is an integral part of our Christian faith. It is also a necessary part of our Christian faith. It is necessary from the point of view of our Christian faith itself. Christ must come again in order to complete and fulfill His

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first coming. A Jewess said to a friend of mine, who was endeavoring to persuade her that Jesus of Nazareth was the Messiah: "I do not know. If He was, I know He must come again, and when He comes again He will tell us Jews whether He was here before." Christianity is an incomplete, and imperfect, and unfulfilled thing unless the goal of it is the return of Jesus to complete that which He began. The return of Christ is essential to Christianity from the point of view of the inner needs of Christianity for its own completeness.

It is essential to Christianity from the point of view of the personal requirements of our own spiritual lives. We need the hope of Christ's second coming as a buttress to our faith in the supernatural. Even in the days of Simon Peter the hope of Christ's return had begun to grow dim. Peter says men began to lose faith in the

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supernatural and to miss out of their lives the sanctions of conduct that come from a supernatural faith, and their naturalism found expression in the question, "Where is the hope of His coming? for all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation." An aged minister in New Jersey once told me that after having been in the ministry for many years he found that his Christian faith had died away into sheer naturalism, and he was preaching to men a simple moral gospel until he got hold of the hope of Christ's coming. The expectation of that great supernatural future event made all other supernaturalisms easy. I believe we need the hope of Christ's coming to fortify our faith in the supernatural, which cannot be kept alive by any belief in supernatural occurrences nineteen hundred years ago. We need it to vivify and to keep quick and active our present Christian faith.

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It is so easy for Christian faith to die away into what is purely mental, what is mechanical, what is external. Men are often ready to have to do with a Christ of ancient history, when they are not ready to have to do with a Christ of present life and a Christ of coming judgment. People would rather have Christ wandering up and down through Palestine nineteen centuries ago than testing their present-day lives by the standard of His own, or standing over them as the judge already waiting at the door. The element of expectation is essential to life. We cannot well retain pure and fresh and quick our faith in the Christ who died and rose again unless we believe also in the Christ who is reigning now and who is again to come.

Now this necessity of our spiritual life for something to strengthen and make vital to us our faith in the supernatural, this necessity of our personal

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life to have some truth that will supply the element of prophecy and expectation, is met by Christ's teaching of His own personal coming. It may as well be confessed that this truth has been much ignored among Christians. Perhaps most of us have never thought that Jesus Christ is coming back again. I remember vividly the first time I discovered this truth on going to Northfield sixteen years ago as a sophomore in college. We stayed in Hillside Cottage and one day we came back to our rooms from a meeting in which some one had pointed out the New Testament passages promising the return of Jesus Christ with hearts all aglow. Life seemed altogether changed for me in that hour. I discovered that Christ was not resting back in that grave near Jerusalem; that Christ was not only sitting God-remote at the right hand of the Father, but that Christ is waiting, patiently waiting, the coming

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of that glad day when He is to come back again to me and to all of those who love His appearing.

Men have neglected this truth out of sheer indifference and carelessness. In a certain great book on systematic theology, the whole subject of the future of Christianity is relegated to a few chapters at the close, and the author confesses in the initial paragraph that really he has not studied the subject of which he is to treat. This truth has suffered also from exaggerations. Despite Christ's clear warning, men have fixed upon the day of His coming. They have described in detail the events that are to accompany His appearing, and have raised in the minds of many a natural repugnance to the whole truth of Christ's word that some day He is to return.

Many, I believe, also hide themselves from this truth because of the subtle scepticism and naturalism that lurk in

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our Christian life. Men veer off from the supernatural. They tone down their statements of Christ's deity. Many mock at the idea of Christ's divine and all-absorbing claims, and they do not like to think of Him as the real returning Christ who shall come again as once nineteen hundred years ago He came to Judea.

Men have hesitated also to accept the truth of Christ's coming, because they have wanted to get away from the real vital grip of Christ upon their lives. They like His ethics softened; they like the indescribably lovely way in which He puts His doctrine; they are attracted by His infallible taste; but the stronger, more virile elements of His teaching they shrink from, and they do not like to come face to face with a truth that makes Christ with all His claims a real dominant person and near-at-hand Lord.

And yet, just as clearly as language

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can make it, the Bible sets before us the truth that Jesus is coming back again. "I will come again," He says in John xiv. 3. Again: "Be ye also ready, for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of Man cometh." (Luke xii. 40.) "Ye men of Galilee," said the two men in white in Acts i. 11, as they stood on the mount from which Christ ascended, the disciples standing before them—"Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus, who is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen Him go into heaven." And the very last message of the Bible is, "He that testifieth these things saith, Surely I come quickly; Amen. Even so come, Lord Jesus."

Now these promises of Christ and of Christ's Word cannot be exhausted by any mere spiritualized interpretation. I believe that Jesus Christ comes in

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death. No one need hesitate to acknowledge that in every great event of life that brings to us the message of God, Jesus Christ comes to us. But it becomes impossible any longer to indicate thought by human speech, if these words are emptied of all their actual primary significance in this way.

You cannot exhaust the promise of Christ's coming by death. Death is our greatest foe. "The last enemy that shall be overcome," says Paul, "is death." Consistently, from beginning to end, death is set before us as a loathsome and repellant thing. Can you apply to death all the sweet words that are spoken of the coming of Christ for which we are told to look? Paul draws the sharp distinction between them in the first five verses of the fifth chapter of II. Corinthians. He points out that there is a world of difference between dying and Christ's coming. "We that are in this taber-

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nacle," he says, "do groan, being burdened: not for that we would be unclothed,"—that is, die and go into the grave, and our spirits be separated from our bodies—"not that we would be unclothed, but clothed upon, that what is mortal might be swallowed up of life," that we might have the new life which Christ will give us when He comes. (Phil. iii. 20, 21.) The apostles never dreamed of confusing death and Christ's coming. Jesus said to Peter about John that day when He and Peter were walking by the shores of the Sea of Galilee, "If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee?" "Then went the saying abroad," says John, "that that disciple should not die." The apostles instantly interpreted the hint that a man might live until Christ came back again as a promise that he should not die. From beginning to end, the promises of the New Testament about

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Christ's coming mean nothing if they mean that the significance of that coming is exhausted in the meeting between our souls and Him when we go to Him in death.

Some people have said that this promise was exhausted by the fall of Jerusalem. Take one passage and exchange the language and see. Take those closing verses of I. Thessalonians i., for example, where Paul speaks to the Thessalonians of their having "turned from idols to serve the living and true God, and to wait for His Son from heaven, whom He raised from the dead, even Jesus." Read that this way: "Ye turned from idols to serve the living and true God, and to wait for the fall of Jerusalem." It makes it absolutely meaningless and absurd. One of the gospels, at least, was written after the holy city had been destroyed. If those prophecies had been fulfilled in the destruction of Jerusalem,

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we may be sure that there would have been at least some covert allusion thereto.

You cannot exhaust the promises of Christ's coming again by any reference of them to personal spiritual life. It is to be acknowledged regarding prophecy, when we think of the very essence of prophecy, that all through life men should be fulfilling it in themselves. But every fresh fulfillment in my life or yours of that promise of Christ's coming, is only a fresh witness to its large, and rich, and complete fulfillment in the day when every eye shall see Him, and He shall come back again even as He went away.

I want to try to point out in a very simple way something of the meaning of Christ's coming.

It means, first of all, that our long-sundered ties shall be united again. "If we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in

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Jesus will God bring with Him. For we that are alive and remain shall not prevent them which are asleep. For the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God, and the dead in Christ shall rise first: then we which are alive and remain, shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord." (I. Thess. iv. 14-17.) The coming of Christ means, first of all, the glorification of our human relationships, the knitting up of our severed human ties, the making permanent and eternal of our human loves and affections.

It means, secondly, our emancipation from the influence of all outer evil. In his volumes on Isaiah in the "Expositor's Bible," George Adam Smith gives a fresh translation of one of the verses of the eleventh chapter

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of Isaiah. It is the chapter that speaks of the shoot coming out of the stock of Jesse, and one verse is translated in the Revised Version, "His delight shall be in the fear of the Lord." Professor Smith points out that the literal Hebrew reading is "He shall draw breath in the fear of the Lord." It was a prophecy of the Messiah. He was to be free from all that carnal, fleshly, temptation-filled atmosphere in which we live. He was in some real sense tempted in all points as we are, but also He drew all His breath, not in the miasma of our lustful life, but in the pure, clean, ever-enduring fear of the Lord. And the teaching of the New Testament is this, that when Jesus comes back, we, too, like Him, shall be free from all these external allurements to sin, from all these incitements to evil, all lawlessness, all objective wickedness. The very prince of wickedness himself, is to be slain by

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the breath of His mouth, and by the manifestation of His power. All that which from without makes its seductive, its alluring appeals to the inner consciousness, will die away and be gone forever when Jesus Christ comes back to receive His own and to enable them to breathe in the fear of God.

And thirdly, not only does Jesus mean by His coming to deliver us from the outside evil; by His coming He means to deliver us also from that great fount of inner temptation and allurements, out from which, Jesus Christ said, flow all the evils of our life, all the evil desires, all the evil passions, all the evil lusts and acts that corrupt and corrode life. Professor Bruce, in his volume on "St. Paul's Conception of Christianity," refers to Paul's allusions to his own personal temptations as indicating the warfare he had to wage against inner sinful desire. Did you ever stop to think

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why it was that Paul was so constantly speaking of the temptations of the flesh, why in so many of his Epistles he makes a long list of the sins that soil men's lives, what he means when he tells the Corinthians that he was obliged to buffet his own body and bring it under? I presume Paul was a sorely tempted man just along those lines of physical temptation which are strongest with young men, and to which many young men yield. It was in the great longing and desire to be freed from the source of all that sin and uncleanness that Paul declared his citizenship was in heaven, whence also he looked for the Lord Jesus, who should change these vile bodies—these bodies of our humiliation, these bodies which are the source and fount of so much sin and lust and evil—and give us instead the pure clean bodies of His glory. It was the yearning to be broken free from the shackles of lust and sin that sprang up

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in his own inner life that made Paul long for the day when Christ should come back and give him in exchange for all that which he carried with him daily and which suggested daily sin and evil to him, a body like Christ's own body of glory, of purity and of stainlessness and of holy Christlikeness.

And the coming of Christ means more than these three things. It means the redemption of all our life. You will recall that mighty passage in Paul's Epistle to the Romans, the eighth chapter, in which he links up all creation to us. Dr. Smith suggests that just as Jesus Christ is our mediator, we are called there the mediators of the beasts; that as Jesus Christ brought us holiness and peace, so the dumb creation waits for its redemption until the sons of God are revealed in us. "For the earnest expectation of the creation," wrote Paul, "waiteth for the redemption of the sons of God.

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For the creation was subjected to vanity, not of its own will, but by reason of Him who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself shall also be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the liberty of the glory of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now, and not only so, but ourselves also, which have the first fruits of the spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves waiting for our adoption,"—which has not been completed as yet, but will be at Christ's coming,—“to wit, the redemption of our body.” Deliverance from sin, from the possibility of sin, from the outside allurements to sin, from the internal inclination to sin, the knitting up of all the severed loves of earth—these are some of the things the coming of Jesus Christ will mean.

Now do not let us be confused or misled by any doubts or disputes of

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men, by any misguiding or misleading speculations as to the manner and time of Christ's coming. It is enough for us to know just what the Bible states and no more. It tells us very plainly all that it is necessary for us to know about the manner of His coming. The same Christ is coming back who went away. "This same Jesus, which is today taken up from you into heaven, shall so come again in like manner as ye have seen Him go." It is the personal Jesus who is to come back visibly to us, who is to come back unexpectedly in such an hour as we think not, who is to come back not unexpectedly only, but suddenly. Matthew and Luke preserve for us the words of Christ in which He likens the suddenness of His coming to the flashing of lightning from the east to the west. "As thou seest the lightning flash from one quarter of the heaven to another, even so shall the coming of the Son of

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Man be." Jesus also likened the suddenness of His coming to the quickness of the coming of the flood in the days of Noah. "For as in those days that were before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day when Noah entered into the ark, and they knew not, until the flood came and took them all away; so shall be the coming of the Son of Man. Watch, therefore, for ye know not on what day your Lord cometh." And that tells us all that we need to know about the time of His coming. Jesus Himself said that He did not then know when He would come. "Of that day and of that hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of God, neither the Son, but the Father only." When He talked with His disciples with reference to this time, He told them that all that was required of them was that they should watch. "Watch, for in an hour

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that you think not the Son of Man cometh.”

What made it perfectly plain to them that they were not to nullify His teaching by any human conditions was the command to watch. All significance of meaning in His promise was not to be killed by the interposition of any long period of time or order of events that must transpire before Christ could come again. There are people who tell us that the whole world must be converted before Christ comes back. When will that be? We have not converted a single town in America yet. Jesus did not say that every soul in the world must be converted to Him before He came. He made it plain that the tares and the wheat were to grow up together until the harvest. He made it clear that just as there were plenty of wicked people in the days of Noah when the flood came, so there would be plenty of

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sinning men in the day when He came back. He went so far once as even to put it in the form of a question. "When the Son of Man cometh," He said, "will He find faith on the earth?" And the teaching of the whole New Testament is that evil will last in the world until the day Christ comes to slay it with the glory of His appearing.

All Bible scholars agree now that the apostles actually were watching for Him. Many of them think that the apostles honestly believed that Jesus Christ would come in their lifetime. I do not know whether that is so. I know that the early disciples actually thought that Jesus Christ *might* come in their lifetime. "Be ye patient," said James, "for the coming of the Lord is at hand." "Yet a little while," said the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews, "yet a little while, and He that shall come will come, and will not tarry."

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Now if we are looking in our Christian lives for a most practical and life-molding truth, it is here. Even if religious knowledge is not, as of course it is not, based solely on value-judgments, *i. e.*, "judgments which express not the objective truth of things, but their value to us as subjects of pleasure and pain," value-judgments have their place among truths which we hold to be objectively valid. We may all be Ritschlians to this extent. Surely it is wrong for us to crowd up into the foreground of our Christian life those truths that can wield but little power over life, while we hold in the background those great truths that mold and shape character. And there is hardly any truth taught in the New Testament that is more constantly appealed to, scarcely even the truth of Christ's death upon the cross, scarcely even the truth of Christ's resurrection from the grave—hardly any truth is more con-

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stantly appealed to than this truth of Christ's second coming as influencing and molding conduct.

It is so in the matter of simple, personal holiness. "And now, little children," writes John, "abide in Him; that when He shall appear, we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before Him at His coming." And throughout the Epistles of the Apostle Paul, we find him appealing to the expectation of Christ's coming as the motive to keep life blameless and clean. "Now may our God and Father Himself, and our Lord Jesus direct our way unto you, to the end that He may establish your hearts unblamable in holiness before our God and Father at the coming of our Lord Jesus with all His saints." "And ye are dead, and your lives are hid with Christ in God. When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with Him in glory. Mortify therefore"—

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the "therefore" connected at once with the hope of Christ's coming—"mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, passion, evil desires and covetousness, which is idolatry." We are looking for something that will purge our lives clean. "Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God: therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew Him not. Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when He shall appear, we shall be like Him; for we shall see Him as He is. And he that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as He is pure."

I want to speak this word to the man who would be free from unclean personal sin: The next time the temptation comes, fix your mind on the hope of His coming. No man can

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easily do an unclean and unholy thing expecting at that moment that Jesus Christ might come. Can I cross the threshold of the questionable place? Can I read the questionable book? Can I be found with that questionable story on my lips? Can I be caught on the verge of that sin, if I am expecting that at that very moment Jesus Christ may come? And this is not to suggest any unworthy motive such as men fear, but only to secure to the highest motives conceivable, a reinforcement which will make them effective. He that hath in his life the hope of God and of Christ's return will hate impurity. He will purify himself, even as Christ is pure.

There are some of us who get irritated with ourselves. It is not so hard to be patient with others, but it is very hard to be patient with one's self when the jealous or the prideful thought, the thought that exalts self comes,

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when the atmosphere of self steals in and dims the glory of the face of God. Then to the impatient man there comes the word of James, spoken of a different kind of impatience, the impatience at social injustice, "My brothers, be ye patient, for the coming of the Lord is at hand." When He comes there can be no thoughts of pride, save of pride in Him; nor any thoughts of jealousy, save jealousy for His glory; nor any thoughts of self, save as of self dead, and lost in Christ, living only in His beauty, and in Him.

We need the help of the hope of Christ's coming to make judgment kind. How easy it is for us to tarnish even slightly other men's names! There seems to be an almost irresistible instinct within us that leads us when we are talking about a man to pick out some fault of his. Something has been said commendatory of a man, and we say,

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“Yes, but—yes, but he has this weakness, he has that fault, this defect.” It is too easy for us to be harsh and un-Christian in our judgment of men. Nothing will deliver us from it so well as the expectation of His return. “Wherefore,” writes Paul in the fifth verse of the fourth chapter of First Corinthians, “wherefore, judge nothing until the Lord come, who, when He shall appear, will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and make manifest the counsels of the heart; and then shall every man have his praise of God.” My judgment of you, your judgment of me is nothing. The only judgment that is of avail is the judgment that He shall pass when He comes. Let judgment wait until then. Meanwhile let us love.

The truth of Christ’s coming is set before us as the most powerful motive for winning men. “What will be my joy,” writes Paul in one of his Epistles

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to the Thessalonians, and in one, also, to the Corinthians, "what will be my joy, my glory, my crown of rejoicing at the coming of Christ? Will not ye whom I have won to Him?" Very lonesome and desolate we shall feel in that day if we must greet Him all alone. Very happy and content if we can have some brother by the hand, and when He comes can go to greet Him and say, "Lord, here is my friend." The great glory of our life in the day of Christ's appearing will be the men, whom out of darkness we have won into His marvelous light.

And what more powerful motive to fidelity and daily duty could men find than the expectation of Christ's coming? It is to this that Paul appeals with his dying breath in the last chapter of his last Epistle. "I charge thee, Timothy," he says, "in the sight of God and of Christ Jesus, who shall judge the quick and the dead, and by His

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appearing and His kingdom; preach the word; be instant in season and out of season." This is the old truth that Jesus was enforcing upon His disciples when He held up before them the expectation of His coming and said: "Know this; if the man of the house had known in what watch the thief would come, he would have watched and would not have suffered his house to be broken through. Therefore be ye also ready, for in an hour that ye think not the Son of Man cometh." "Who then is that faithful and wise servant, whom his lord has set over his household to give them food in due season? Blessed is that servant whom his lord when he cometh shall find so doing." We do our work better because we are expecting Him. We can hate dishonest work, shoddiness, more bitterly because He may come to let His own all-trying eye rest on the last piece of work we have done,

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to judge whether or not it be worthy of Him.

Now, what is our attitude to be during the remainder of our lives toward the hope of Christ's coming? Are we going on in perfect indifference toward it? Will you say: "That is just another of those half pernicious doctrines that people tear out of their spiritual significance? I do not believe in any such materialistic truth as that Jesus is bodily coming back again." That is what many people say about His first coming. They will not believe that God was made flesh and dwelt among men. There is a better attitude than that to take toward Christ's coming. I heard of a man who preached a sermon once in which he said, "I hate that doctrine, that Christ will come back again." That is not the attitude that Paul took toward it, when he wrote to Timothy, "I have finished my course, I have

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kept the faith: henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not unto me only, but unto all them also that love His appearing." It is not the attitude that Jesus told us to take toward His coming. He entreated us, if we loved Him, to be longing and watching for His return. "In the evening, or at midnight, or at the cock-crowing, or in the morning," He said, "I will come. What I say unto you, I say unto all; watch. Watch, therefore, lest when the Son of Man cometh, He shall find you sleeping." Have we been watching for Him? Are we watching for Him now? Will you be watching for Him this evening as you lie down to rest? In an hour that we think not He will come. If we love Him and desire Him, can we for a moment think of any other attitude toward Him than

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eager and longing expectation? Can we have any prayer save the last prayer in the Bible, "Even so come, Lord Jesus"?

"It may be in the evening,
When the work of the day is done,
And you have time to sit in the twilight
And watch the sinking sun,
While the long, bright day dies slowly
Over the sea,
And the hour grows quiet and holy
With thoughts of Me;
While you hear the village children
Passing along the street,
Among those thronging footsteps
May come the sound of My feet.
Therefore, I tell you, Watch,
By the light of the evening star,
When the room is growing dusky
As the clouds afar;
Let the door be on the latch
In your home,
For it may be through the gloaming
I will come.

"It may be when the midnight
Is heavy upon the land,
And the black waves lying dumbly

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Along the sand;
When the moonless night draws close,
And the lights are out in the house;
When the fire burns low and red,
And the watch is ticking loudly
Beside the bed.
Though you sleep, tired out, on your couch,
Still your heart must wake and watch
In the dark room,
For it may be that at midnight
I will come.

“It may be at the cock-crow,
When the night is dying slowly
In the sky,
And the sea looks calm and holy,
Waiting for the dawn
Of the golden sun,
Which draweth nigh;
When the mists are on the valleys, shading
The rivers chill,
And My morning-star is fading, fading
Over the hill:
Behold, I say unto you, Watch;
Let the door be on the latch
In your home;
In the chill before the dawning,
Between the night and morning,
I may come.

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**"It may be in the morning,
When the sun is bright and strong,
And the dew is glittering sharply
Over the little lawn;
When the waves are laughing loudly
Along the shore,
And the little birds are singing sweetly
About the door;
With the long day's work before you,
You rise up with the sun,
And the neighbors come in to talk a little
Of all that must be done;
But remember that I may be the next
To come in at the door,
To call you from all your busy work
Forever more.
As you work your heart must watch,
For the door is on the latch
In your room,
And it may be in the morning
I will come."**

**So He passed down my cottage garden,
By the path that leads to the sea,
Till He came to the turn of the little road
Where the birch and laburnum tree
Lean over and arch the way;
There I saw Him a moment stay,
And turn once more to me,**

THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST

As I wept at the cottage door,
And lift up His hands in blessing—
Then I saw His face no more.

And I stood still in the doorway,
Leaning against the wall,
Not heeding the fair white roses,
Though I crushed them and let them fall;
Only looking down the pathway,
And looking towards the sea,
And wondering, and wondering
When He would come back for me,
Till I was aware of an Angel
Who was going swiftly by,
With the gladness of one who goeth
In the light of God most high.

He passed the end of the cottage
Towards the garden gate,—
(I suppose he was come down
At the setting of the sun
To comfort some one in the village
Whose dwelling was desolate),
And he paused before the door
Beside my place,
And the likeness of a smile
Was on his face:—
“Weep not,” he said, “for unto you is given
To watch for the coming of His feet

THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST

Who is the Glory of our blessed heaven.
The work and watching will be very sweet,
Even in an earthly home,
And in such an hour as you think not,
He will come."

So I am watching quietly
Every day.
Whenever the sun shines brightly,
I rise and say,
"Surely it is the shining of His face,"
And look unto the gates of His high place
Beyond the sea,
For I know He is coming shortly
To summon me.
And when a shadow falls across the window
Of my room,
Where I am working my appointed task,
I lift my head to watch the door, and ask
If He is come;
And the Angel answers sweetly,
In my home,
"Only a few more shadows,
And He will come."

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