

23. COMING OF CHRIST SERIES

THE PROMISE OF CHRIST'S COMING

Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for Him shall He appear the second time without sin unto salvation. Hebrews 9:28. He will swallow up death in victory; and the Lord God will wipe away tears from off all faces; and the rebuke of His people shall He take away from off all the earth: for the Lord hath spoken it. And it shall be said in that day, Lo, this is our God; we have waited for Him, and He will save us: this is the Lord; we have waited for Him, we will be glad and rejoice in His salvation. Isaiah 25:8, 9.

The coming of the Lord has been in all ages the hope of His true followers. The Savior's parting promise upon Olivet, that He would come again, lighted up the future for His disciples, filling their hearts with joy and hope that sorrow could not quench nor trials dim. Amid suffering and persecution, "The appearing of the great God and our Savior Jesus Christ" was the "blessed hope." When the Thessalonian Christians were filled with grief as they buried their loved ones, who had hoped to live to witness the coming of the Lord, Paul, their teacher, pointed them to the resurrection to take place at the Savior's advent. Then the dead in Christ should rise, and together with the living be caught up to meet the Lord in the air. "And so," he said, "shall we ever be with the Lord. Wherefore comfort one another with these words." I Thessalonians 4:16-18.

On rocky Patmos the beloved disciple hears the promise, "Surely I come quickly," and his longing response voices the prayer of the church in all her pilgrimage, "Even so, come, Lord Jesus." Revelation 22:20." -The Great Controversy, page 302.

Long have we waited for our Savior's return. But none the less sure is the promise. Soon we shall be in our promised home. There Jesus will lead us beside the living stream, flowing from the throne of God, and will explain to us the dark providences through which on this earth He brought us in order to perfect our characters. There we shall behold with undimmed vision the beauties of Eden restored. Casting at the feet of the Redeemer the crowns that He has placed on our heads, and touching our golden harps, we shall fill all heaven with praise to Him that sits on the throne." - Testimonies, Volume VIII, page 254.

The promise of Christ's Second Coming was ever to be kept fresh in the minds of His disciples. The same Jesus whom they had seen ascending into heaven, would come again, to take to Himself those who here below give themselves to His service. The same voice that had said to them, "Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end," would bid them welcome to His presence in the heavenly kingdom. . . .

Those who have loved Him and waited for Him, He will crown with glory and honor and immortality. The righteous dead will come forth from their graves, and those who are alive will be caught up with them to meet the Lord in the air. They will hear the voice of Jesus, sweeter than any music that ever fell on mortal ear, saying to them, Your warfare is accomplished. "Come, you blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world." Matthew 25:34." - Acts of the Apostles, pages 33, 34.

THE MANNER OF CHRIST'S COMING

His Coming Will Be Personal

Let not your heart be troubled: you believe in God, believe also in Me. In My Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto Myself; that where I am, there you may be also. John 14:1-3.

His Coming Will Be Literal

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. I Thessalonians 4:16.

His Coming Will Be Visible

When He had spoken these things, while they beheld, He was taken up; and a cloud received Him out of their sight. And while they looked steadfastly toward heaven as He went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel; which also said, you men of Galilee, why stand you gazing up into heaven? This

same Jesus, which is taken tip from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as you have seen Him go into heaven. Acts 1:9-11.

Christ had ascended to heaven in the form of humanity. The disciples had beheld the cloud receive Him. The same Jesus who had walked and talked and prayed with them, who had broken bread with them, who had been with them in their boats on the lake, and who had that very day toiled with them up the ascent of Olivet, the same Jesus had now gone to share His Father's throne. And the angels had assured them that the very One whom they had seen go up into heaven, would come again even as He had ascended. He will come "with clouds; and every eye shall see Him." "The Son of man shall come in His glory, and all the holy angels with Him, then shall He sit upon the throne of His glory." Revelation L7; I Thessalonians 4:16; Matthew 25:31." - *The Desire of Ages*, page 832.

This is a thrilling time;
Far-reaching questions, mighty in portent,
Concern the mind of statesman and of sage;
The issues of the ages by consent
Focus their climax on this last-day page.

This is an awful time,
Of blood and war and strife and secret shame;
The truth of God is turned into a lie;
In wrathful tones do men despite His name
As rebels bold His government defy.

This is a needy time;
Brave men are needed, loyal for the right,
To stand for God and truth against sin and wrong,
With courage bold to battle with their might,
Till conflict fierce shall end in victor's song,

This is a weary time;
Sad hearts are loaded down with pain and care,
The toils of earth in never ceasing round
Banish fond hope, the joys of life outwear;
In this old world but little rest is found.

This is a solemn time;
For now the judge of earth and sea and sky,
Upon His heavenly throne in lofty state
Holds solemn court, the sons of men to try;
On its decision hangs their every fate.

This is a cheering time;
The signs of God point to the glorious day
But When He shall come whose right it is to reign;
Light hope lights up the rugged, darkened way
That leads to morn from night, to joy from pain.
F. M. W.

SIGNS IN THE HEAVENS

Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, 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 in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. Matthew 24:29, 30. In those days, after that tribulation, the sun shall be darkened, and