

TWO ADVENTS OF CHRIST

NO. 430

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“And as is appointed unto men once to die but after this the judgment: So 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 9:27, 28.

We must begin by noticing the parallel which the Apostle here draws. The words “as” and “so” suggest a comparison between two Truths of God, the correspondence of which he designed to set forth. The one a fact generally allowed, the other a fact he was anxious to inculcate. Now you will note that he says, “It is appointed unto men *once* to die,” and only once. This is a truism. The rule is universal. The exceptions are inconsiderable. One or two persons may have died twice. As, for instance, Lazarus, and those others who were raised from the dead by Christ. These, we cannot doubt, after living for a little while, returned again to the tomb.

But for the most part, speaking of the race, “It is appointed unto men once to die.” The greatest affairs of life can only be performed once. We are once born *naturally*—are once born *spiritually*. There are not two natural births, neither are there two spiritual births. We live on earth but once. We die but once. We shall be judged but once. We shall receive the final sentence but once, and then we shall once be received into the joy of our Lord forever, or once be driven from His Presence never to return.

Now, a part of the Apostle’s parallel lies here. As men die but once, so Christ has died but once. As the Law required but one death, so Jesus Christ, having offered that one death as the ransom for His people, achieved His task. “In the day that you eat thereof you shall surely die,” was the penalty. “Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures,” was the payment. “By one man sin entered into the world and death by sin.” That is the first *fact*. “But now once in the end of the world has He appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself.” This is the second *fact*.

But you have not got the full weight of the comparison yet. After man’s spirit has been once on earth, has lived its time, and the body has died, the soul is to revisit this earth again, for “after this the judgment.” Every man will have two advents—the advent which he now enjoys or which he now misuses upon earth—and the advent which lies beyond the present course of probation. After he has descended to the tomb, he shall come here again. His bones shall come together, bone to his bone. The flesh shall come upon the skeleton and the spirit shall return, either *from the Heaven* where it rejoices, or *from the Hell* where it howls, to inhabit the body once again, and to stand upon the earth.

We must all come here again—even though the place that now knows us shall know us no more forever. Yet, somewhere upon this earth we shall stand, even though we should be unable to recognize any likeness between that and the place in which we lived, and unable to recognize any likeness between us and what we were. Regardless, here we must return to receive our appointed doom.

Now, so is it with Christ. He has once died and He is to come a second time. A second time is His body to be on earth. After death, the judgment! Only when we speak of Christ, He shall come, not to be judged but to be the Judge. After death comes the reward with us—after death the reward with Him. After our death comes our resurrection. That has passed already upon Christ. As a resurrection shall come to saint and sinner, the final audit and pronouncement of the sentence—so Christ shall come to the final gathering together of His elect and the final overthrow of all His enemies, to the final crowning of His head—when He shall have put all things under His feet and reign forever and ever.

Having thus, I think, brought out the parallel of the text, I will leave it for you to think over. As it is appointed unto men to die once and after this the judgment, so it was appointed unto Christ to die but once. That is achieved. The sequel is now pointed out. To them that look for Him shall He appear the second time without sin unto salvation. We will spend our time tonight, and God grant that we may spend it profitably, by observing, first, *the likeness between the two advents*

of Christ. Secondly, the dissimilarity between them, which is a far more extensive subject. And then we shall make a few remarks concerning our personal interest in both advents.

I. The text asserts very plainly that as we are here twice—once in a life of probation and a second time in the Day of Judgment—so Christ shall be here twice—once in His life of suffering and then again in His hour of triumph,

THE TWO COMINGS OF CHRIST HAVE SOME DEGREE OF LIKENESS. First, they are like each other in the fact that they are both of them Personal comings. Christ came the first time, not as a spirit, for a spirit has not flesh and bones as He had. He was One who could be pressed to a woman's bosom, One who could be borne in a father's arms. He was One who could afterwards walk in His own Person to the temple—One who could bear our sins in His own body on the tree.

We have done once and for all with the foolish ideas of certain of the early heretics, that Christ's appearance upon earth was but a phantom. We know that He was really, personally, and physically here on earth. But it is not quite so clear to some persons that He is to come really, personally and literally, the second time. I know there are some who are laboring to get rid of the fact of a personal reign, but as I take it, the coming and the reign are so connected, that we must have a spiritual coming if we are to have a spiritual reign.

Now we believe and hold that Christ shall come a second time, suddenly, to raise His saints at the first resurrection. This shall be the commencement of the grand judgment and they shall reign with Him afterwards. The rest of the dead live not till after the thousand years are finished. Then shall they rise from their tombs at the sounding of the trumpet and their judgment shall come and they shall receive the deeds which they have done in their bodies.

Now, we believe that the Christ who shall sit on the Throne of His father David, and whose feet shall stand upon Mount Olivet, is as much a personal Christ as the Christ who came to Bethlehem and wept in the manger. We do believe that the very Christ whose body did hang upon the tree shall sit upon the Throne. That the very hands that felt the nails shall grasp the scepter. That the very feet that were fastened to the Cross shall tread upon the necks of His foes. We look for the personal advent, the personal reign, the personal session and court of Christ.

Nor less shall the advents be like each other in the fact that they shall both be according to promise. The promise of the first coming of Christ was that which made glad the early Believers. "Your father Abraham rejoiced to see My day, he saw it and was glad." The epitaph inscribed upon the slab which covers the sepulcher of the early saints has written upon it, "These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off." And today we believe that Christ is to come according to promise.

We think we have abundant evidence in the Words that were uttered by the lips of inspired Prophets and Seers, and more especially from the enraptured pen of John in Patmos. Do they not testify that Christ shall surely come? We now, like Abraham of old, do see His day. Our eyes catch the coming splendor. Our soul is overwhelmed with the approaching glory. Did the Jew look for Messiah, the Prince? So do we. Did he expect Him to reign? So do we. In fact, the very Prince for whom Israel now looks in all her hardness of heart, is He whom we expect.

They doubt Messiah's first advent and they look for Him to come as the fairest among ten thousand, the Prince of the Kings of the earth. Hail, Israel! In this your Gentile sister is agreed. She looks for Him to come in the same form and fashion. And when His coming shall have removed the scales from the blind eyes of Israel's tribes, then the fullness of the Gentiles shall, with Abraham's seed, praise and magnify the Lamb once slain, who comes the second time as the Lion of the tribe of Judah. In both cases we think the advent of Christ fully promised.

But we must remark in the next place, that the second advent of Christ will be like the first in its being unexpected by the mass of people. When He came before, there were only a few looking for Him. Simeon and Anna and some humble souls of the sort knew that He was about to come. The others knew that the Patriarchs and Prophets of their nation had foretold His birth. But the vanity of their thoughts, and the conduct of their lives were at such entire variance with the creed to which they were trained, they cared nothing for Him.

The Magi might come from the distant East, and the shepherds from the adjacent plains—but how little sensation did they make in the streets of busy Jerusalem, in the halls of kings, or in the homes of business? The kingdom of God came not with observation. In such an hour as they thought not, the Son of Man came. And now, though we have the Words of Scripture to assure us that He will come quickly and that His reward is with Him and His work before Him—yet how few expect Him!

The coming of some foreign Prince, the approach of some great event, is looked for and anticipated from the hour that the purpose is promulgated among the people. But Your coming, Jesus, Your glorious advent—where are they that strain their eyes to catch the first beams of the Sun rising? There are a few of Your followers who wait for Your appearing. We meet with a few men who walk as those who know that time is short and that the Master may come at cockcrow-ing, or at midnight, or at the day watch.

We know a few beloved disciples who, with longing hearts, beguile the weary hours, while they prepare songs to greet You, O Immanuel!—

*“Strangers on earth, we wait for You;
O leave the Father’s Throne,
Come with a shout of victory,
Lord, And claim us as Your own.
No resting place we seek on earth,
No loveliness we see,
Our eye is on the royal Throne,
Prepared for us and You.”*

Lord, increase the number of those who look for You, and desire You, and pray and wait for You, and watch through the dreary hours of the night for the morning which Your coming shall usher in!

Yet, mark, when He shall come, there will be this to say about it, that *He will come to bless those who do wait for Him just as He did at the first.* Blessed were the eyes that saw Him! Blessed were the hearts that loved Him! Blessed were the ears that heard Him! Blessed were the lips that kissed Him! Blessed were the hands that broke the tributary alabaster box upon His glorious head—and blessed shall they be who are counted worthy of the resurrection and of the kingdom which He has prepared!

Blessed are they who, having been born of the Spirit, can see the kingdom of God. But doubly blessed are they who, having been born of water as well as of the Spirit, shall *enter into* the kingdom of God! For unto *all* this is *not* given. There are some who will not see the kingdom and others who cannot enter because they will not obey the ordinances which makes them Christ’s disciples. Thrice blessed shall they be who, with loins girt about, being obedient servants, and having done His will, shall hear Him say, “Come you blessed, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from before the foundation of the world.” He comes to bless His people.

But then there is this further likeness and with the mention of it, I close this first point—He comes, not only to bless His people but *to be a stone of stumbling and a rock of offense to them that believe not upon Him.* When He came the first time, He was like a refiner’s fire and like fuller’s soap. As the refiner’s fire burns up the dross, so did He consume the Pharisees and Sadducees—and as the fuller’s soap cleanses away the filth, so did He unto that generation when He condemned it, even as Jonah the Prophet did unto the men of Nineveh and thereby condemned the men of Jerusalem because they repented not.

Thus too, when He shall come the second time, while He shall bless His people, His fan will be in His hand and He will thoroughly purge His floor and they who know Him not, and love Him not, shall be driven away like the chaff into unquenchable fire. Long not for Christ’s coming if you love Him not, for the Day of the Lord will be unto you darkness, and not light. Ask not for the world’s end—say not, “Come quickly,” for His coming will be your destruction—His advent will be the coming of your eternal horror. God grant us Divine Grace to love the Savior and put our trust in Him. Then, but not till then, we may say, “Come quickly, come quickly, Lord Jesus!”

II. Now we shall turn to the second part of our subject, THE UNLIKENESS BETWEEN THE TWO ADVENTS.

In the prophecy of *His coming* the first and the second time there was disparity as well as correspondence. It is true in both cases He will come attended by angels and the song shall be, “Glory to God in the highest, on earth peace, goodwill towards men.” It is true in both cases, shepherds who keep watch over their flocks, even by night, shall be among the first to hail Him with their sleepless eyes—blessed shepherds who watch Christ’s folds, and therefore shall see the Great Shepherd when He comes.

Still, how different, I say, will be His coming. At first He came as an Infant of a span long. Now He shall come—

“In rainbow wreath and clouds of storm,”

the Glorious One. Then He entered into a manger, now He shall ascend His Throne. Then He sat upon a woman’s knees and did hang upon a woman’s breast. Now earth shall be at His feet and the whole universe shall hang upon His everlasting shoulders. Then He appeared the Infant, now the Infinite. Then He was born to trouble as the sparks fly upward, now He comes to glory as the lightning from one end of Heaven to the other.

A stable received Him then. Now the high arches of earth and Heaven shall be too little for Him. Horned oxen were then His companions, but now the chariots of God which are twenty thousand, even thousands of angels, shall be at His right hand. Then in poverty His parents were too glad to receive the offerings of gold and frankincense and myrrh. But now in splendor, King of kings, and Lord of lords, all nations shall bow before Him—and kings and princes shall pay homage at His feet.

Still He shall need nothing at their hands, for He will be able to say, “If I were hungry I would not tell you, for the cattle are Mine upon a thousand hills.” “You have put all things under His feet. All sheep and oxen, yes, and the beasts of the field.” “The earth is the Lord’s and the fullness thereof.”

Nor will there merely be a difference in His coming. There will be a most distinct and apparent difference *in His Person*. He will be the same, so that we shall be able to recognize Him as the Man of Nazareth, but O, how changed! Where now the carpenter’s smock? Royalty has now assumed its purple. Where now the toil-worn feet that needed to be washed after their long journeys of mercy? They are sandaled with light, they “are like unto fine brass as if they burned in a furnace.” Where now the cry, “Foxes have holes and the birds of the air have nests but I, the Son of Man, have not where to lay My head”?

Heaven is His Throne. Earth is His footstool. Methinks in the night visions I behold the day dawning. And to the Son of Man there is given “dominion and glory and a kingdom, that all people, nations and languages, should serve Him.” Ah, who would think to recognize in the weary Man and full of woes, the King eternal, immortal, invisible? Who would think that the humble Man, despised and rejected, was the seed corn out of which there should grow that full corn in the ear, Christ All-Glorious, before whom the angels veil their faces and cry, “Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of Sabaoth”?

He is the same but yet how changed! You that despised Him, will you despise Him now? Imagine the Judgment Day has come and let this vast audience represent the gathering of the last dreadful morning. Now you who despised His Cross, come forward and insult His Throne! Now you who said He was a mere man, come near and resist Him, while He proves Himself to be your Creator! Now, you who said, “We will not have this *man* to reign over us,” say it now if you dare—repeat now, if you dare, your bold presumptuous defiance!

What? Are you silent? Do you turn your backs and flee? Verily, verily, so was it said of you of old. They that hate Him shall flee before Him. His enemies shall lick the dust. They shall cry to the rocks to cover them and to the hills to hide them from His face. How changed, I say, will He be in the appearance of His Person.

But the difference will be more apparent *in the treatment which He will then receive*. Alas, my Lord, Your reception on earth the first time was not such as would tempt You here again. “All they that see Me laugh Me to scorn. They thrust out the lip. They say, He trusted in God that He would deliver Him, let Him deliver Him if He delights in Him. I am become a reproach, the song of the drunkard, a byword and a proverb.” “When we shall see Him, there is no beauty in Him that we should desire Him.”

This was the world’s opinion of God’s Anointed. So they did salute Jehovah’s Christ when He came the first time. Blind World, open your eyes while the thunderclaps of judgment make you start up in terror and amazement and look about you. This is the Man in whom you could see no beauty—dare you say the same of Him now? His eyes are like flames of fire and out of His mouth goes a two-edged sword. His head and His hair are white like wool, as white as snow, and His feet like much fine gold. How glorious now! How different, now, the world’s opinion of Him!

Bad men weep and wail because of Him. Good men cry, “All hail! All hail! All hail!” They clap their hands and bow their heads and leap for joy. Around Him an innumerable company of angels wait—cherubim and seraphim with glowing wheels attend at His feet and ever unto Him they continually, continually, continually cry—Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of Hosts.” Let us suppose again that the Judgment Day has come and let us challenge the world to treat the Savior as it did before.

Now, then, Crowds, come and drag Him down, to hurl Him from the hill, headlong! Step forward, you Pharisees, and tempt Him and try to entangle Him in His words. Herodians, have you no penny now, that you may ask Him a difficult question to entrap Him? What? Sadducees, have you no riddles left? Aha! Aha! Laugh at the Scribes and at the wise men—see how the wise Man of Nazareth has confounded them all! See how the Sufferer has put to nothing the persecutors! Come Judas, arch-traitor, sell Him for thirty pieces of silver! Come and give Him another kiss and play the traitor over again!

Pilate, come forward and wash your hands in innocence and say, "I am clear of the blood of this just Person!" See to it, you fathers of the Sanhedrin, wake from your long slumbers, and say again, if you dare, "This man blasphemes." Smite Him on the cheek you soldiers, buffet Him again you praetorians. Set Him once more in the chair and spit in His face. Weave your crown of thorns and put it on His head and put the reed into His right hand. What? Have you not an old cloak to cast about His shoulders again? What? Have you no songs, no ribald jests, and is there not a man among you that dares, now, to pluck his hair?

No, see them, how they flee! Their loins are loosed. The shields of the mighty have been cast to the winds. Their courage has failed them. The brave Romans have turned cowards and the haughty bulls of Bashan have hastened away from their pastures. And now, you Jews, cry, "Away with Him," now let His blood be on you and on your children! Now come forward, you ribald crew and mock Him as you did upon the Cross. Point to His wounds, jeer at His nakedness—mock His thirst, revile His prayer—stand and thrust out your tongues and insult His agonies if you dare. You did it once! It is the same Person! Do it again!

But, no. They throw themselves upon their faces and there goes up from the assembled mass a wail such as earth never heard before—not even in the day when Mizraim's children felt the angel's sword and, weeping worse than it was ever known in Bochim. Hotter tears than Rachel shed when she would not be comforted for her children. Weep on! It is too late for your sorrow now. Oh, if there had been the tear of penitence before, there had not been the weeping of remorse, now. Oh, if there had been the glancing of the eye of faith, there had not been the blasting and the scorching of your eyes with horrors that shall utterly consume you. Christ comes, I say, to be treated very differently from the treatment He received before.

The difference appears once more in this. He *will come again for a very different purpose*. He came the first time with, "I delight to do Your will O God." He comes a second time to claim the reward and to divide the spoil with the strong. He came the first time with a sin-offering. That offering having been once made, there is no more sacrifice for sin. He comes the second time to administer righteousness. He was righteous at His first coming, but it was the righteousness of allegiance. He shall be righteous at His second coming with the righteousness of supremacy. He *came* to endure the penalty, He *comes* to procure the reward. He *came* to serve, He *comes* to rule.

He came to open wide the door of Divine Grace, He comes to shut the door. He comes not to redeem but to *judge*. Not to save but to pronounce the sentence. Not to weep while He invites, but to smile while He rewards. Not to tremble in heart while He proclaims Grace but to make others tremble while He proclaims their doom. Oh Jesus! How great the difference between Your first and Your second Advent!

III. I must now spend the few minutes that remain in ASKING A FEW QUESTIONS.

What has this to do with us? It has something to do with everyone of us, from the oldest bald-head here, down to that rosy child who is listening with eyes of wonder to the thought that Christ shall come and every eye shall see Him. There are many spectacles which only a few among the children of men can see but every eye shall see *Him*. Many of us may be gone from this earth before the next great display shall be seen in London, but every eye shall see Him. There may be some grand sights which you feel no interest in. You would not see them if you might, but you shall see Him.

You would not go to a place of worship to hear Him but you shall see Him. Perhaps you went up to the House of God sometimes, and when there, vowed you would never go again. Ah, but you will be there then, without a question as to your choice. And you will have to remain till the close, too, till He pronounces either the benediction or the malediction upon your heads. For every eye shall see Him. There is not one of us that will be absent on the day of Christ's appearing. We have all, then, an interest in it. Alas, it is a sorrowful thought that many will see Him to weep and to wail!

Will you be among that number? No, do not look around to your neighbor—will *you* be among that number? Alas for you! You will, if you never weep for sin on earth. If you do not weep for sin on earth you shall weep for it there. And,

mark, if you do not fly to Christ and trust in Him *now*, you shall be obliged to fly *from* Him and be accursed of Him *then*. “If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be Anathema Maranatha”—accursed with a curse!

Paul said that. In the name of the Church, by its most loving and tender Apostle, the soul is cursed that loves not Christ! Heaven on that day shall solemnly ratify the curse with an “Amen.” And the Day of Judgment brings its thunders to roll in dreadful chorus the sound, “Amen. Let him be accursed if he loves not Christ.” But there will be some there who, when Christ shall come, shall greatly rejoice to see Him. Will you be among *that* number? Will there be a crown for you? Will you share in that magnificent triumph? Will you make one of that royal court which shall delight to “see the King in His beauty” in “the land that is very far off”?

Sister, will you be among the daughters of Jerusalem who shall go forth to meet King Solomon with the crown his mother crowned Him in the day of His espousal? Brother, will you be among those who shall go forth to meet the King when He comes with, “Hosanna, blessed is He that comes in the name of the Lord”? “I hope so,” says one. I hope so, too, but are you sure? “Well, I hope so.” Do not be content with having a *hope* unless you know it is a good hope through Divine Grace.

What do you say tonight—have you been born again? Have you passed from death to life? Are you a new creature in Christ Jesus? Has the Spirit of God had dealings with you? Have you been led to see the fallacy of all human trust? Have you been led to see that no good works of yours can ever fit you to reign with Christ? Have you been led to discard your righteousness as filthy rags? Soul, can you say tonight—

*“My faith does lay her hand
On that dear head of Yours.
While like a penitent I stand,
And there confess my sin”?*

Humbly, feebly, but still earnestly, can you say, “Christ is my All. He is all I desire on earth. He is all I need for Heaven”? If so, long for His appearing, for you shall see Him, and shall be glorified in Him. But beware if you cannot say that!

We are getting near to the end of the year. This is the last time I shall have the pleasure of addressing you this year. Oh that God may bring in more in the last week of the year than in all the weeks that have gone! It is possible. Nothing is too hard for God. It will certainly be so if God shall stir up your hearts, Brothers and Sisters, to pray for it. Are there not young men here who are not yet the followers of the Lamb? Oh, that tonight, even tonight, the Spirit of God may say in your heart, “Turn you! Turn you! Why will you die?” And oh, may you be made so uneasy that tonight you will not be able to give sleep to your eyes nor slumber to your eyelids till you have put your trust in Christ and He is yours!

Tomorrow probably you will hear the guns betokening the time when the ashes of the Prince are put into their resting place. May every gun be a sermon to you, and as you hear them booming, let this be its message—

*“Come to judgment,
Come to judgment, come away.”*

And may you be able to answer as you hear it,

*“Yes, blessed be God, I am
Not afraid to come to judgment, for
Bold shall I stand in that great day!
For who anything to my charge shall lay?
While, through Your blood, absolved I am,
From sin’s tremendous curse and shame?”*

Remember, salvation is by Christ. Not of works, nor of the will of man, nor of blood, nor birth. And this is the message which Christ bids us deliver, “Whosoever calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved.” Oh, may you be led to call on His name by prayer and humble faith and you shall be saved. “Whosoever believes on Him is not condemned.” Oh, may you believe on Him tonight if you never have done so before. Touch the hem of His garment, you with the bloody issue. Say, “Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!”

You with the blind eye, say, “Lord save me, or I perish!” You who are ready to sink, cry out to Jesus! And the ready ears of Jesus and the ready hands of the Savior shall now hear and bless if the heart is ready, and if the soul is asking mercy. May God grant you the richest blessings of His Grace for Christ Jesus’ sake. Amen.

Perhaps it would be improper in the pulpit to wish you “the compliments of the season,” but I do wish you the blessing of God at all seasons, in season and out of season, and that is my blessing upon you tonight—that you may have the blessing of God living and His blessing dying—His blessing in His advent and His blessing at the Judgment. The Lord bless you more and more! May He give you a blessed Christmas and the happiest of New Years, and to Him shall be all the praise and the honor. Amen.

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