

The Approaching Advent of Christ

by
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CHAPTER XII

MESSIAH'S DAY

The examination of the terms *End*, *Appearing*, *Revelation*, and *Parousia* established the fact that one and all are undoubtedly used of the Day that brings the fulfillment of the Church's hope; also that the candid interpretation of the passages where they occur presupposes that the Church will be on earth until the End of the Age, as our Lord had taught in the Parable of the Tares and the Great Missionary Commission. One set of terms remains to be examined, namely, those bearing on the Day that closes the present world-period and ushers in the Age to Come. One of these terms, "the Last Day," was examined in our study of the resurrection in the Gospels, but there are several others that refer to the same day, namely, "the Day," "in that Day," "Jesus Messiah's Day," "Messiah's Day," "the Day of the Lord Jesus," "the Day of the Lord Jesus Messiah,"¹ and "the Day of the Lord." To avoid wearisomeness, I shall arrange the texts into groups and comment on each with an occasional reference to an individual text. And we shall confine ourselves to the Epistles of Paul, for they are common ground; pre-trib leaders applied all the above expressions to the Glorious Appearing of Christ.

Well then, do we ever find the Day of the Lord inseparably linked with the Church's hope or some vital aspect of it? If the secret pre-tribulation Rapture is true, we must never find Christians in the New Testament looking for the Day of the Lord as if it were the time for the fulfillment of their hope or for closing their career on earth.

(I) THE DAY

(1) 1 Thessalonians 5:4.

But ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that *the day* should overtake you as a thief. (Darby's

1 I follow here the example of Bishop Lightfoot in substituting "Messiah" for "Christ" in these texts. The universal use of the latter as a proper name for our Lord has obscured the fact that almost always in the N.T. "Messiah" or "the Christ" would give the sense and the "atmosphere" better. What a lot of fresh meaning, for instance, Lightfoot imparts to a familiar text when he renders it, "we preach a Messiah crucified." (Cited in the *Study Bible*: 1 Corinthians; where the Bishop is also quoted as saying that "it is not so much a name as an office that is referred to.") So also is it in reference to the "Day of Christ," etc. In his work, *The Lord From Heaven*, Anderson says: "I would take sides with those who refuse to believe that 'Christ' is ever used merely as a proper name. With the Jew it was a sacred title of great solemnity; and it is hard to believe that a Hebrew Christian could have come to regard it in any better light" (p. 105). The texts are otherwise given as in the R.V., except 1 Cor. 5:5, where the latest edition of the Greek Text (Nestlé's 14th Edition, Stuttgart, 1930) omits the word "Jesus"; so also the American "1911 Bible," Westcott and Hort, Goodspeed, D. Smith, Rutherford, *CGT*, and *ICC*.

version.)

The natural meaning of this passage is that "the day" will overtake both Christians and the ungodly. Upon these [the ungodly] it will come with the unexpectedness of a thief; not so, however, with those [who are saved]. Christians are looking for the Lord, and His Coming will find them expecting Him. As Frame says: "Although the day comes suddenly for both believers and unbelievers alike, it is only the latter (v. 3), and not the former (vv. 4-5a) who are taken by surprise" (p. 180).

And Stier says: "Christ comes to His people as *their Lord*; to the unfaithful and secure, as a thief in the night."

In his lucid work in *EGT*, Moffatt says:

While the Day comes suddenly to Christians and unbelievers alike, only the latter are surprised by it. Christians are on the alert, open-eyed; they do not know when it is to come, but they are alive to any signs of its coming. Thus there is no incompatibility between this emphasis on the instantaneous character of the advent and the emphasis, in 2 Ep. ii. 3 ff., on the preliminary conditions.

There is only one Coming, but it has two different effects and characters towards those who watch and [to] those who slumber. This accounts for the Lord's warning to the Overseer at Sardis: "If, therefore, thou shalt not watch, I will come as a thief, and thou shalt not know what hour I will come upon thee" (Rev. 3:3, R.V.). It depended on the Overseer's attitude whether Christ's Coming would have the character of blessing or judgment.

(2) 1 Corinthians 3:13.

Each man's work shall be made manifest: for *the day* shall declare it because it is revealed in fire; and the fire itself shall prove each man's work of what sort it is.

Darby points out in his *New Translation* that it is the *Day* that is revealed in fire. Clearly it refers to the same event as 2 Thessalonians 1:8, where the Lord is "revealed in fire" taking vengeance on the unrighteous, and bringing rest to the saints.

When are the saints tested and rewarded? According to Paul in our passage, at the Day of the Lord; elsewhere at His Appearing and Reign (2 Tim. 4:1,8), at the Parousia (1 Thess. 2:19, 3:13), and at His Coming to judge and reign (1 Cor. 4:5,8). According to John, [it is] at the Last Trumpet (Rev. 11:18), at the beginning of the kingly rule of Christ (Rev. 20:4-6), and at the Day of Judgment (1 John 4:17). According to our Lord, [is it] "at the resurrection of the just" (Luke 14:14), at the Last Day (John 6:39-54), at His Coming as Son of Man (Matt. 16:27), and at His Coming "for the Church" (Rev. 22:12). This last passage is illuminating: "Behold, I come quickly; *and my reward is with me*, to render to each man according as his work is."

The resurrection, judging, and rewarding of Christians take place at the Day of the Lord. What therefore God hath joined together let not man put asunder in the interest of a theory.

(3) Romans 13:11-12.

Knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep; for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed. The night is far spent, *the day* is at hand; let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armor of light.

On this expression Moffatt remarks in *EGT* on Thessalonians: "The present age is utter night, as contemporary rabbis taught; the age to come is all day. Meantime faith is to hold fast through this night." William Kelly says: "The Apostle elsewhere insists that 'the day *is* at hand' (Rom. 13). What day? The day of the Lord of course" (*Second Coming*, p. 174).

And on our passage Moule remarks beautifully in *The Expositor's Bible*:

The night with its murky silence, its "poring dark," the night of trial, or temptation, of the absence of our Christ, is far spent, but the day has drawn near; it has been a long night, *but* that means a near dawn; the everlasting sunrise of the longed-for *Parousia*, with its glory, gladness and unveiling (p. 365).

It is quite impossible to believe that Paul would have made these references to alertness, testing, and hope in relation to *the Day* if he believed that Christians would be raptured away from the world a generation before the Day appears.

(II) IN THAT DAY

We now come to another eschatological expression that is used in Paul's Epistles. I refer to the phrase "in that day." It is used frequently in the O.T., and when it is not used in a local, demonstrative sense, it has but one meaning--the Day of the Lord. It was the day when the outcasts of Israel would be gathered, Israel converted, the sleeping saints raised, Jehovah manifested in His glory, and the Kingdom established. We find it in the Gospels in the same sense. "Many will say unto me *in that Day*, Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy by thy name?"²--again, [it is] the day of the Kingdom and the day of Judgment, as the context shows.

Can we find this expression associated with the hope and reward of Christians?

(1) 2 Thessalonians 1:10.

When he shall come to be glorified in his saints, and to be marveled at in all them that believed (because our testimony unto you was believed) *in that day*.

(2) 2 Timothy 1:12.

I am persuaded that he is able to guard that which I have committed unto him *against that day*.

2 Matt. 7:22 (R.V.); cf. Luke 17:31. "A technical eschatological expression derived from the O.T. prophetic literature; cf., e.g., Mal. 3:17-18; it is of frequent occurrence in apocalyptic literature, e.g., in the Book of Enoch (cf. 14:3, 'On that day mine Elect One will sit on the throne of glory and make choice among their deeds'). Cf. Matt. 24:36." Canon Box: *The Cent. B.*, Matthew, new edition.) Moffatt translates the three occurrences in 2 Tim. by "the great Day."

(3) 2 Timothy 1:18.

The Lord grant unto him to find mercy of the Lord *in that day*.

(4) 2 Timothy 4:8.

Henceforth there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give to me *at that day*: and not only to me, but also to all them that have loved his appearing.

There cannot be any doubt about the meaning of "in that Day" in the above-mentioned passages. It is the day of revelation, when persecutors are judged [and] Christians gain relief from persecution, and marvel at the Lord when they see Him as He is. It is the day of rewards and resurrection, the day of the Glorious Appearing, which the saints love because it is their blessed hope (Tit. 2:13).

In *Christ's Coming Again* Kelly admits that the passages in 2 Timothy refer to the Day of the Lord but contends that it is the rewarding that is in view, not the Rapture (pp. 59-61, 85). But he cannot retreat by that path; four barriers and more bar the way--Luke 14:14, Revelation 22:12, 11:18, and 1 Corinthians 4:5,8. Escape there is none.

(III) MESSIAH'S DAY³

(1) Philippians 1:6.

Being confident of this very thing, that he which began a good work in you will perfect it until *Jesus Messiah's day*.

(2) Philippians 1:10.

That ye may be sincere and void of offence unto *Messiah's day*.

(3) Philippians 2:16.

Holding forth the word of life; that I may have whereof to glory in *Messiah's day*, that I did not run in vain neither labor in vain.

All the pre-trib leaders recognized aright the true significance of Messiah's Day. It is the day when Messiah comes forth in glory to set up His Kingdom in the Future Age.⁴ Our Lord showed us clearly what He understood by the expression. He said to the disciples:

3 Cf. Darby's translation of these passages.

4 "But there was still another reason why the title 'Son of Man' was specially appropriate to Jesus. The name Messiah denoted the Lord of the Messianic age in His capacity as Ruler; in reality it was applicable to the person so predestinated only when His enthronement had taken place, not before it" (Dalman, *The Words of Jesus*, p. 265). Kelly defines "the day of Christ" as the day "when they that suffer shall reign with Him" (*Revelation*, p. 236).

The days will come, when ye shall desire to see one of the days of the Son of Man, and ye shall not see it. And they shall say unto you, Lo, there! Lo, here! go not away, nor follow after them: for as lightning, when it lighteneth out of the one part under the heaven, shineth into the other part under heaven; so shall the Son of Man be *in his day*. . . . After the same manner shall it be *in the day* that the Son of Man is revealed (Luke 17:22-30).

On the expression "days of the Son of Man," Zahn has the following excellent comment:

Among the Jews this was the most usual name for the time of the Messianic Kingdom. To live to see the dawn of this time had long been the yearning desire of the Godfearing (Luke 2:25, 28; 10:24; 11:2; Acts 26:6 ff.) and, after He is separated from them (Luke 9:27; 21:28), should again become the earnest desire of the disciples of Jesus. . . . "The Day" of the Son of Man (v. 24) is the day of His unveiling, of His stepping forth from concealment (v. 30); it is, so to speak, the Day of His accession to the throne, therefore the first of the unending days of the Messiah (cf. Luke 1:33).⁵

Darby, Kelly, Trotter, C.H.M., and a thousand others saw the truth of these things. What is astonishing is that they failed to see how intimately the Day of Messiah is bound up with "the blessed hope" of the Church. The first passage in Philippians clearly presupposes that Messiah's Day terminates the service of the saints on earth. Progressive sanctification goes on in them until the Day when Messiah appears and they shall be like Him, for they shall see Him as He is (1 John 3:2). In the second the Apostle prays for the same grace in believers as he desires for them elsewhere at the *Parousia*, as 1 Thessalonians 3:13 and 5:23 prove. In the third the Day is clearly the same as the Parousia in 1 Thessalonians 2:19-20, where the Apostle is also speaking of his reward. That being so, Messiah's Day is the day of the saints' resurrection (Luke 14:14). An interval of several years or decades between the Parousia (with the first resurrection) and Messiah's Day is without foundation. I observe that Kelly and F. S. Grant in their expositions of Philippians leave the expression "Day of Christ" unexplained.

(IV) THE DAY OF THE LORD JESUS

(1) 1 Corinthians 1:7-8.

So that ye come behind in no gift; waiting for the revelation of our Lord Jesus Messiah; who shall also confirm you unto the end, that ye be unreprouable in *the day of our Lord Jesus Messiah*.

This text was examined in chapters 8 and 10. The collation [bringing together] of *Revelation, End, and Day of Messiah, our Lord*, makes it certain that the End of the present world-epoch is in view. Where, then, is there room for a previous rapture of the Church? 1 Thessalonians 5:23 links them all with the Parousia.

(2) 2 Corinthians 1:14.

We are your glorying, even as ye also are ours in *the day of our Lord Jesus*.

5 *Zahn-Kommentar, in loco*; the conclusion of the quotation is from the note on p. 601.

This connects Revelation 11:18 and Luke 14:14 with the Parousia and resurrection in 1 Thessalonians 2:19, to the ruin of the whole scheme that interposes an interval of several years between the Coming in 1 Thessalonians 2:19, 4:15, and the rewarding of the saints at the Day of the Lord.

(V) THE DAY OF THE LORD

Here we have the well-known O.T. formula for the Day that closes the present Age and ushers in the Messianic Kingdom. It is a day of judgment upon the ungodly but of blessing upon the righteous. Does Paul ever link this Day with the hope and final salvation of the Church? He does.

(1) 1 Corinthians 5:4-5.

In the name of our Lord Jesus, to deliver such a one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the *day of the Lord*.

Zahn in *INT* (i., 278) explain thus:

The Apostle in Ephesus proposes that the Church in Corinth join with him in the name of Jesus and in the confidence that Jesus' miraculous power will be vouchsafed to them (cf. Matt. 18:19 ff.), to constitute a court which shall deliver the offender over to Satan in bodily death, in order that his spirit may be saved in the day of judgment. It is not to be an act of excommunication by the Church, but a judgment of God, a miracle in answer to prayer, in which Paul and the Church are to unite, and for which a definite day and hour are to be arranged.

The underlying presupposition is that when the saints are raised at the Last Day they give account to God. 1 Corinthians 3:13-15, 4:5-6, Romans 14:10 (R.V.), and other places give the scene. And the passage under consideration refers the testing and judgment to the Day of the Lord. Moreover, the Church, not the Remnant, is in view.

(2) 1 Thessalonians 5:2.⁶

For yourselves know perfectly that the *day of the Lord* so cometh as a thief in the night.

Alford interprets thus:

You and all we Christians have no reason to fear, and no excuse for being surprised by, the DAY of the Lord: for we are sons of light and day (Hebraisms signifying that we *belong to*, having our origin from, the light and the day).

(3) 2 Thessalonians 2:1-3.

Now we beseech you, brethren, touching the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and our gathering

6 In their work on Thessalonians, Messrs. Hogg and Vine say that at chapter 5:1, "the apostle proceeds to describe the effect of that revelation *upon the world*"; what is exact is that at 1 Thess. 4:14-18 the dead (in Christ) are in view; in 5:1-6 the living.

together unto Him; to the end that ye be not quickly shaken from your mind, nor yet be troubled, either by spirit, or by word, or by epistle as from us, as that *the day of the Lord* is now present; let no man beguile you in any wise, for it will not be, except the falling away come first, and the man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition. (English R.V.)

Almost all the scientific commentaries are agreed that this passage, [and] indeed the whole of the Second Epistle to the Thessalonians, was written to correct the error current among the Thessalonians that the Day of the Lord *had already come*.⁷ By means of an Epistle attributed to Paul, or by a pretended revelation of the Spirit, teachers were asserting erroneously that the Day had come. The Apostle addresses [consigns] himself to overthrow this delusion; and he does so by showing that before the Day of the Lord may arrive, certain definite events must precede it--in particular the Apostasy and the revelation of the Man of Sin.

What concerns us chiefly, however, is the theorists' explanation of this passage.⁸ They assert that the Coming of the Lord is to take place before the revelation of Antichrist and several years before the Day of the Lord. The passage, on the contrary, is a thorough denial not only of the particular delusion that

7 The translation "is just at hand" is to be rejected, for the same word is rendered "present" in every other place in the N.T. Moffatt translates "is already here"; Weymouth has "is now here"; Goodspeed has "has already come." Zahn says: "The rendering of *enesteken*, 'is immediately at hand,' or 'is beginning,' should be abandoned, because unsupported by grammar and by usage. As is well known, the present is called by the grammarians *ho enestōs chronos*, and in business transactions *hē enestōsa hēmera*, was the regular use of 'this day'" (*INT*, i., p. 235).

8 See *Notes on 2 Thess. 2:1-8*, by A. C. Gaebelien (N.Y., 1901), and Kelly *Christ's Coming Again*--a volume that defends to the last ditch "the secret Rapture" and the other novelties of the School. It is characterized by much sophistry and special pleading, and, at times, by grossly offensive vigor. A saint in the American Church, the late Dr. W. J. Erdman, wrote a tract called *The Time of the End*, in which, with courtesy, even urbanity, he examined Darby's theories. It was easy to show that the marriage in Matt. 25 and Rev. 19 is located at the Day of the Lord, for that is where Anderson, Marsh and Bullinger, following the Scripture, located it. Here is Kelly's outburst: "No, my brother, prejudice and passion have misled you. The marriage *is* in heaven and *before* that day. Dare you deny it in flat contradiction of God's word? Tremble for yourself, and beware of such termerity." Yet this is mild compared with the handling of Newton, Tregelles, and the "Apostolic Fathers." The *odium theologicum* is without parallel in serious theological literature of recent decades. Kelly has a real grievance against the literature of the second century; according to him and other theorists the whole Church up to A.D. 96, when John wrote the Apocalypse, believed in a secret, pre-tribulation Rapture; yet within a decade or two it has gone: *spurios verschwinden*: has vanished without leaving a single trace behind. Picture the miracle involved in believing that, a decade or two after Darby's death in 1882, the whole Brethren movement, in all countries, is found to have given up the Secret Rapture and is looking only for the Glorious Appearing: *and not a vestige of protest or controversy or any such thing!* This is the miracle that Brethren want us to swallow about the abandonment of the Apostolic hope by the children and grandchildren of the Apostles. There is an easier explanation: Our Lord in Matt. 24, Paul in Titus 2:13 (and everywhere else), John in Rev. 1:7, and Peter in his Epistles, made the Glorious Appearing the hope of Christians; the secret, pre-tribulation Rapture is a Gentile conceit of the nineteenth century. And no amount of vituperation against the Apostolic Fathers, Tregelles, and Newton can make it anything else.

afflicted the Thessalonians but also of the one espoused by modern theorists.

The new interpretation is erroneous for the following reasons:⁹

(1) The Epistles to the Thessalonians nowhere teach that the *Coming* will take place before the Day of the Lord. The passage in 1 Thessalonians 4:13-17 locates the Coming at the resurrection, and the resurrection in Scripture is *everywhere* located at the Day of the Lord. Nowhere is this more clearly asserted than in 1 Corinthians 15:54 and Isaiah 25:8. The resurrection of the saints synchronizes with Israel's deliverance and conversion.

(2) In 2 Thessalonians 4:14-18, the Parousia is represented as a triumphant arrival of our Lord as King, assembling His hosts for the conflict with the powers of this world and the rescue of the Elect. This is at the Day of the Lord.

(3) In 1 Thessalonians 5:1-6, where Paul deals with the Advent in its relation to the living, he clearly presupposes that the Day approaches for all the living.

(4) In 2 Thessalonians 1 Paul had taught in unmistakable terms that it is *at the Revelation* of the Lord in great power that suffering saints will be recompensed with rest and persecutors with tribulation. They were suffering; therefore the *Day* had not come, for it brings relief.

(5) The theorists' interpretation is erroneous because this very chapter shows that Antichrist is to be slain by Christ at His Coming (*Parousia*, verse 8), whereas they assert that the Parousia precedes even the rise of Antichrist. And the presence of the word *Appearing* only makes matters worse for the theorists. Professor Frame says: "The words '*epiphaneia*' and '*parousia*' are ultimately synonymous: the point is that the manifest presence itself is sufficient to destroy the 'Anomos,'"--lawless one. The truth of this was clearly demonstrated by the extracts from Deissmann in our last chapter. Not only that, we saw in our chapter on the Glorious Appearing that again and again the Appearing is represented as the realization of the Church's hope; and Titus 2:13 proves that the Glorious Appearing is the very hope itself. On 2 Thessalonians 2:8 Canon Faussett remarks: "The first outburst of His advent--the first gleam of His presence is enough to *abolish* utterly all traces of Antichrist, as darkness disappears before the dawning day . . . the word for *appearing* (English Version here 'the brightness') plainly refers to the coming itself."

What we have in 2 Thessalonians 2:8 is simply another aspect of the one Glorious Appearing described in 1 Thessalonians 4:14-28, 2 Thessalonians 1:5-10, and Revelation 19:11 ff., and referred to in Titus 2:13.

(6) It is not to be wondered at that the new program of the End cannot survive a natural interpretation of 2 Thessalonians 2:1-3. According to Paul, the Day of the Lord's Coming will be *preceded* by an apostasy in the Church *and* the arrival of Antichrist. At Christ's Coming the Man of Sin shall be sent to his doom. The theorists, however, teach that the Parousia of our Lord will be *followed* by the Apostasy and the rise of Antichrist. And Paul is invoked to support this ludicrous scheme of the future!

⁹ This text is especially interesting because it was here that Mr. Tweedy of Demerara, and Mr. Darby thought they found a secret Rapture several years before the Great Tribulation. (See Kelly's *Christ's Coming Again* and R. Cameron's *Scriptural Truth About the Lord's Return*.)

Even this is not all, for it must be said that while pre-tribs do not teach the delusion that the false teachers in Thessalonica taught, they do sponsor the same ideas as rendered that delusion possible. That Christ might come *secretly*, that His Coming might *precede* the arrival of the Apostasy and of Antichrist, that He might come *at any moment*, and that tribulation might continue for saints *after* His Coming, were precisely some of the presuppositions that rendered possible the propagation of the delusion that the Day of the Lord *had* already come. And all are pillars in the pre-trib edifice.

But Paul informs us that they were *false* teachers who taught thus, and he teaches that certain predicted events must precede the Day of the Lord's Coming. If we do likewise [teaching as Paul did], [then] we teach the Lord's Coming in a Scriptural way. If we do not, we are misguided and misleading teachers.

(7) The theorists' explanation requires us to believe that the real delusion at Thessalonica was that in the brief space of a few months between the First and Second Epistles to the Thessalonians, the whole "pre-trib" program of the End was believed to have been fulfilled. We know that the *Day of the Lord* was believed to have actually arrived. Very well then. If they held "pre-trib" views *after* receiving and reading 1 Thessalonians 4:14-18, they [must have] necessarily believed, when opening the Second Epistle, that the Secret Coming, the Secret Rapture, and the Secret resurrection of that passage [1 Thess. 4:14-18], *ex hypothesi*, had *first* taken place--and [all] so secretly that they knew nothing of it; then the interval of seven years or more with the doings of Antichrist, and then the Glorious Appearing of the Lord--all had gone by in the course of half a dozen moons and they were left lamenting!

What the Thessalonians were deluded into believing was bad enough in all conscience. But this explanation of it is history, exegesis, and eschatology for the credulous.

(8) If, as the theorists insist, 1 Thessalonians 4:13-17 instructed the Thessalonians to expect the *Coming* of the Lord several years or decades before the *Day* of the Lord, why does not Paul in 2 Thessalonians 2:1-3 appeal to the *Coming* or Parousia (with the resurrection and Rapture) as a necessary precursor of the Day of the Lord? Why did he not say--as the theorists invariably say,

Now we beg you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our gathering together to him, that ye be not soon shaken in mind, . . . as that the day of the Lord is present. Let not anyone deceive you in any manner, because the day will not come unless *the gathering of the saints* have first come, and the Man at God's right hand *have been revealed to His own*, in blessed and holy retirement, in heaven, and apart from all signs and events.¹⁰

Why did he not do that? Here was the chance of a lifetime to shut out misunderstanding and error. [Yet] he does not take [it]. Instead he writes [that] the Apostasy must come first and the Man of Sin have his Parousia.

Pre-tribs cannot get five minutes into an address, or five pages into a book, on prophecy without remarking on "the fact"--which contains scriptural teaching on the Lord's Coming, and "the double bearing of the fact," which tells of new traditions of men on the beautiful, secret, pre-tribulation

10 See A. J. Pollock, p. 19: "Why should he beseech them by the rapture [*sic*]? For the obvious reason that as the rapture would take place before the day of the Lord could set in, that day could not be present."

Rapture of the Church and the risen saints as an indispensable precursor of the terrible, dreadful, horrible and awful Day of the Lord, and occurring years and years before that Day breaks on a world already distracted by the prior removal of the light and salt of the earth and by the reign of Antichrist. These things, it is claimed, are as plain as A.B.C. in the Epistles of Paul. So they are, if one closes one's eyes and swallows two big assumptions, namely, [1] that the Day of the Parousia is always and only a clam bright day fit only for a wedding or a rapture and without shadows or dust of battle or any such thing, and [2] that the Day of the Lord is always and only a day of darkness and thick clouds and awful gloom, fit only for a battle or a clash of powers from the unseen world.¹¹

The New Testament smites both assumptions at every turn. The Lord associated the glorious Day with the muster of the saints (Matt. 24:31). Paul [associated] the Parousia with the great Day of battle, and "the blessed hope" with Jehovah's Glorious Appearing.¹² John [associated] the marriage-supper of the Lamb and His Church with the Day of wrath upon the world.¹³ Yet pre-tribs swallow the assumptions mentioned as truths, and believing in the unity and harmony of the Bible [they] bend a hundred texts to fit the assumptions.

Paul did differently. Having shown in 2 Thessalonians 1 the two sides of blessing and judgment, rest and doom at the Revelation, or Day, or Parousia of the Lord, he [then] links the Coming and the Day in 2 Thessalonians 2:1-3 as the most natural thing possible. [In] wishing to give right teaching on the Coming of the Lord and the Rapture of the saints, he says that the Apostasy and Antichrist must come first.

Now we beseech you, brethren, *touching the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and our gathering together* unto him; to the end that ye be not quickly shaken from your mind, nor yet be troubled, . . . as that the *day of the Lord* is now present; let no man beguile you in any wise; for it will not be, except the falling away come first, and the man of sin be revealed.¹⁴

Beginning to exhort them touching the *Coming* of the Lord, he proceeds to speak of the *Day* of the Lord. Is not this a remarkable circumstance? It is a convincing proof that the two things were synchronous in Paul's mind and not separated by a period of years as the theorists assert. And if we adopt another meaning of the preposition and translate [it] "on behalf of," the case is even worse for the new theories, for the passage then reads,

Now we beseech you, brethren, on behalf of *the coming* of our Lord Jesus Christ and *our gathering together* unto Him to the end that ye should not think that *the Day of the Lord* is now present.

11 Here is a typical extract from Trotter, and it is representative of the school (p. 283): "The one (the Parousia) is all brightness and joy; the other (the Day of the Lord) is all gloom, and darkness, and terror." And see chap. 1 of this volume. What a travesty of the Apostolic note of *joy* at the Coming of the *Day*, with its light and blessing for all believers, banishing the gloom and darkness of this Age, when He is absent.

12 2 Thess. 2:8; cf. Rev. 19:20; Titus 2:13.

13 Rev. 19:1-20; cf. Matt. 24:51-25:1: "*Then* shall the kingdom of heaven be like," etc.

14 I have omitted the intervening words on the instruments of deception, to bring the conclusion into greater relief and sooner before the mind. The sense is in no way altered.

To minds unswayed by presuppositions the meaning is clear. Paul is seeking to refute a delusion that the Day of the Lord had already come. He does so first by citing two principal *characteristics*, and, secondly, [by citing] two principal *precursors* of the Day of the Lord. The characteristics of the Day are the Arrival of the Lord and the muster of the Elect. It is as if he said, "How can the Day have come when the two things that characterize it have not happened? As you are still suffering here on earth and the Lord has not come in person, how can the *Day* have arrived?" He merely mentions these two features because his first Epistle, written a few months previously, had fully expounded them. The two *precursors* of the Day of the Lord are the coming of the Apostasy and the revelation of the Man of Sin. These he develops to remind them of his doctrine preached orally when with them; for, as Zahn says in *INT*,

This error Paul meets not by proclaiming a new revelation, but by reminding his readers of the things they had heard him say when he first preached the Gospel to them--things which, therefore, they ought not only to know, but also to use, as a means of defence against such a misleading claim as this (2:5,6). This explains why, in what is said about the forms that the unfolding of the closing events of the present age is to assume, as also about the parousia of Christ and the union of Christians with Him, the definite article is used (2:1; cf. 1 Thess. 4:14-18), it being assumed that these terms were familiar to the readers. "The *Day* of the Lord," Paul argues, cannot have come already; for, according to what he had said earlier, it could not come before "*the* falling away" and the revelation of "*the* man of lawlessness," whom Christ is to destroy at His second coming (i., p. 226).

To most minds no doubt will remain from a consideration of Paul's use of "the Day," "in that Day," "the Day of the Lord," and "Messiah's Day," that all are synonymous expressions for the day of the Parousia, which closes the present Age and ushers in the Age to Come. It is the day of resurrection, of reward, of rest for the saints, but of judgment and condemnation for the impenitent.

And a study of the rest of the N.T. confirms the teaching that the *Day* has no terrors for the saints, for it is the day for the realization of their dearest hopes. In Hebrews 10:25 it is held out as a day that concerns the Church, and in verse 37 the writer, obviously referring to the same event, says, "For in a little, a very little now, The Coming one will arrive without delay."¹⁵ Peter, in 2 Peter 1:19, holds out the Day as a day of hope for the Christian, terminating the present darkness;¹⁶ and at 3:12 the Apostle

15 Moffatt; so Weymouth.

16 "We have also the prophetic word made sure; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed in your hearts, as unto a lamp that shineth in a dark place till *the day* dawn and the day-star arise." This is the version of an American revision company in 1911, whose secretary was C. I. Scofield. It followed the punctuation adopted by Tregelles. Despite the truculent opposition of Kelly (*Christ's Coming Again*, part ii., p. 7), I think the above version gives the sense better. Of course Kelly, fighting to save a secret rapture several years before the Day, must get rid of a text that presupposes that the believer's path will be illumined by the study of prophecy *until the Day dawns*; for his scheme presupposes that after the Rapture (represented, *ex hypothesi*, by the morning star), there will follow the rise of Antichrist and the blackest night this world has ever seen; and no one can tell us how long this "dawn" is going to last, whether 1260 days or 1260 years! It should be added that we have no quarrel with the beautiful A.V. here, only with its misuse. Yet the other is clearer.

speaks of the saints as "expecting and helping to hasten the coming (parousia) of *the day of God*"¹⁷ at the regeneration of Nature, according to Isaiah 65:17-25, 66:22-23, Matthew 19:28, Acts 3:21, and Romans 8:18-22.¹⁸ On this Canon Faussett aptly remarks:

Not that God's eternal appointment of the time is changeable, but God appoints *us* as instruments of accomplishing those events which must be first fulfilled before the Day of God can come. By praying for His coming, furthering the preaching of the "gospel for a witness to all nations," and bringing in those whom "the longsuffering of God" waits to save, *we hasten the coming of the day of God* . . . Christ says, "Surely I come quickly. Amen." *Our part is to speed forward* this consummation by praying "Even so, come, Lord Jesus."

If anything was wanting to justify the above exegesis concerning the identification of the Day of Christ and the Day of the Lord Jesus Christ with the hope of the Church, it is supplied by the fact that many advocates of the theories introduced by Darby are now teaching the same doctrine as that set out above. Having short or convenient memories, they are insisting in the strongest manner that the *Coming* of Christ synchronizes with the *Day* of Christ. Now as I have shown in the first chapter, Darby, Kelly, Mackintosh and Trotter all taught in the most decided manner that the *Coming* of Christ is one thing, the *Day* of Christ is another. The two are separated by an unknown period of years. Not only this, when premillennial writers like Tregelles, Newton, Müller, Alford, Saphir, West and Erdman taught that the *Day* of Christ was the same thing as the *Coming* of Christ, their teaching was repudiated in energetic fashion by orthodox pre-trib advocates. It was confusing in the extreme and a betrayal of the blessed hope to mix it up with the *Day* of Christ, so it was arrogantly asserted.

Now, however, if Gaebelien,¹⁹ Anderson,²⁰ and Scofield²¹ are to be believed, the blundering and confusion must be attributed to the past eminent leaders of the pre-trib school of prophecy, for it is now being asserted on the housetops that "the Day of Christ" synchronizes with the hope of the Church at the Parousia.

17 Weymouth.

18 That the Day of the Lord embraces not merely the day of Messiah's Advent but also the period of His subsequent reign seems to be admitted by A. B. Davidson. In his *Theology of the O.T.* (pp. 381-382) he says: "The day of the Lord widens out into a period, homogeneous, no doubt, but extensive" (p. 382). Again: "Though the 'day of the Lord,' as the expression implies, was at first conceived as a definite and brief period of time, being an era of judgment and salvation, it many times broadened out to be an extended period. From being a day it became an epoch. This arose from the fact that under the terms day of the Lord, that day, or that time, was included not only the crisis itself, but that condition of things which followed upon the crisis" (p. 381). It is in this light that 2 Peter 3:10-13 must be interpreted. At Acts 3:21 and 2 Peter 1:11, it is *Messiah's Kingdom* that is in view. Delitzsch, on Isaiah 65-66, well says that there is a coalescence of the Messianic Reign and the eternal state. Only Paul in 1 Cor. 15:23-28 and John in the Apocalypse 20:1-21:8 distinguish the two Eras. See Anderson, *Forgotten Truths*, p. 70: "The Day of the Lord is an era." And Dr. Oesterley says: "Sometimes the 'Day' is sued in a wide sense for the new era itself" (*The Last Things*, p. 14.)

19 *Notes on 2 Thess. 2:1-8* (p. 5).

20 *The Hebrews Epistle*, p. 85, etc.

21 *Will the Church pass Through the Great Tribulation*, pp. 11, 13, 28; *Scofield Reference Bible*, p. 1212, *What do the Prophets Say?* (p. 122).

It is contended, according to the new school of the new persuasion, that while the *Coming* of Christ and the *Day* of Christ are identical, yet they occur long before the *Day of the Lord*. It is this day that concerns Israel and the world, while the *Coming* and the *Day* of Christ refer exclusively to the Church. I want the reader to note the remarkable *volte face* [180 degree turn] in this defence of pre-trib theories, for when properly understood it reveals in the clearest manner the utter worthlessness of the exegetical foundation upon which the new theories rest.

The change occurred as follows. Prior to the appearance of the Revised Version of 2 Thessalonians 2:2, that text read "the day of Christ" (and not "the day of the Lord," as in the Revised Version). To Darby this change made no difference whatever, for he taught with commendable consistency that all these expressions--"the Day of Christ," "the day of Jesus Christ," "the Day of the Lord," "the Day of Jehovah"--signified one and the same day; so that even after he had adopted the reading "Day of the Lord" in his translation of 2 Thessalonians 2:2, he continued to speak of "the Day of Christ" as synonymous (*Synopsis* on Phil. 2:16). The Revised Version, by eliminating the one unfavorable²² instance of "the Day of Christ" at 2 Thessalonians 2:2, proved a veritable godsend in that it released Philippians 1:6, 9, 10; 2:16; 1 Corinthians 1:7-8, and 2 Corinthians 1:14 for service elsewhere in prophetic charts and programs. But yesterday it was shocking to apply them to the hope; [yet] today it is shocking to withhold them.

In other words, all the favorable texts mentioned above²³ were now coolly and conveniently brought forward by about thirty-five years and applied unabashedly to the blessed hope of the Church! Only the *Day of the Lord* was left at the close of Daniel's apocalyptic Week in order to prop up that part of the new program of the End, which continued to assert that while the *Coming* and the *Day* of Christ had no predicted signs or events preceding them, the *Day* of the Lord was to be preceded by signs innumerable, especially by the Apostasy and the revelation of Antichrist. And those of us who still assert that the *Day* of Christ and the *Day* of the Lord are the same are looked upon as benighted people, though their identify was a fundamental part of the new system before the R.V. appeared. We can cite page after page from Darby, Kelly, Mackintosh and Trotter to prove our position. Yet they have been torn to ribbons in the house of their friends.

This historical sidelight and the complete change of front [face] it has revealed will serve two purposes. First, it confirms us completely in our exegesis in applying "the *Day* of Christ" and kindred expressions to the blessed hope of the Church. Second, it shows that what passes for new light may mean simply that one is living by one's wits, that one is an opportunist snapping up chances by the way, a policy known to Mr. Micawber.

I remark in passing that many people will have been persuaded that both sections of the Darbyist school are right. Anderson, Scofield and Gaebelien [are right] in that "the *Day* of Christ" is emphatically the day for the fulfilment of the blessed hope of the Church. Darby, Kelly, Trotter, C.H.M., and large numbers even today [are right] in that "the *Day* of Christ" (or Messiah) is the same as "the *Day* of the Lord."

22 Unfavorable, that is, to an "any-moment" *Coming* and *Rapture*, at Christ's *Day*, without previous signs.

23 Phil. 1:6, 9, 10; 2:16; 1 Cor. 1:7-8; 2 Cor. 1:14.

As for the new view that the *Day of Christ*, or *Messiah's Day*, will precede the *Day of the Lord* by several years or decades, it is sufficient to point to 1 Corinthians 1:7, where *Messiah's Day*, the *End of the Age*, and the *Revelation* are all linked together. More damaging still is the consideration that on the new view the glorious *Day of Messiah*, which is a principal theme of O.T. prophecy, is to be succeeded by *the rise and reign of the Man of Sin* and the deepest degradation that Israel has ever known. *Messiah's Day* forsooth [indeed]! "Messiah" means anointed, that is, *King*. And these new innovators in Israel want us to believe that this King's glorious *Day*, the *Day of days of the King of kings*, is going to be followed by Antichrist's triumph and Reign, not His own, and by that interregnum of confusion, apostasy, and delusion that their word-painters have made so familiar. It is fair to say that Darby, Kelly, Trotter, and C. H. Mackintosh at least spared us this preposterous tax on our credulity.

Hence even this new-fangled version has been found troublesome, and a still newer one has been found. Messrs. Hogg and Vine in *Touching the Coming* have discovered that the expressions "Day of Christ," "Day of Jesus Christ," and "Day of the Lord Jesus" are a *period of time* beginning with the Rapture and ending with the Glorious Advent (pp. 66-70, 97). And [what is] the proof of this latest dispensational novelty? None but the requirements of their own fantastic program. They make what they would prove the presupposition of their exegesis. And how long will Messiah's "Day" last? Heaven only knows. It may only be a little while--three and a half years, or seven years, or seventy; but Anderson insists that the Scripture will still harmonize if the period lasts for a thousand! And what are the *effects* of *Messiah's Day*? Christians as the salt and light of society are withdrawn from the world, Antichrist arises and comes to his triumph, [and] Israel suffers as she has never suffered before. This is no caricature but a statement of the case.

One must sorrowfully remark that the defence of these false theories throws up sophistry that can give points and a beating to the Rabbis in Israel. There is an unwillingness to accept the plain facts of a text like 1 Corinthians 1:7 and scores of others. For the infatuated there are always three ways out of every difficulty. "Messiah's Day" applies to the *Day of the Lord*. Does that embarrass? Then apply it to the Rapture several years or decades before. Does that still embarrass? [Then] make it a bridge spanning both. This is what is being done with *Parousia*, *Appearing*, *Revelation*²⁴ and *Day*. They are pushed and pulled to make them say the very opposite of what they say in Scripture. Everything, anything, is preferable to the withering of a gourd of mens' planting.

24 *Appearing* and *Revelation* are now in the second stage. They are actually being applied to the Secret Rapture; see Vine, *The Rapture and the Great Tribulation*, pp. 23-6. Their being made a *period* covering the times of lawlessness and the rise and triumph of Antichrist is only a question of a little more exegetical persecution.