

# *The Approaching Advent of Christ*

by  
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## CHAPTER XIII

### SIR ROBERT ANDERSON'S THEORY OF A SERIES OF COMINGS

We are confirmed in our repudiation of the new exegesis of the words *coming, appearing, revelation* and *day* of Christ by the simple fact that from within the theorists' camp a powerful voice has been raised, which, while seeking to vindicate essential features of the new scheme, has repudiated most of the blundering exegesis by which that position has been propped up. I refer to Sir R. Anderson's volume, *Forgotten Truths*. The writer was quick to see how erroneous and absurd was the exegesis that relegated the Appearing and Revelation to an event at least seven years after the fulfillment of the Church's hope. He saw what every unbiased student has seen, that the hope of the Church is nothing else than the Glorious Appearing of Christ. Unfortunately, instead of rejecting the pleasing schemes of the Second Advent that originated in denying or ignoring this fact, and could survive only by the free use of imagination and "grasshopper" exegesis, Sir R. Anderson set to work to find a new apologetic for the main scheme of the prophetic future introduced by Darby. His scheme is contained in his well-known volume, *The Coming Prince*, but principally in his more recent work, *Forgotten Truths*.<sup>1</sup> It is not my intention to review this volume, which has caused astonishment and disappointment in many quarters. It seems scarcely credible that a work abounding in a spirit and method that I forbear from characterizing, should have come from the same pen as gave to the Church one of the most brilliant, sane, and helpful works ever issued on unfulfilled prophecy--*The Coming Prince*. Even in circles where Sir R. Anderson has been able to count on flattering reviews, his latest volume was roundly condemned for its methods and spirit.

A typical hair-raising statement of Sir R. Anderson's, which shakes our confidence in him as an exegete, is on one of the most sacred and glorious of Apostolic declarations about the life beyond the grave: "*To die is gain*" is the evil creed of a suicide. The apostle never said that" (p. 63).

Sir R. Anderson tells us that the true rendering should be "to have died is gain." Such pedantic literalism is reminiscent of the dying pundit who confessed that he had given his life to elucidating the Greek article: he had been wrong; he ought to have given it to the dative case! Millions of saints have been comforted by the Apostle's saying about death, and all the recent translations, including Darby's,

1 Also *Unfulfilled Prophecy*, 2nd edition. It is with the greatest regret that here and elsewhere I find myself differing from the respected author of these volumes. I am one of thousands to whom *The Gospel and Its Ministry*, *The Coming Prince*, and other works in exposition of the faith, were illuminating and helpful. But, unfortunately, Sir R. Anderson's views on "dispensational truth" have been pushed to extreme lengths, so that what I hold to be thoroughly erroneous teaching is given forth as "assured results" of a new enlightenment. I am dealing, however, with Sir R. Anderson's views, not with him personally. A like remark applies to my exposure of Dr. Bullinger's position; it is possible to entertain respect for him as a devout Christian man, while repudiating his system of lunar interpretation. (Written in 1914.)

tell us that they were right. To die *is* gain for the Christian, for he is immediately ushered into the presence of his Saviour and Lord (Phil. 1:23; Rev. 7:9-17).

I have spoken of methods, and here is an example at hand to illustrate my meaning. After remarking that the Coming of the Lord *as Saviour* is confounded with the Day of the Lord, Sir R. Anderson adds (*Forgotten Truths*, p. 71): "In fact the error which the Second Epistle to the Thessalonians was designed to correct is now in the creed of Christendom."

This is a gross and unpardonable misstatement and simply springs from the author's inveterate habit of tilting at the theologians, Churches, and Creeds of Christendom. We know what was "the error that the Second Epistle to the Thessalonians was designed to correct." They had imbibed the teaching that the Day of the Lord had already come (2 Thess. 2:2). Now, whatever may be the defects of "the creed of Christendom," it is only by an outrage that it can be said to contain the error that the Day of the Lord has arrived. It may be asserted with all confidence that "the creed of Christendom" is that the Day of the Lord (when the resurrection and judgment of "the quick and the dead" shall be accomplished) is still future. If Christendom is behind the Thessalonians in looking for Christ, it certainly is ahead of them in believing that the Day of the Lord has not yet come; ahead of them (and modern theorists) in repudiating the vagaries [notions] that our Lord's approaching Advent may take place secretly and at any moment, and may be followed by the rise of Antichrist and tribulation for the saints.

Let not students of prophecy think and talk lightly of the Creed of Christendom. Happy should we be today if the whole Church could rally round this standard as she did in the first centuries of our Era, seeing in it a glorious symbol of the outstanding facts of our religion, which she was to confess and maintain before the world. [A] great part of our trouble is that ministers either disbelieve the Creed or multiply it a hundredfold to our division and confusion. A very great patristic theologian has shown in successive studies<sup>2</sup> that the essentials and form of the Creed go back to the very heart of the Apostolic Age. It saw the Church through the stress and storm of almost interminable struggles with heretical, "mosquito" sects, and was the joyful confession of the faithful as they received the waters of baptism. The men who framed the Creed loved our Lord's Appearing, and considered that no statement of Christian doctrine was complete without its being mentioned. They included, therefore, a brief article designed to go straight to the heart and conscience of their converts from heathenism: an article taken verbatim from the speech of Peter and Paul in their sermons or writings.<sup>3</sup> The candidate for baptism confessed that God's only Son, our Lord, who was seated on the right hand of God, would return "to judge the quick and the dead." The statement had the advantage of brevity, solemnity, and credibility. Would that this could be said of modern statements of the Lord's Coming.

Another extraordinary theory of Sir R. Anderson's (it amounts almost to an obsession) is that Matthew's Gospel is "Jewish" in such a sense that it cannot refer to the mystical Body of Christ, the Church of this Dispensation. The following extract will show to what lengths this extraordinary vagary is pushed:

The First Gospel does not contain a single word that is inconsistent with its scope and purpose

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2 Zahn: *The Apostles' Creed* (E.T.) and *Shizzen aus Leben der alten Kirche* (1908: chapter vii, "The Rule of Faith and the Baptismal Confession"). Zahn rejects the tradition that the Apostles sat down formally and composed the creed, but maintains that the principal articles go back to a "form of sound words" in use in the Apostolic Age itself.

3 Acts 10:42; 2 Tim. 4:1; 1 Peter 4:5.

in the Divine scheme of revelation, as a record of the Lord's mission and ministry as Israel's Messiah; and it will be studied by believing Israelites in days to come *as if the present Christian dispensation had never intervened.*<sup>4</sup>

I have grave doubts of the fulfillment of Sir R. Anderson's prophecy. Even if they read Matthew's Gospel when drowsy--or studied a copy of it interleaved with Bullinger's *Mystery*, or Sir R. Anderson's *Forgotten Truths*, or had access to no commentary on it except Dr. Gaebelein's--their perusal and study of Matthew 13:3-52; 16:18; 18:17; 22:1-14; 24:14, 31; 26:13; and 28:18-20, would completely bewilder them if they studied it "as if the present Christian dispensation had never intervened."

Over against the wild suggestion that Matthew's Gospel is narrowly Jewish in its contents, scope, and outlook, I set herewith the testimony of the author of perhaps the best commentary we have on the First Gospel.<sup>5</sup>

In greatness of conception, and in the power with which a mass of material is subordinated to great ideas, no writing in either Testament, dealing with a historical theme, is to be compared with Matthew. In this respect the present writer would be at a loss to find its equal also in the other literature of antiquity (ii., p. 566).

One would like to quote pages from this magnificent study of "The Contents, Plan, and Purpose of Matthew's Gospel." There is space, however, for only two or three paragraphs--just sufficient for our present purpose. After throwing a flood of light on the famous and difficult passage, "On this rock I will build my Church," etc., and remarking that "it is this idea of the Church" that distinguishes the central section of the Gospel (11:2-20:34), Dr. Zahn goes on:

It is because Jesus is condemned to death by the heads of the people and delivered over to the Gentiles for the carrying out of their sentence (16:21, 20:18 ff.) that the kingdom of God is to be stayed in its sweeping onward progress (cf. 11:12), and a period intervene between its beginning through the word of Jesus and its completion with His parousia, during which the kingdom of heaven shall have its preliminary realization in a Church of the Christian confession by no means free from foreign elements, in which even the best members are still tainted with sin (13:36-43, 28, 18:7-35, 22:11, 24:12). This Christian Church and the Jewish people are represented as two sharply distinguished bodies. The teaching concerning discipline within the Church (18:15-35), marriage (19:3-12), the relation of children to Jesus and so to His Church

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4 *Forgotten Truths*, p. 126. See also *The Bible and Modern Criticism* (p. 278), where Sir R. Anderson says concerning Christ's purpose to build His Church ("on this rock I will build by Church," Matt. 16:18): "I deprecate any exposition of these passages which makes them refer exclusively, or even primarily to the present dispensation. Such an exegesis is, I think, refuted by the fact that it is in the teaching of the First Gospel that these words are recorded." How like our Melbourne story (see. p. 118), "Matthew's Gospel was written for the Jews!" It ought to be said that this strange interpretation of Matt. 16:18 did not originate with Darby but with Sir R. Anderson and Dr. Bullinger. I know no other writers who entertain it. In chapter 7 I have dealt briefly with these strange views of the First Gospel, and in a forthcoming volume on Matt. 24-25, the Remnant and other dispensational theories will be exhaustively examined.

5 I am referring to Zahn's large volume in the N.T. Commentary edited by him; the citations, however, are from the English translation of his *INT*.

(19:13-14), the attitude toward earthly possessions (19:16-26), the Divine reward in relation to human labour (19:27-20:16), ruling and serving (20:20-28, cf. 23:8-12, 24:45-51)--all these presuppose a Church of Jesus, which, whatever its organization, was certainly separate from the Jewish people, and regulated by a different law from that which prevailed among the Jews (ii., pp. 551-2).

In the same study Dr. Zahn deals thus with the close of Matthew's Gospel:

The one declared to be dead appears alive to His friends in Jerusalem as well as in Galilee (28:9, 17). The same person who refused to call either the power of God or that of the devil to His aid in order to disarm His foes and to gain dominion over the world (4:8; 26:53), speaks as Lord of heaven and earth. The Messiah of Israel who longed to save His people from sin, and who remained loyal to this His first duty, even unto death (1:21, 10:5 ff., 23, 15:24), commissions the Eleven to make all peoples without distinction His disciples through baptism and teaching. With this Church, which shall increase constantly as the majestic command is carried out, His invisible presence shall abide until the end of the world, i.e., until His visible return (28:18-20, 24:3, 14). Thus ends "The Book of the History of Jesus Christ, the Son of David, the Son of Abraham" (pp. 555-6).

Worthy to be placed alongside the above is another great scholar's testimony to the Catholicity of Matthew's Gospel:

I am with you (*egō meta humōn*). This is the amazing and blessed promise. He is to be with the disciples when he is gone, with all the disciples, with all knowledge, with all power, with them all the days (all sorts of days, weakness, sorrow, joy, power), till the consummation of the age (*heōs tēs sunteleias tou aiōnos*). That goal is in the future and unknown to the disciples. This blessed hope is not designed as a sedative to an inactive mind and complacent conscience, but an incentive to the fullest endeavour to press on to the farthest limits of the world that all the nations may know Christ and the power of His Risen Life. So Matthew's Gospel closes in a blaze of glory (A.T. Robertson, *in loco*).

If, as Sir R. Anderson teaches, there will be in Palestine (when the Great Commission is being fulfilled in the End-time) a company of "Jews and yet Christians"<sup>6</sup>--"a believing community of Israelites," who will be "Jews whose faith will be akin to that of the Lord's disciples during His earthly ministry,"<sup>7</sup> then the question of their standing is settled for us. Paul had thought this question through, and had definitely decided that the Church, the Body of Christ, *did not begin with his conversion*. Sir R. Anderson, Dr. Bullinger, and Dr. Marsh affirm that it did, but Paul is dead against them. He asserts that

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6 *The Coming Prince* (p. 170). The note is important, so also the following page (171), where the Seven Epistles are given a "Dispensational" reference to the time after the Rapture. See also his *Silence of God*, which is of fundamental importance in the author's scheme, and his tract *The Distinction between The Kingdom of Heaven, The Kingdom of God, and The Church* (pp. 9-10). Here the position is taken up that there will be a Church on earth that will be Jewish, without belonging to the Body, but to the Bride--of course after the Rapture. It is to this "Church" that Sir Robert applies Matt. 16:18. It would be a kind of continuation of the Pentecostal Church.

7 *Forgotten Truths*, pp. 75-6.

he was the least of the Apostles, because he "persecuted *the Church of God*."<sup>8</sup> And whereas dispensationalists hold up the Thessalonians as model Churches, Paul commends *them* because they "became imitators of the churches of God, which are *in Judæa in Christ Jesus*" (1 Thess. 2:14). As Bishop Lightfoot points out,<sup>9</sup> the phraseology is carefully chosen: "churches of Judæa" alone might have meant any Jewish assemblies; but the addition of "in Christ Jesus" was absolutely decisive. And in Galatians 1:22 Paul speaks of "the Churches of Judæa which were *in Christ Jesus*." Then in Romans 16:7 he mentions two kinsmen "who were *in Christ* before me." What all this means is plain: the mystical Body of Christ began with the Churches of Judæa years before Paul was converted. Sir R. Anderson and his coterie would divide ancient Christendom into the "Pentecostal" Church and the "Body of Christ" Church. The Apostle Paul gloried in showing his solidarity with the mother Church of Judæa and gave proof of it not only in the passages mentioned, but by devoting much time among the Gentile Churches to raising a collection for the poor saints of Jerusalem.<sup>10</sup> He seized an opportunity to demonstrate the unity and fellowship of Jews and Gentiles in the one Church of God in Christ Jesus.

We need not worry much, therefore, about the attitude of Jewish Christians in the End-time toward Matthew's Gospel; and we can safely reject freak theories of the Advent that depend upon first accepting freak theories about Apostles, Churches, and Gospels. Having been assured by Sir R. Anderson that there will be Christian Israelites in Palestine in the End-time, equal in standing to the Apostles and the Pentecostal Church, the whole pretentious system collapses, for a natural reading of Matthew 24-25 leads to the conclusion that they will fulfill some rugged texts there about the Great Tribulation, whereas the new theories require us to believe that all Christians will have been raptured to heaven several years before.

Another thing that awakens attention in Sir R. Anderson's scheme of the End is his frequent reference to a certain "future age" after the Rapture of the Church and before the Messianic Reign. He does not, and cannot, produce a scrap of evidence for any such "age." The only age in time that Scripture speaks of to follow "the present Age" is that called "the Future Age," or "the Word to Come," when, not Antichrist, but Christ the Lord assumes the sovereignty of the world.

One of the most eminent of present-day theologians writes thus:

It is common knowledge that Bible eschatology as a whole is set within a definite framework--the conception of two distinct worlds or æons; "the present age," or simply "the age" largely subject to the power of darkness, and "the coming age," which by its victorious advent abolishes all tragedy. It is upon this grand apocalyptic opposition that Paul builds his main view of the last things.<sup>11</sup>

But it is time to come to Sir R. Anderson's main position on the Return of Christ. It is, briefly,<sup>12</sup> "that what we term the second advent of Christ is not a single event, but includes several manifestations." He finds a doctrine of "various comings" in the future taught in Scripture. How many such *comings* of

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8 1 Cor. 15:9; Gal. 1:13; Phil. 3:6.

9 *Notes on Epistles of St. Paul*.

10 2 Cor. 8-9; Rom. 15:25-31; 1 Cor. 16:1-3; Acts 24:17; Gal. 2:10.

11 Prof. H. R. Mackintosh in "The Expositor" (*Studies in Christian Eschatology*), Feb., 1914, p. 123.

12 See *Coming Prince*, p. 153; *Hebrews Epistle*, appendix iii.; *Forgotten Truths*, pp. 46-8 and 144.

Christ there will be Sir R. Anderson cannot inform us. But after careful "sorting" of the Scriptures, he finds at least *four* distinct future appearances of Christ, namely:

- (a) That of 1 Thessalonians 4, when the surviving Church and the risen saints will be caught up. This will occur before the Seventieth Week of Daniel.
- (b) That of Acts 1:9-11,<sup>13</sup> Zechariah 14:4, which will occur at the close of that Week and has reference to Israel's deliverance.
- (c) That of 2 Thessalonians 2:8, when Antichrist is destroyed.
- (d) That at the conclusion of the millennium for the Last Judgment.

But of course there may be many more appearances, for the peculiar principles that lead to a doctrine of four "second" advents may lead, when logically applied, to a doctrine of forty. If the Coming of *the Son of Man* must be different from the Coming of *the Lord*, then the coming of *Messiah* must be something different still; so that each distinctive title of Christ and each new permutation of them will connote "a special relationship" and a special coming. Sir R. Anderson does not openly contend for this, but that is what his principle leads to. And his handling<sup>14</sup> of the sister phrases, *Day of Christ*, *Day of the Lord Jesus*, and *Day of the Lord* confirms us in our inferences. How utterly rabbinical and erroneous it all is may be seen from the fact that the Coming of the *Word of God* in Revelation 19:11-16 to destroy "the Beast" is the same as the Coming of *the Lord* in 2 Thessalonians 2:7-8 to destroy "the Man of Sin." Even Sir R. Anderson cannot deny this since he identifies, and rightly identifies, the Beast and that person. The *Appearing* of 2 Thessalonians 2:8 and that of Revelation 19 are the same despite the great differences in titles and "coloring," whereas on Sir R. Anderson's principles they ought to be distinct.

Holding to a whole series of distinct comings of Christ in the future, it is not surprising that Sir R. Anderson should quarrel with the expression "the Second Advent," for while he himself believes in a *second* advent, he seems to lack the courage to sort and label his various comings following the second as the "third," "fourth," and "fifth" advents of Christ. Would he do so, we should not need to trouble about refuting his scheme. The mere statement of it might be trusted to do that. The simple fact that the most illustrious scholars and theologians have used the term "the Second Coming" does not restrain Sir R. Anderson from attributing its use to deplorable error and ignorance. It does not seem to occur to him that the great scholars and theologians may be right and himself wrong. One is reminded, not for the first time in this controversy, of the Scottish girl's spying her brother among the recruits and finding them all "oot o' step except oor Jock." How applicable to this new-fangled scheme of Sir R. Anderson's! It was never heard of prior to him and has not commended itself to a single teacher of light and leading since. Yet he parades it with much dogmatism as an established truth. The following considerations will show why it is to be rejected as an innovation.

1. The writer of Hebrews speaks (9:28) of a "second" appearing--"He shall appear a *second* time, without sin unto salvation." So inconvenient is this text to Sir R. Anderson's theory that he has boldly

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<sup>13</sup> See the footnote at p. 186 (*Coming Prince*).

<sup>14</sup> *Hebrews Epistle*, p. 85.

denied that this refers to the second Coming of Christ!<sup>15</sup> He thinks the truth of the priesthood explains the text, and in his *Forgotten Truths* refers to this again: "When Aaron passed within the veil, the people watched till he came out again" (p. 46). Exactly! And the writer of Hebrews goes on to tell us that our great High Priest, who accomplished redemption upon the cross and bore the sins of many, entered into heaven itself, where He carries on His priestly ministry on behalf of His people. But, says the writer, "unto them that look for him *shall he appear the second time*, without sin unto salvation."

Sir R. Anderson dislikes both the A.V. and R.V. of this text, saying that the expression "shall appear the second time conveys a wrong impression." But, on the contrary, its accuracy is confirmed by the Revised Version, Darby's, Weymouth's, Moffatt's, Goodspeed's, Conybeare's, Wade's, and Way's. Every one of those versions also give the translation "*will appear a second time*," or "*will appear again*," which Sir R. Anderson also tries to get rid of in the interest of his freak interpretation. A. T. Robertson says of our text that it is a "blessed assurance of the second coming of Christ, but this time 'apart from sin'." And of the verb *apekdechomai*, he says that it is "the very verb used by Paul in Philippians 3:20 of waiting for the coming of Christ as Saviour" (v., p. 405). This same verb, and the text in Philippians where it occurs, are quoted with approval by Sir R. Anderson in a version of Grimm's:<sup>16</sup> "*We are assiduously and patiently waiting for the Saviour*." This is precisely the truth of Hebrews 9:28 that he would filch from us so as to make theologians and students who speak of the Second Coming look perverse or ignorant, or both. And, be it added, it is *Christians*, not "the earthly people," who await "assiduously and patiently" the coming forth of the High Priest to bless them.

2. While we read in Scripture of Christ's appearing a *second* time, it is remarkable that it never speaks of a *third* or *fourth* or *fifth* appearing. Not even at the Last Judgment (Rev. 20:11) do we read of an appearing, because Christ comes at the *beginning* of the millennium and never leaves His people. There is no place for a third appearing.<sup>17</sup>

It is unfortunate for Sir R. Anderson and all other theorists that the Epistle to the Hebrews, which speaks of our Lord's *Second* Appearing, locates it at the Day of the Lord, when the Kingdom is introduced: "And when he again bringeth in the first-born into the world he saith, And let all the angels of God worship him" (1:6, R.V.).

Westcott in his commentary gives us the true meaning: "For the present He has been withdrawn from the 'habitable world,' the limited scene of man's present labours; but at the Return He will enter it once more with sovereign triumph; Acts 1:11."

A first appearing at the Incarnation to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself (9:28) and a second appearing in the future to bless His expectant people and establish His reign (1:6; 10:25, 37) are the Eschatology of Hebrews. The Apostle cheers his Jewish readers with the thought that the next appearing of Messiah will be followed immediately by His visible triumph. Sir R. Anderson would encourage Jewish Christians in Palestine with the news that the next Appearing of the Lord Jesus Christ will be followed by the triumph of Antichrist and the further degradation of the Hebrews.

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15 *Coming Prince*, p. 291.

16 *Forgotten Truths*, p. 65.

17 The words of W. Kelly are substantially correct: "Christ's coming to the world is really described in chapter 19, before the millennium. At the end of the millennium there is no coming of Christ, but rather a departure, if you will, of the heaven and the earth" (*Second Coming*, p. 312).

3. It is awkward also for Sir R. Anderson's scheme that Paul, who is supposed to have favored or introduced the new scheme, knows of only one future appearing--*the* appearing of Christ. The event is associated with the destruction of Antichrist at the beginning of the millennium,<sup>18</sup> with the reign of Christ (2 Tim. 4:1), with the rewarding of the saints (2 Tim. 4:8), which we know from the Apocalypse is located at the Day of the Lord (11:18), from Luke 14:14 at the resurrection, and from Revelation 22:12 at the *coming*.

But this is not all. This Glorious Appearing is definitely held out as being "the blessed hope" of Christians (Tit. 2:13). Sir R. Anderson, who saw this, and saw also the blundering exegesis of the whole school on this text, adroitly tries to claim it as supporting his own peculiar scheme. After quoting the text about "the Glorious Appearing," he scornfully asks, "Will anyone dare rob us of these words by referring them to the great and terrible day of the Lord?"<sup>19</sup> If identifying "the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ" with "the glorious appearing" of Jehovah at the Day of the Lord is a capital crime, then all writers and commentators and theologians in every age of the Church are guilty of it; for all of them (including Darby and Kelly, and every soul of man in the dispensationalist school) applied the Glorious Appearing of the great God to the "gloriously appearing" Day of the Lord.

And rightly so, because in Titus 2:13 the Glorious Appearing is set in juxtaposition to "this present age," in which Christians glorify God by sober, righteous, and godly lives. Very evidently the Glorious Appearing terminates "this present evil age" (Gal. 1:4) and ushers in the new Age, when Christians, having suffered, shall reign. Yet Sir R. Anderson's exegesis would commit us to the vagary [notion] that after the Glorious Appearing of Jehovah-Jesus (Tit. 2:13), apostasy will come in like a flood, Antichrist *rise* to persecute the saints, the Great Tribulation supervene, and the Jewish Nation enter upon the blackest night in her whole history, accepting Antichrist as Messiah. In the whole range of the exegesis that Sir R. Anderson pillories (and it is all except his own, practically), there is nothing quite so "hotch-potch" [jumbled/confused] and ludicrous as this. The Glorious Appearing of *Messiah* followed by the rise and triumph of the Man of Sin! How different from the truth of Scripture; for Paul tells us that by the "brightness" or "appearance" of Christ's *Coming*, the Man of Sin shall be sent to his doom (2 Thess. 2:8).

Neither Sir R. Anderson's scheme nor Darby's can bear the magnificent light that modern scholarship throws on 1 Thessalonians 4:14-18, 2 Thessalonians 1:5-10, 2 Thessalonians 2:8, and Titus 2:13 as descriptions of the triumphant arrival of our Lord.

4. All that Sir R. Anderson has said about the impossibility of the various prophecies being fulfilled in one Glorious Appearing of Christ (with many events accompanying and following it), is applicable, on his principles, to the great crisis of the *death* of Christ. Adopting his canon that fulfillment of purpose

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18 2 Thess. 2:8; Isaiah 11:4; Rev. 19:20.

19 *Forgotten Truths*, p. 66. Canon Girdlestone, in an address before the Prophecy Investigation Society ("Morning Star," Jan. 1st, 1913), says the Hebrew word in Joel 2:31 signifies awe rather than terror. He says: "This day is called great and terrible by Joel, and 'dreadful' in Malachi; but the original word is the same, an indication rather of *awe* than terror; a solemn time to be considered with awe and reverence. God shall then vindicate Himself and His ways of righteousness before all."

concerning the Jew, the Gentiles, and the Church of God cannot be accomplished at the same crisis--which is his underlying presupposition--[then] we could say: What hotchpotch to suppose that Christ died at one and the same time for Paul (Gal. 2:20), for Israel (John 11:51-52), for sinners as such (Rom. 5:8), for the Church of God (Eph. 5:25), for the O.T. saints (Heb. 11:40), for the vindication of the righteousness of God (Rom. 3:25), for the reconciliation of all things (Col. 1:20), to bring to naught the prince of death (Heb. 2:14), to deliver us from bondage (Heb. 2:15); died that we might be crucified with Him (Gal. 2:19-20). What hotchpotch also to suppose that the death of the *Son of Man* (John 3:14) is the same as the propitiatory sacrifice of the *Lord Jesus Christ* (Gal. 6:14); how absurd that the death of the *good Shepherd* (John 10:11) can be the same thing as the death of *the Lamb* (John 1:29; 1 Pet. 1:19), that all the typical sacrifices of the O.T. cultus should be fulfilled in the death of the *one Man* (Rom. 5:15, 19)."

Yet we know that all was fulfilled in the death of the *Son of Man*; that one crisis embraced all purposes and relationships. So also will it be with the Appearing of the *Son of Man*. It is one crisis with various phases and relationships. At His Coming out of heaven, He gathers the Elect saints and destroys the Man of Sin; He then comes on to the earth, where the Jews look upon Him whom they pierced; the Kingdom is then established in power--and all the essence of simplicity.

5. Efforts have been made to substantiate the theory of a series of future Appearings by drawing an analogy between the Scriptural account of the first Advent and the very latest theories of the Second. This has been done ingeniously by Miss Ada R. Habershon in an interesting parable, "The Rabbis' Discussion," published in the London "Christian," December 23rd, 1909.

She aims at proving that as the first Coming of Christ was made up of various *comings* (events of the Incarnation and Ministry) separated by years, so also the Second Coming of Christ will consist of various *comings* or events separated by years, but all constituting the *Parousia*. She says: "The attempt to fit all the prophecies concerning the Lord's *parousia* into one event has contributed largely to the prevailing confusion of teaching." To this I reply:

(a) Those who reject the nineteenth-century theory of several future Comings do not endeavor to crowd all the events of the *Parousia* "into one event." All that they are guilty of is insisting that the *Parousia* consists of a single crisis, a single Advent accompanied and followed by many events and phenomena concerning the history of Israel, the Church, and the Kingdom of God.

(b) Miss Haberson bids us believe that the *Parousia* is spread over a protracted period. This, however, is rather different from what the Lord Jesus Christ taught. He said: "As the lightning cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west; so shall also the coming (*parousia*) of the Son of Man be" (Matt. 24:27).

(c) The facts of the first coming of Christ do not support Miss Habershon's scheme. It is she who confuses the matter. The advent of the Eternal Son to this world took place in a moment of time, but it was followed by His presence in this world for about forty years. Many events took place in that time that were not parts but *results* of His coming or arrival. So will it be at His Return. His Advent will take place suddenly and be followed by many predicted events. They are not separate Comings but results of His own glorious Arrival. Having come, Christ remains with His people forever, first in the Messianic Kingdom of a thousand years on the renewed earth, then in the eternal state when God shall be all in all.

To have furnished a parallel to this scheme of Miss Habershon's and Sir R. Anderson's, Christ should have ascended to heaven some time after His birth, returned to this world to be baptized, ascended again to heaven, and later returned to fulfill some other phase of His mission; for the scheme Miss Habershon is propounding presupposes several descents out of heaven and several ascents back again.

(d) Miss Habershon uses the following illustration to maintain her scheme: "The flag on Buckingham Palace proclaims the presence of the King in the Metropolis, and tells us that the court is in London."

This illustration might be used to good effect in connection with the Second Coming, but I am at a loss to see how it illustrates, much less supports, the latest theory; for when Christ's *Parousia* in 1 Thessalonians 4:15 is fulfilled according to the new schemes, will that "proclaim the presence of the King?" Not at all. It will be the signal that the greatest darkness and sadness have only commenced for the world--for apostasy comes in like a flood, Antichrist arises to his triumph, Israel suffers fearful delusion, and tribulation follows for saints on earth. The King of kings has come in His glory but Antichrist flourishes here below! And this is gravely offered to us as a substitute for the "prevailing confusion" that at Christ's Coming Antichrist will be immediately *slain* and the reign of the Prince of Peace set up!

5. The root error in Sir R. Anderson's scheme is due to his misreading of 1 Thessalonians 4:15 and 1 Corinthians 15:51. He would have us believe that Paul there revealed the "mystery"<sup>20</sup> (or secret truth) of the hope of the Church.<sup>21</sup> This is a new *Coming* different from that in the earlier Scriptures. The theory is entirely erroneous. The truth revealed at 1 Thessalonians 4:15 is simply that living believers will have no advantage whatever over those who fall asleep. Both together will meet the returning Lord. And at 1 Corinthians 15:51 the Coming of the Lord is not even referred to! The truth revealed is simply that not all believers shall fall asleep, but that all shall be changed from corruptible to incorruptible in an instant of time.

And Sir R. Anderson's scheme is annihilated by the fact that the resurrection and transfiguration of the saints are located by the Apostle *at the Day of the Lord*.<sup>22</sup> If Sir R. Anderson persists, in spite of this, in maintaining a series of future Comings, then the *terminus a quo* for the first is the Day of the Lord. But if the first *Coming* in his series is so located, I think the charm of his scheme would wear off even for himself.

A man was traveling and issued [emerged] from a range of hills on to an extensive plain. He crossed a

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<sup>20</sup> *Forgotten Truths*, pp. 45-46.

<sup>21</sup> If true, this curious theory would involve the startling conclusion that up to the writing of 1 Thess. 4, the Apostolic Church did not have the hope of Christ's Return! With praiseworthy consistency, Sir R. Anderson actually says that the Lord taught the Apostles to look for events, not for His Coming! (*Forgotten Truths*, p. 79). Yet the Epistle of James (4:7-8), which Sir R. Anderson accepts as the earliest N.T. writing, shows conclusively that the Coming of Matthew 24:27-30 was a living and joyous hope in the Church about A.D. 45, when Zahn, Mayor and others date the Epistle of James. Anyone who can read Matt. 24-25 and conclude that our Lord taught the Apostles not to look for His Coming is simply in great bondage. The hope is everywhere, there and in Acts, while Paul was *still in his sins*, and in James before 1 Thess. 4.

<sup>22</sup> 1 Cor. 15:54. Cf. also Isaiah 25:8, etc.

stream that ran off to his right over a long stretch of sand. After an hour or so a thread of water gushed toward him from the right, falling over a cascade of white marble to his left. Soon another stream was approaching him from behind, flowing over gravel, through pure red soil, and going off into the woods nearby. With the appearance of water again after an hour's riding, the question arose: How many rivers had he crossed, one or several? The contours of the region were not decisive against several. The traveler was a stranger in the neighborhood [and] to find out from an inhabitant of the country was difficult; but he had adopted a method that gave him a definite and accurate conclusion. He had observed that the water at every crossing (in every direction, and over every succeeding bed of sand, of rock, of gravel, of marble) carried always not only a particular substance in solution but also a peculiar kind of grass floating on the surface. He drew the conclusion, with such certainty as the Method of Agreements in Inductive Logic could afford him, that the several streams were one--one stream in extremely varied surroundings.

Now in God's word there is a stream of revelation that meets us everywhere--in the Prophets, the Gospels, the Epistles, and the Apocalypse. It touches the Coming of the King and His kingly rule among the children of men. It passes through the most varied country, now of hope and fear, storm and calm, peace and judgment, anarchy and righteousness, covenant and promise, laughter and tears.

And the King's subjects, for the better knowledge of His mind and the more faithful waiting for His arrival, would know whether there is one stream or two--one Coming or two or several. Most said, "But since the beginning it has been held that there is only one." But others said, "That is confusion. God has shown us recently that there are two." And one said, "But there are several." And another said, "Let us try the stream and see whether there is everywhere, at each turn, amid all the changes of coloring, of direction, of emphasis, of relation, some circumstance--something in the streams--that binds them into one. If we do this, and have eyes to see and courage to follow, we shall know of the doctrine." And it was found that Isaiah at 25:8 [and] 26:19; Daniel at 12:2,13; our Lord at Luke 14:14-15 [and] 20:24; and John [at] 6:39-54; Paul at Romans 11:15, 1 Corinthians 15:23-26, 50-54; and John in Revelation 11:15-18 and 20:4-6, had so linked the saints' resurrection, the coming of the Kingdom, and the renewal of Israel, that no reasoning of man could separate them.