

The Approaching Advent of Christ

by
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CHAPTER VII

THE GREAT MISSIONARY COMMISSION AND ITS FULFILLMENT

Matthew 28:19-20 (R.V. mg.).

Jesus came to them and spake unto them, saying, All authority hath been given unto me in heaven and on earth. Go ye therefore, and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I commanded you: and lo, I am with you alway, *even unto the consummation of the age.*

These were among the last words spoken by the Lord to His Apostles before He left them. Naturally they have a peculiar interest to all His people today, because it is through the obedience of the Apostles and early witnesses to this command that we ourselves have come to know the faith of the Gospel. What concerns us now, however, is the light that these words of our Lord throw upon our inquiry when the Church's career upon earth will close. It affords us very clear guidance, for the Lord promised to the founders of His Church His own presence by the Spirit "unto the consummation of the age." Plain it is, therefore, that the Church will exist on earth until that time. Such is the natural inference of the promise; for if the Lord had believed that He was to come and receive His believing people to Himself several years before the End of the Age arrived, He could not have used the language that we are now examining. He would have said, "I am with you all the days until the last trial, when I will receive you to Myself." But the fact that He said "I am with you alway even unto the consummation of the age" is proof that our Lord presupposed that His Church would not be removed from earth to heaven several years or decades before the End.

Some have sought to obviate this criticism by assuming that the End of the Age is a period lasting from the Rapture till the millennium. But I have already shown that the suggestion is untenable, because the proposed interval, so far from being a consummation to "this present evil Age," is a new age altogether. But according to Scripture the age that follows the present one is that of the kingly rule of Messiah. Moreover, Matthew 24:3 shows that the consummation of the Age is Christ's Advent in glory and power to establish that Kingdom.

Other pre-trib advocates, who saw clearly the truth of this, cast about to find a less vulnerable mode of saving their theories, because to leave the Church on earth until the End of the Age was a heresy that the new scheme of the prophetic future was intended to save us from. These theorists admit that Christ's words presuppose the existence on earth until the very End of this Age of the people whom the Apostles represented. And they admit that if their theories had to stand the test of the obvious meaning of Christ's promise, they would necessarily collapse. "But," they triumphantly claim, "the surface meaning of the Great Commission is not the true meaning at all. Our Lord was not addressing the

Apostles as representatives of His church during the Gospel dispensation but of a Jewish Remnant that is to arise in the future, after the Church is taken to heaven. True, this is not the common view, and none of the great commentators has ever taught it, but Darby discovered it some years ago through seeing that Matthew is the Jewish gospel."

Such is the theory entertained by many teachers in England and America.¹

As this theory of the Jewish Remnant will come before us at length in another volume, I do not enter fully upon it now. Suffice it to offer a few general criticisms on its use at Matthew 28, and I am confident that these will avail to show that the supposed "discovery" is merely an invention.

First, it is fair to state that we are not alone in repudiating this new vagary of exegesis. Most of those who maintain the new prophetic scheme, and even believe in the missionary labors of the future Jewish Remnant, treat with scorn and indignation the new interpretation of Matthew 28:19-20. This is the attitude of Open Brethren as a whole. They, who have a noble missionary work in all parts of the world, energetically resist the latest theory of the new cult. Year by year conferences are held among the Christians I have mentioned to urge the claims of the Lord's last Commission upon the Church, and stir up greater interest in the missionary crusade. It is therefore not open to Gaebelein and his school to urge that opposition to their interpretation springs from "dispensational" ignorance, because many men on his own side, who are not his inferiors in perception of prophetic truth, reject the dispensational interpretation of Matthew 28.

But without going into the Remnant theory, it is possible to show conclusively that the application of Matthew 28 to Jews of the Last Days is wrong. Indeed, such an application is inconsistent with the theory of the Remnant elsewhere. When, for instance, Christians open Matthew 24 for instruction on the Lord's Coming, Darbyists say to us: "How can the Apostles in Matthew 24:3 have represented the Christian Church? They knew nothing of redemption by blood, nothing of the new creation headed up in the risen Christ, nothing of the new life through the indwelling Spirit, nothing of union with Christ the Lord in His death and resurrection. They were but companions of a rejected Christ, and, as such, were typical of a Remnant in Israel that will have a hazy notion of Christ's person and work, yet will be witnesses for Him."

Such is the gist of the arguments used to prove that the Coming of Matthew 24:29-31 and the preceding events cannot have reference to any part of the Church of God of this Dispensation.² And it is accompanied by the tacit admission that if the Apostles, when receiving the instruction of those chapters, had not been such a poor turnout spiritually, if they had been redeemed by the blood of the Lamb, made part of the new creation in Christ Jesus, endowed with the life-giving Spirit, and united to Christ in His death and resurrection, then the only choice would be to accept the teaching about the Parousia in Matthew 24 as spoken to representatives of the Christian Church.

But the theorists' attitude to the Apostles in Matthew 28:19-20 gives the lie to their pleading at 24:3; for

1 See Gaebelein: *Matthew, in loco*, where Darby is quoted. Cf. Anderson: *The Buddha of Christendom*, p. 271; *The Bible or the Church?* p. 232.

2 See Kelly, *Christ's Coming Again and Second Coming*; Darby, *Synopsis*; Trotter, chapter 15; Gaebelein, *Olivet Discourses and Matthew*. Kelly is very specific on the points mentioned in the text.

when the Apostles sat at Christ's feet in Matthew 28, not only the greatest crisis in the history of the world but also the greatest in the spiritual experience of the Apostles had taken place, namely, the death and resurrection of the Son of God. The men who for three years had been disciples at the Saviour's feet were now redeemed by the previous blood of the Lamb, were clean through the word that He had spoken, were a new creation in Christ Jesus.³ They had received the regenerating Spirit and been begotten again unto a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead (1 Pet. 1:3). In a few days they were to receive the Spirit of power in all His fulness for the accomplishment of the task that the Lord was now committing to them.⁴ And yet in spite of this revolution in the Apostles' standing and experience, our dispensationalist friends have the coolness to link them to the semi-Christian, semi-converted Jewish Remnant of uncertain standing in the Last Days!

If, however, the dispensational status of the Apostles depended from time to time upon their spiritual attainment or standing at the time the Lord addressed them; if, for example (as pre-tribs insist), the limited standing of the Apostles at Matthew 24:3 placed them in relationship with the future Jewish Remnant, then it is simply impossible to relegate them to that Remnant in Matthew 28, because their spiritual condition and standing had been transformed since the former occasion. I have already referred to words of Kelly's to show that after the resurrection the Apostles stood on *Christian* ground. They stood before God in the fullness of the redemption accomplished by Him who died the death and rose in the power of an indissoluble life (Heb. 7:16). To the Jews, as a matter of fact, our Lord did not manifest Himself after His resurrection. He revealed Himself only to His brethren, the men and women who had been redeemed by His blood and were now in union with Him (Matt. 28:10; Heb. 2:11-13; cf. Acts 10:41).

Every argument, therefore, that the theorist uses to prove that the Apostles at Matthew 24:3 represented the Jewish National Remnant of the future, avails to refute his contention that at 28:19-20 they did not represent the Christian Church; for the ground on which they now stand is not Jewish but Christian, and He of whom they are companions is not a Christ after the flesh in Israel but the risen and glorified Lord of the universe.

The fact that the Remnant theory can be made, on pre-trib dispensational presuppositions, to fit the Apostles' standing alike before and after the tremendous change of the cross, the resurrection, and the bestowal of the Spirit, is proof that the whole Remnant hypothesis is a veritable nose of wax to be turned and twisted as the difficulties dictate.

Marvelous is the Remnant in the hands of a thorough-going dispensationalist. Are there "martyrs"⁵ for God's word and Christ's Gospel still in the disembodied state in heaven *after* the Secret Rapture and resurrection? The Remnant or its converts will account for them. Are there "saints" (Paul's and John's name for Christians) in the tribulation at the End?⁶ Again, the Remnant's converts fulfill all that is asked of them. Are there "Elect" (the term used by our Lord and His Apostles for the saved of this

3 On the words, "He breathed on them and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Spirit" (John 20:22), the reader is referred to Kelly's *N.T. Doctrine of the Holy Spirit*, p. 140.

4 Mark 16:15-16; Acts 1:8; Luke 24:47-9.

5 Rev. 7:9-17, 6:9-11, 20:4b; Isaiah 26:19.

6 Rev. 22:21 (R.V.), 13:7, 14:12.

dispensation)⁷ to be mustered at the Last Day? The Remnant with its Imprecatory Psalms, and the Sermon on the Mount, accommodates itself to the situation. It [the Remnant] meets every emergency, solves every difficulty, carries every weight. At one and the same time it is going to complete a commission⁸ (Matt. 10:1-23) that began with a prohibition to go among Gentiles (v. 6) and take up another to go and disciple all Nations.

Again, if the spiritual attainments and standing of the Apostles at the time preclude the application of Matthew 28:19-20 to a semi-converted Remnant of the Last Days, still more do the spiritual blessings and functions presupposed preclude it. According to the Commission, the persons addressed will disciple all nations and baptize them into the name of the Trinity. Now this is something that it will be impossible for the Remnant to do, because the strange theory itself credits the Remnant with only the haziest notions of Christ's person. Almost all pre-tribs even teach that the Remnant will not acknowledge Jesus as Messiah. Gaebelein himself tells us that it is "an evil interpretation" that makes Christians of the 144,000 Jewish witnesses, who, *ex hypothesi*, are to fulfill Matthew 28:19-20 during the time of Antichrist;⁹ and yet his new-fangled interpretation of the missionary Commission sends them out to win and baptize all nations! And as for baptism, the very significance of the rite rules out the Remnant, for we know that that sacrament signifies, among other things, the identification of the believer with Christ in His death. But, *ex hypothesi*, the Remnant will know nothing of such a truth.

Again, the persons addressed by Christ were commissioned to teach their converts "to observe *all things* whatsoever I have commanded you." Not a few select passages from the Sermon on the Mount; not a few stray snippets selected by dispensationalists as too rugged for the Church; not isolated fragments from the "Jewish Gospel"; but "all things whatsoever I have commanded you"-- including, of course, the command, "This do in remembrance of Me," and all other precepts and commands in the discourses of the Upper Room, and their sublime teaching on the Fatherhood of God, the brotherhood of Christ with believers, and the new commandment of love in the family of God. All this, however, will be lost on the Remnant; for they, so far from being able to inculcate those wonderful doctrines, will be, *ex hypothesi*, ignorant of the first principles of the Gospel of Christ. Gaebelein tells us with enthusiasm that the witnessing Remnant will even fulfill the Imprecatory Psalms, and at the same time some of the Beatitudes of our Lord! This seems totally incredible, but it is so.¹⁰

Finally, the persons addressed by the Lord Jesus were promised the presence of the risen, glorified Christ by the Spirit every single day until the Age should end (v. 20). The Lord Himself was to be their strength and portion. Does any theorist seriously contend that the Jewish Remnant will enjoy this unique blessedness?

When one thinks of this dispensational miracle of a company of semi-Christian, semi-converted Jews (guided now by the Imprecatory Psalms, now by the Lord's Prayer, some Beatitudes, and the more arduous portions of the majestic Sermon on the Mount) going out to evangelize the world in 1260 days (at the very time that the Holy Spirit, *ex hypothesi*, has been raptured to heaven and Antichrist is reigning in a world of men given over to judicial blindness), and of this company of 144,000 evangelists succeeding in converting "the overwhelming majority" of the inhabitants of the world to

7 Matt. 22:14 (*ekletoi*: the same word as in 24:31), and Rom. 8:33., etc.

8 Matt. 10:23 is applied by Dr. Gaebelein to the future preaching of the Remnant.

9 *Olivet Discourse*, p. 45.

10 See his *Matthew*, *Olivet Discourse*, and *Hath God*, etc.

Christ; and when one thinks that the essential features of this ludicrous picture are enthusiastically accepted by countless multitudes in Christendom, one can only find suitable words in Lucian,¹¹ who (though he lived about 1800 years ago) furnished a marvelous picture of modern reasoners who swallow an absurdity for one of their premises, carry it through to its logical conclusion, and without a smile offer us a fantastic conclusion (which gets not a whit saner or truer from endless repetition and dogmatism):

I fancy you hearing from some teller of tales how there is a certain lady of perfect beauty, beyond the Graces themselves or the Heavenly Aphrodite, and then, without ever an inquiry whether his tale is true, and such a person to be found on earth, falling straight in love with her, like Medea in the story enamoured of a dream-Jason. And what most drew you on to love, you and the others who worship the same phantom, was, if I am not mistaken, the consistent way in which the inventor of the lady added to his picture, when once he had got your ear. That was the only thing you all looked to, with that he turned you about as he would, having got his first hold upon you, averring that he was leading you the straight way to your beloved. After the first step, you see, all was easy; none of you ever looked round when he came to the entrance, and inquired whether it was the right one, or whether he had accidentally taken the wrong; no, you all followed in your predecessors' footsteps, like sheep after the bell-wether, whereas the right thing was to decide at the entrance whether you should go in.

Perhaps an illustration will make my meaning clearer: when one of those audacious poets affirms that there was once a three-headed and six-handed man, if you accept that quietly without questioning its possibility, he will proceed to fill in the picture consistently--six eyes and ears, three voices talking at once, three mouths eating, and thirty fingers instead of our poor ten all told; if he has to fight, three of his hands will have a buckler, wicker targe, or shield apiece, while of the other three one swings an axe, another hurls a spear, and a third wields a sword. It is too late to carp at these details, when they come; they are consistent with the beginning; it was about that that the question ought to have been raised whether it was to be accepted and passed as true. Once grant that, and the rest comes flooding in, irresistible, hardly now susceptible of doubt, because it is consistent and accordant with your initial admissions. That is just your case; your love-yearning would not allow you to look into the facts at each entrance, and so you are dragged on by consistency; it never occurs to you that a thing may be self-consistent and yet false; if a man says twice five is seven, and you take his word for it without checking the sum, he will naturally deduce that four times five is fourteen, and so on *ad libitum*. This is the way that weird geometry proceeds: it sets before beginners certain strange assumptions, and insists on their granting the existence of inconceivable things, such as points having no parts, lines without breadth, and so on, builds on these rotten foundations a superstructure equally rotten, and pretends to go on to a demonstration which is true, though it starts from premises which are false.

Just so you, when you have granted the principles of any school, believe in the deductions from them, and take their consistency, false as it is, for a guarantee of truth. Then with some of you, hope travels through, and you die before you have seen the truth and detected your deceivers, while the rest, disillusioned too late, will not turn back for shame: what, confess at their years that they have been abused with toys all this time? so they hold on desperately,

11 *The Rival Philosophies.*

putting the best face upon it and making all the converts they can, to have the consolation of good company in their deception; they are well aware that to speak out is to sacrifice the respect and superiority and honour they are accustomed to; so they will not do it if it may be helped, knowing the height from which they will fall to the common level. Just a few are found with the courage to say they were deluded, and warn other aspirants. Meeting such a one, call him a good man, a true and an honest; nay, call him philosopher, if you will; to my mind, the name is his or no-one's; the rest either have no knowledge of the truth, though they think they have, or else have knowledge and hide it (vol. ii. 83-5).

These words of the great Attic wit and literary miracle of the second century of our Era are more caustic than one likes, but otherwise they are perfectly applicable to those students of prophecy who confuse and combine two companies of the End-time that the Scriptures distinguish: namely, a Remnant of pious Israelites in Palestine, who are sealed against death and apostasy in the last great trial, and are converted to the Saviour at His descent to the mount of Olives;¹² and the Christian Church of Judæa, which in Apostolic times formed part of the Body of Christ,¹³ if the Apostle Paul is to be trusted, and, in the End-time, will study Christ's word, will act on it to the saving of their souls, and will share His glory when He comes to reign:¹⁴ Jews in the land of Israel, subject to its laws and codes and constitution, just as Christians elsewhere are subject to the laws of their countries; yet Christians who love the Saviour of Israel, and wait for the blessed hope of His Glorious Appearing.¹⁵

The failure of theorists to distinguish these things is what necessitated and created the two-headed, two-tongued monstrosity in Israel and Christendom at the End-time: a half-converted, half-Christian Jewish Remnant, which at one and the same time evangelizes the nations and [yet] invokes the curses of heaven upon them; which cleaves to the Imprecatory Psalms and [yet] uses the Lord's Prayer, some of the Beatitudes, and the Missionary Commission of Matthew 28; which knows nothing of present peace, forgiveness and deliverance and [yet] converts untold millions to Christ: which is sealed against death and [yet] has many thousands of "martyrs" who are so fortunate as to enter heaven and attain the highest blessings: which is nebulous in its knowledge of full salvation and [yet] becomes nursing father to the glorious martyrs of Revelation 7.

An acute writer said of pre-war Russia that it showed an Asiatic face towards Europe and a European face towards Asia. And the Remnant of Darby, Trotter, and Gaebelein¹⁶ will be a prodigy in the manipulation of its conflicting moods and feelings as it pursues "the gentle art of making enemies" and preaches to them the Gospel of the Kingdom.

It is all consistent and ludicrous, because they began by accepting the absurdity that a cantankerous O.T. company in the strait-jacket of the Imprecatory Psalms is to be identified with members of the Christian Church, now on the soil of Palestine, now among the nations, who keep the teaching of Jesus Christ in using the Lord's Prayer and other ordinances, in disciplining all nations by baptism, and by teaching their Saviour's will as the grand principle of a new life.

12 Rev. 7:1-8 and 14:1-5; Joel 22:32 (R.V.); Zech 8:11-12; Zech 12-13; Matt. 23:39; Rom. 11:25-26.

13 1 Thess. 2:14; Gal. 1:22; 1 Cor. 15:9; Rom. 16:7.

14 Rev. 12:14,17; Matt. 24:15; Luke 21:34-36, etc.

15 Titus 2:13. See Weymouth's, Moffatt's and Goodspeed's translations and chapter 9 of this volume.

16 The picture is given with a wealth of detail by all three writers.

There will always be a few to think that in addition to exceptional gifts and insight Darby wore a mantle of infallibility; so that the Remnant theories will last as long as the *Synopsis* is read, which will be a long time. But there is no excuse for Open Brethren's persisting in the acceptance of theories that, more than any other factor (not excluding Sacerdotalism), are making the oral teaching of our Lord of no effect--theories that are blighting Bible study and Christian fellowship all over the world, theories and *traditions* that have cursed the movement from the beginning. Why is there no excuse? Because the great leader who saved them from a new bondage, who was mighty in prayer to God for the support of thousands of orphans, the sending forth of missionaries, and the distribution of the Word God, taught them the *truth* on the hope of Christ's Second Coming,¹⁷ without the subtleties, the distortions, and the errors that others wrote on their broad phylacteries. And if some think that mighty prayer, spirituality, and the simplicity of Christ are inadequate guides on prophecy, then there are the admirable books by Tregelles, a thorough scholar: *Remarks on The Prophetic Visions of Daniel*¹⁸ and *The Hope of Christ's Second Coming*, to supply what they desire in the way of competent scholarship. The boycott on these and Newton's works might well be lifted in this centennial year.¹⁹

It is seriously and repeatedly urged by theorists that the fact of the Missionary Commission's being recorded in Matthew's Gospel is proof that it cannot be applicable to the Church. But the atoning death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ are also recorded in that same Gospel. Must we therefore assume that those doctrines do not have reference to the Church of God but apply only to the Remnant of Jews in the Last Days? We must do [so] if this argument is sound. True it is that one of Matthew's aims was at proving that Jesus is the Messiah of Israel; but that Gospel was written in vain unless we see that it was a principal intention of its author to show that He who is Israel's Messiah is also Lord and Saviour of a Church from all nations. In the selection of the parables and incidents in the last sixteen chapters of his Gospel, the Apostle aims at showing, among other things, that the Gospel has broken beyond the limits of Judaism, and, in an age when Jesus is rejected officially by the Nation, is gathering a new and living Israel from all tribes and nations of the earth. It is Matthew's Gospel alone that records the Lord's purpose to build His new Ecclesia (16:18).

The volume that opened by giving the "genealogy of Jesus Christ the son of David, the son of Abraham," closes fittingly and grandly by showing Jesus no longer as the Saviour merely of the lost sheep of the house of Israel but as the Saviour of a company from all nations, and Lord of the universe; by showing that this company is subject not to the law of Moses but to the precepts and principles of Him whose commandments are not grievous; by showing that this Israel after the Spirit will not enjoy the presence of Jehovah at stated times and places only but all the days and in all places, until He shall come forth in His glory and the Church shall see Him as He is.

A modern master in Israel and the Church thus characterizes the Great Commission:

17 *The Second Coming of Christ*, by George Müller; a sermon preached in 1881.

18 Published originally by Samuel Bagster & Sons, London; Newton's works on prophecy (*The Prophecy of the Lord Jesus as contained in Matthew 24-25.*, etc.) were published by Houlston & Sons, London. They are now obtainable from the Sovereign Grace Advent Testimony Movement.

19 It is fair to state that Sir R. Anderson treated the 144,000 as "Jews and yet Christians"; but, as seen above, Gaebelien calls this "an evil interpretation." Anderson, followed by Bullinger and F. E. Marsh, held that the Pentecostal Church did not belong to the Body of Christ, which began with Paul. But this fiction is disposed of by 1 Thess. 2:14; Gal. 1:22; 1 Cor. 15:9; and Rom. 16:7.

The last words of our Lord, as recorded in the Gospel of Matthew, are invested with a special interest. They are most memorable, when we consider the occasion on which they were uttered, and the calm majesty with which the Saviour, rejected by men, declares Himself the Light of the world and the Lord of all ages; when we think of the commentary which is written on these words in the Book of Acts and in the history of the last eighteen centuries; of the solemn and touching manner in which they are brought before us as a living reality in every baptism; of the power which they have exerted in constraining the Church to go forth with the Gospel message, and when we remember the precious and comprehensive promise they contain of the Lord's presence with His Church, until the Church shall be "for ever with the Lord.

These words of our Saviour contain also a brief summary of Christian doctrine, a concise epitome of Church truth. The *centre* is the Person of Christ; the *foundation* is the revelation of God, as Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Here we see the spiritual character of the Church, as the Light and Teacher of the Nations. Here we are reminded of the new obedience of the Gospel, as distinguished from the dispensation of the Law. The Apostolic Commission points out the relation of the Church to the world--her character and her mission; while it contains all needful encouragement and consolation, both in the declaration of Christ's omnipotence, on which it rests, and in the promise of His Presence with His people throughout the dispensation.²⁰ (Italics his.)

When I hear the theorists relegating the Great Commission to the Jews because it is written in the "Jewish" Gospel, I am always reminded of an interesting story, which has a good moral. A revered missionary friend of mine in Melbourne, Australia, had the admirable custom at dinner, when the family circle was complete, of selecting a Biblical topic as a subject of conversation. By means of the discussion that followed, even young people were instructed in the mysteries of the faith; for the father was a scholarly man and a reverent student of the Scriptures, including prophetic truth. But of course there was a danger of young people's not seeing things in their right proportion, and of being misled by half-truths. One day the mother, on going to the front gate, found one of her sons, a youth about nine, engaged in a vigorous fight with a neighbor's son. The mother rebuked her boy and asked him for an explanation. "He hit me on the face and I hit him back," came the reply. "But," the mother asked, "have you never read the words of the Lord Jesus, 'whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also'?" The lad thereupon asked, "Mother, in which Gospel is that text found?" "In Matthew's," was the reply. Upon which he quickly and triumphantly responded, "Well, mother, Matthew's Gospel was written *for the Jews!*"

How very like the grown-up theorists who, whenever they are confronted with a text in Matthew or the Apocalypse that smashes their system, endeavor to wriggle out of their difficulty by explaining, with a wave of the hand, "That's in the Jewish Gospel," or "That was spoken to Jews." The poor Apostles! If only they had been a conglomeration of men from the heathen tribes in the four corners of the earth, then we could have accepted teaching addressed to them as Christians and meant for the Body of Christ. But seeing that they came from the same race as Abraham and Isaac and Jacob, as Moses and David and Daniel, as Rabinowich and Edershem and Adolph Saphir, they could not receive teaching from the Lord in the days of His flesh that was suitable for the Church out of all Nations! So, in effect, it is gravely argued in certain circles where the new wisdom prevails.

20 Adolph Saphir: *Christ and the Church* (preface).

Let sober Christians have done with a system of prophetic interpretation that leads them to subscribe to vagaries like this. Let them, if need be, throw overboard the new theories of the Advent rather than give up this glorious promise of the Saviour's presence with His people. For surely His gracious words are not only calculated to stir the conscience in view of millions lying still in darkness, but also to arouse joy unspeakable in the soul of everyone who is laboring for Him; for He promises to be with us, and holds out to us the hope of His coming again.

In his learned and helpful commentary on Matthew, Plummer says of the Lord's promise to His Church:

There need be no doubts or faintheartedness after such an assurance as that, and nothing is wanting to the fullness of it. There is the solemn introduction, "Behold"; the emphatic pronoun, "I" showing that no less than the Risen Lord Himself is to be their companion and their ally; the detailed description of the time ("all the days"), leaving not a single day without the certainty of this help; and the express statement that this promise holds good as long as the present dispensation shall last ("until the consummation of the age"). When "the consummation of the age" has been reached, they will no longer need the assurance that He is with them to aid them in their work, for their work will be accomplished, and they will "see Him as He is" (1 John 3:2) (p. 436).

The words of another wise expositor may well close our consideration of the Missionary Commission: "The Church enjoys the spiritual presence of her Lord until the close of the current age, which would be coincident with the second advent" (Meyer).