

# Theology on the Web.org.uk

*Making Biblical Scholarship Accessible*

This document was supplied for free educational purposes. Unless it is in the public domain, it may not be sold for profit or hosted on a webserver without the permission of the copyright holder.

If you find it of help to you and would like to support the ministry of Theology on the Web, please consider using the links below:



Buy me a coffee

<https://www.buymeacoffee.com/theology>



PATREON

<https://patreon.com/theologyontheweb>

[PayPal](#)

<https://paypal.me/robbradshaw>

---

A table of contents for *The Bible Student* can be found here:

[https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles\\_bible-student\\_01.php](https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles_bible-student_01.php)



*“The Entrance of THY WORDS Giveth Light”*

---

CONTENTS

	PAGE
MUCH SERVING ... ..	1
CHRIST IN THE FOUR GOSPELS ... ..	4
THE JOYS OF BIBLE STUDY ... ..	11
NOTES ON HEBREWS ... ..	17
WORD STUDIES IN THE FIRST PSALM ...	22
THE SECOND ADVENT ... ..	27
WORDS DESCRIPTIVE OF THE SECOND ADVENT	35
EXEGETICAL STUDY OF COLOSSIANS ... ..	37
THE RECENT FINDS IN PALESTINE ... ..	43
THE BIBLE'S ORIGINS ... ..	46

---

*Editor:* A. McDONALD REDWOOD

# THE SECOND ADVENT

BY W. GRAHAM SCROGGIE, D.D.

## 2. The Doctrine of Christ's Coming

It has been said that every science is arranged about a centre. Botany circles around the cellular law of growth; Zoology, around a type of structure; Geology, around an order of strata; and so on. Now Theology is a science, and it too moves around some one point, or points, of revealed truth. In one view it may be said that *Redemption* is the centre around which revelation revolves. In another view we shall see that the orbit of truth is elliptical and not circular. Dr. Pierson tells this story:—

Kepler, first in fact and in genius of modern astronomers, deservedly called "the legislator of the heavens," sought with all his heart to solve astronomical problems. With agony he strove to enter the strait gate and narrow way that lead to the secret chamber of science, and to explain the enigmas of six thousand years. Vainly did the secrets of planetary and stellar worlds seek to elude him. He forged key after key, that he might unlock the doors of these mysteries. His courage and patience transfigured even failure with success. If one theory proved inadequate, there was at least one less to try, and so the limits became narrower within which truth would be found. He exhausted eight years of toil only to prove worthless nineteen successive experiments. At last, driven to abandon the circular orbit, he found his twentieth hypothesis on the curve which is next to the circle in simplicity, namely, the ellipse, and, as all the conditions were met, the problem was solved. Bursting with enthusiasm, he cried: "O, Almighty God, I am thinking Thy thoughts after Thee." Pressing his research further, he established his second and third laws, and, almost wild with triumph, exclaimed: "Nothing holds me! I will indulge my sacred fury! The book is written to be read either now or by posterity; I care not which! It may well wait a century for a reader, since God has waited six thousand years for an observer."

This story illustrates several things, among which might be observed the prevailing ignorance among men of the *system* of revealed truth, in consequence either of their sloth, or of their unbending adherence to preconceived ideas; it illustrates, also, the reward which comes, sooner or later, to the candid and persistent; and we may further learn from it that as by the under-

standing of a few simple laws we may come into a wide knowledge of the Works of God, in like manner, by the apprehension of a few of the greater truths we may come into a new possession of the Word of God. Had Kepler refused to think all that he did not wish to think, he would never have attained success. And so long as Christians refuse to recognize the presence and prominence of certain truths in *the whole system* of revealed truth, they can never hope to rightly interpret Scripture. Among these "certain truths" we place the doctrine of the Lord's Advents, a doctrine to which no adequate place is given in the vast majority of our systems of theology. Men do not wish to think that Christ is coming again, and so they either ignore altogether what is said in Scripture about the subject, or explain away the teaching. Yet, the greatest emphasis is laid on this truth in the Word of God, an emphasis which we could not have failed to observe had not both heart and mind been warped.

Let us then, quite simply and briefly, endeavour to see what place the truth of the Advents occupies in the system of revealed truth. By the Advents we mean, of course, our Lord's first and second comings, the one being now a matter of history, and the other, still a matter of prophecy. It is in the consideration thus of the whole subject that light will be brought to every open mind. We shall expect to find the teaching clear and comprehensive, and we shall not be disappointed.

Sweeping the whole horizon of truth, we may say that there are three words in which it is comprehended:—

*DEFEAT.            DEATH.            DELIVERANCE.*

And an understanding of what is contained in each of these, and of their relation to one another, is the study now before us.

#### I. DEFEAT

Adam, created in innocence, was put on probation, the issue of which, according to whether he obeyed or disobeyed God, would be holiness and life, or sin and death. We know that he deliberately transgressed the commandment of God, and thus brought upon himself and those who were prospectively wrapped up in, and represented by him, the penalty attached to sin, which was death—spiritual, physical, and eternal. But even before the Divine sentence was pronounced, the infinite grace of God was revealed, and His purpose for the race unfolded in what, to Satan, was a word of judgment, but to us, a word of promise.

“I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.”

No sooner had man entered into the darkness of sin than Jehovah flashed along his path a light that told of mercy shown in infinite grace, and of the provision whereby that merciful purpose was to be manifested.

It was in consequence of this *Protevangelium* that Adam and his wife did not die, in the completest sense, that day. But God had attached the penalty of death to sin, and so death there must be.

## 2. DEATH

So we now come down the centuries to the time when the God-Man, the promised Seed of the woman, had His heel bruised, and Himself bruised the Serpant's head; to the time when Christ the Just died for us the unjust, suffering in Himself all the bitter consequences of sin, and thus, fully meeting the righteous requirements of an all-holy God. It is important to understand that Christ's death was not a *necessity*, for if salvation were in any sense necessitated it would cease to be of grace. Death is necessitated by sin, but *our* death, not His. What, then, did make necessary the death of Christ? Surely, the declaration made to the Devil in Gen. 3:15, which, whilst to him a sentence of judgment, was to Adam and his wife an unveiling of divine purpose of redemption, however dim their apprehension of it may have been.

But in order that God's Son might die it was necessary that His life be conditioned as ours, that is, that He become Man, which He could do only by coming to this world. That coming we speak of as His Incarnation, or, His First Advent. This is the point at which we wish to arrive. It is central and fundamental. Two great facts precede Christ's First Advent, and two follow it, and these bear a vital relation to one another which may be shown in this way:—

(a) The Tragic Defeat of the first Adam.

(b) The Revelation of Deliverance.

(c) THE FIRST ADVENT.

(b) The Incarnation of Christ.

(a) The Crucifixion of Christ.

The Fall necessitated death; the promise of deliverance necessitated Christ's death, and His death necessitated His first Advent;

the end of that Advent was Incarnation, which alone made possible the crucifixion. This furnishes us with the key to history from the Fall to the Cross, and no part of this outline can be sacrificed without destroying the whole. One of the distinguishing characteristics of the Israelitish People, who were called in Abram, was their hope of a coming Messiah. Beginning with the predicted "Seed" in Gen. 12:7, 22:17, Gal. 3:16, we trace the promised One as Shiloh in Gen. 49:10, as Star and Sceptre in Num. 24:17-19; as the Unerring Prophet in Deut. 18:15-19; as the Anointed One in 1 Sam. 2:10; as the abiding King in 2 Sam. 7.; as the Branch of the Lord in Isa. 4:2; as Immanuel in Isa. 7:14; as the Child in Isa. 9:6; as the Twig in Isa. 11:1; as the Prince in Dan. 9:25; as the Ruler in Mic. 5:2; as the Desire of all nations in Hag. 2:7; as the Priest King in Zech. 6:13; as the Messenger of the Covenant in Mal. 3:1; to all which must be added the innumerable references to Him in the Psalms and elsewhere; the prophetic presentations of Him in type; and the many Christophanies of the Old Testament. This indestructible hope was planted in the hearts of the people by God Himself, and was just the progressive fulfilment of the promise of a Redeemer. We are not therefore surprised to find such as Simeon and Anna waiting for the consolation of Israel, Who in the fulness of time came, made of a woman, made under the law. (Gal. 4:4, 5.) This brings us to our third word,

### 3. DELIVERANCE

Why did Christ come, and die? Let this same passage in Galatians reply: "To redeem them that were under the law;" and from other Scriptures we learn that this deliverance includes also the material creation (Rom. 8:19-23).

At this point we must remember how God proposed to bless the world (Gen. 12:1-3); how that purpose has been suspended through the sin of Israel (Matt. 23:37, 38); how at the present time He is calling out His Church from the world (Eph. 3: 2-13); and how He purposes to fulfil all His promises made to the "fathers" (Acts 3:20, 21). The recollection of all this brings into view several doctrines of outstanding importance. The Christ of God Who died was not defeated by death, for He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures; and after forty days of manifestation to His disciples, He ascended up into heaven, to His Father's throne (Rev. 3:21). Upon His ascent,

the Holy Spirit, Who had been promised, descended, and constituted the scattered believing units in the world a Church (Acts 2.). During this Church, or Christian dispensation, Israel, as such, is set aside, and the promises made to Abraham and his seed are not now in process of fulfilment. But the divine purpose for the world through Israel has not been changed, it only tarries for a while, and at the close of the present age God in Christ will resume again His Covenant dealings with the elect nation (Rom. 11.); will set up His Millennial Kingdom (Rev. 20:6), and cause all nations of the earth to be blessed (Isa. 2:1-4). It is evident, then, that in order to redeem He had to die; in order to conquer death, He had to rise again; in order to send the Spirit and call His Church He had to ascend into heaven; and in order to restore Israel, establish again the throne of David, and sit upon it as predicted (Luke 1:31-33), ruling the whole earth in righteousness (Isa. 9:7), it will, of course, be necessary for Him to come again, an event which is as clearly predicted as was His first Advent, and which as literally will be fulfilled (Zech. 14:4, Acts 1:11).

Here, then, are five other truths whose connection may be shown thus:

- (a) The Resurrection of Christ.
- (b) The Ascension of Christ.
- (c) THE FIRST ADVENT. Mic. 5:2.
- (b) The Realization of Deliverance.
- (a) The Glorious Triumph of the last Adam.

Now let us put these ten facts together, and we shall see at once how perfect is the plan of redemption history, and how vital to the carrying out of it are the first and second Advents of the Lord Jesus.

- (a) The Tragic Defeat of the first Adam. Gen. 3:6, 7.
- (b) The Revelation of Deliverance. Gen. 3:15.
- (c) THE FIRST ADVENT. Mic. 5. 2.
- (b) The Incarnation of Christ. Luke 2:11.
- (a) The Crucifixion of Christ. Luke 23:46.
- (a) The Resurrection of Christ. Luke 24:6.
- (b) The Ascension of Christ. Luke 24:51.
- (c) THE SECOND ADVENT. Acts 1:11.
- (b) The Realization of Deliverance. Rom. 8:20, 21.
- (a) The Glorious Triumph of the last Adam. Phil. 2:10, 11.  
Rev. 19.

Note the harmonies of this *Poem of History* in ten lines:—

In line 1, Paradise is lost; and in line 10, it is regained. In line 2, deliverance is revealed; and in line 9, it is realised. In line 4, Christ descends from heaven; and in line 7, He ascends to heaven again. In line 5, Christ is crucified; and in line 6, He rises from the grave. And the foci around which this whole system of truth revolves are the first and second Advents in lines 3 and 8. Before the First Advent are Ruin and Revelation. After the Second Advent are Realization and Restoration. And between the two Advents are the Incarnation, Crucifixion, Resurrection, and Ascension of Christ, the central doctrines of the Christian Faith.

Take the doctrine of the Advents out of this System of Truth and the whole goes to pieces. As certainly the First Advent was a necessity in order to the atoning death of Christ, so certainly is the Second Advent a necessity in order to the ultimate triumph of Christ. Eliminate the Advents, I say, and all is confusion; but apprehend their place and importance in the revealed plan of the ages, and you are in possession of one of the great keys of interpretation. It is difficult to understand how any careful student of Scripture can minimize and even deny the doctrine of Christ's Coming Again, for this truth does not rest upon a few proof texts, but enters into the entire warp and woof of divine revelation, and any system of theology which fails to recognize it, must be sadly incomplete if not positively at fault. No doubt this truth was one of the first which the Church lost, and may be one of the last which she shall recover, but it held a very prominent place in the belief and teaching of the Apostles, and the Apostolic Fathers; indeed, according to the historian Mosheim, "the prevailing opinion that Christ was to come and reign a thousand years among men before the final dissolution of the world, had met with no opposition until the time of Origen." Of the sect of the Montanists in the third century, Professor Kurtz, the German historian, writes: "Against what seemed the excessive secularization of the Church it presented a model of Church discipline such as nearness of the Lord's coming demanded." Also, in the middle of the third century we find Cyprian, Bishop of Carthage, saying: "Let us ever in anxiety and cautiousness be waiting the second Advent of the Lord, for as those things which were foretold are come to pass, so those things will follow which are yet promised." No one with any



regard for his reputation will question that this was one of the first doctrines to be promulgated, and that it was very dear to the early Christians. But, it is said, those early Christians were *mistaken*; that the Apostles who at first gave great prominence to this dogma, later on modified, or abandoned it altogether. All that need be said of this claim is that *it is not true*. The Apostle Paul, who began by writing two Letters on this subject (1 and 2 Thess.), ended by declaring this to have been his hope all along, and in view of the "crown" encouraging all Christians in it.

"Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give me at that day; and not to me only, but unto all them also that love His appearing." (2 Tim. 4:8).

Moreover, Paul declares that he had this truth revealed to him by the Lord (1 Thess. 4:15); it therefore becomes a very serious thing to say that the Apostles and their followers were mistaken. I said a moment ago that this truth was one of the first to be lost, that is, to the Church as a whole; but there have never been lacking some who read Scripture aright and had the courage to teach it. Prof. Harnack tells us that the faith of "all the numerous Franciscan spiritualists" from the thirteenth century was the expectation of the imminent return of the Lord. Francis of Assisi and Savonarola both believed and taught that Christ was coming to reign on earth for a thousand years. So did Wycliffe. And Tyndale wrote: "We are commanded to look every hour for that day." "Christ and His Apostles taught no other, but warned to look for His coming again every hour." John Bradford, who was burned at the stake in 1555, wrote: "Covet not the things that are in this world, but long for the coming of the Lord Jesus . . . Whose coming is now at hand." Hugh Latimer wrote: "Let us not think of His coming as far off." "When Paul thought that this day would come in his time, how much more shall we think that it shall be in our time." The Waldensians, Moravians, and French Huguenots were all Chiliasts, that is, they believed that Christ visibly and bodily would reign on this earth for a thousand years; and He could not do this without coming again. And so we might trace the faith adown the ages to our own day, and behold an unbroken chain of belief and testimony to this precious truth that THE LORD JESUS IS COMING AGAIN.

Canon Bernard, in his classic book the *Progress of Doctrine in the New Testament* (1864),\* in treating of *The Revelation* utters these weighty words:

"The book is a doctrine of the power and *coming* of our Lord Jesus Christ. 'Behold, He cometh with clouds, and every eye shall see Him.' That is the first voice, and the key-note of the whole. The Epistles . . . all take their note from this thought and are the voice of a Lord Who will 'come quickly.' The visions which follow draw to the same end, and the last voices of the book respond to the first, and attest its subject and its purpose. 'He which testifieth these things saith, Surely I come quickly. Amen. Even so come, Lord Jesus.' Toward that hope our eyes have been steadily directed in the former apostolic writings; but it is here presented, not so much in relation to our personal life as to the Kingdom of God and to the world itself upon the whole. It appears here as the *consummation of the age*, towards which all things tend. Differences and uncertainties of interpretation as to the details still leave us under the sense that it is a history of the power and *coming* of our Lord Jesus Christ. This assurance, enjoyed at all times, grows clearer in the days of trouble, rebuke, and blasphemy; and the darkest times which the prophecy forebodes will be those in which its fullest uses will be found."

"Therefore, beloved, seeing ye know these things before, beware lest ye, being led away with the error of the wicked, fall from your own steadfastness."

"Earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints."

"Our citizenship is in heaven, from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ."

\* This book has just been republished by Wm. B. Eerdmans Co., U.S.A.—Ed.