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"THE DAY OF THE LORD"

"For that day shall not come, except—"

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The day of the Lord is used in Scriptures with reference to more than one of His great days. In the particular Scripture which declares "That day shall not come, except—" it is used to refer to the day of Christ's appearing. In Paul's first letter to the church at Thessalonica, he had associated the entire sanctification of the church with the thought of their preservation in body, soul, and spirit unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. This reference, together with other statements regarding Christ's return, had been misinterpreted by some in the church, and it appears there were teachers among them who were in error regarding this great truth of the return of our Lord.

In view of these facts Paul opens this second chapter of the Second Epistle with a statement which corrects their error. "Now we beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by our gathering together unto him, that ye be not shaken in mind, or be troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter as from us, as that the day of Christ is at hand." II. Thessalonians 2:1-2. He continues to exhort them that they should not let any man deceive them by any means. "For that day shall not come, except—" Following this word "except," Paul outlines two great historic events which must take place before that day of the Lord is come. Contrary to the teaching of some modernists, Paul knew full well when he wrote this letter that an age of Christian history was to follow before the return of the Lord.

Nineteen centuries have rolled by since this book was written. We stand today at a point in history where the first of the two facts he declared must happen has happened in a most remarkable manner in the very age in which we live. Not only so, but there appears to be a great shaping up of events in the whole world which look toward the possible early transpiring of the second of the two great events he named.

The first one was "That day shall not come except there come a falling away first . . ." The question arises, what was in the mind of Paul and of the Spirit when this notable statement was made. It is clear to our thinking that the falling away to which Paul refers here is parallel with Hebrews 6:6 in which paragraph he declares: "It is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, and have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come, if they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance." These Scriptures refer to something more than what we ordinarily recognize as backsliding. One may backslide by indulging in unethical conduct or by becoming discouraged in living

the Christian life and yet not fall away. The honest backslider will invariably witness to the fact that the Christian life is by far the best life and will often express great regret at his failure to be faithful. There is no turning from faith in Christ or the Christian Scriptures on the part of the ordinary backslider. The exact opposite is true of those who are guilty of falling away. This refers to men departing from the faith of the Gospel, denying its content of holy truth, repudiating the authority of Scripture, involving the fact of a blood atonement for sin and of the literal resurrection of our Lord. This falling away involves a denial also of the supreme deity of our Lord. The unitarian movement which has been espoused and promoted by such a large part of Christendom during the past fifty years of modernism is a clear example of falling away to which Paul refers.

I have now ministered the Gospel for a whole half century in time. In the morning of my ministry the church which ordained me put into my hands the great classical literature of the faith of historic Christianity, which built me in the true faith of the glorious Gospel of Christ. I waded through Harmon's "Introduction to the Holy Scriptures," which presented in a most colossal manner the great arguments sustained, the Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch, and the integrity and authority of each one of the documents included in our canonical Scriptures. The theology the church placed in my hands, also the textbooks in philosophy, sociology, and psychology were all written from the standpoint of the then unquestioned faith of our holy Christianity. Jesus Christ was recognized as authority. His word was a final word with regard to any question upon which He made a deliverance. Harmon therefore appealed to Jesus' testimony regarding the writings of Moses and of many of the other writers of the Old Testament Scriptures. At the close of the quadrenium during which time I was ordained as an elder in the Methodist Church, Harmon's "Introduction" was discarded and in the place of that great book of more than 900 pages, a small book of perhaps 150 or 200 pages by Kirkpatrick was adopted in its place. I reviewed this book and found the key to Kirkpatrick's position when he stated in refutation of the value of Christ's testimony regarding Moses' writings that "all that Jesus knew about the authorship of the Pentateuch was the current perdition of his time." This one statement is a key which unlocks to our thinking the radical and drastic change which took place in the whole setup of college and conference curriculums during about the first decade of this twentieth century. This awful falling away properly designated apostasy had already shown its slimy hand in its efforts to destroy confidence in the authority of God's Word and in the true personality and work of our Lord Jesus Christ. Bishop Foster, in his great book entitled "The

Supernatural Book," stated, with reference to these modern teachers who were falling away from faith, that "The modern enemies of our Lord decorate their sword so beautifully that it is almost hard to resist the assassination." I referred to the beautiful talk about Christ as a man and His example, on the part of those who denied His deity, who had no use for the blood atonement, nor for the absolute historicity of the Scriptures regarding His person, death and resurrection.

I have lived during the period of fearful decline in the faith of the masses in divine revelation. I have witnessed the failure of this whole regime of modernism and am now witnessing in a large way the acknowledgment of failure on the part of leaders in both the field of education and the organized church.

There is just now a partial return in the direction of loyalty to Christian truth known in some quarters as "the new orthodoxy." The failure of the leaders in this movement to go far enough is very evident to everyone who has a clear vision. They are seeking to build loyalty to Christ, some of them even acknowledging His Godhood and Saviourhood, but still refusing to return to faith in the absolute integrity and authority of the Scriptures. This age of leaders have so bowed the knee to the Baal of modern science (much of it science falsely so-called) that they are not willing to humble themselves and acknowledge their failure and repudiate the whole theory of evolution and return to loyalty to the holy Scriptures.

This falling away has taken place in such a measure and degree as to be recognized in history as a definite prophecy-fulfilling period of time. Since men have departed from the true faith, there have arisen false philosophies, involving a godless "humanism;" also false teaching in the realm of the science of biology as well as in the field of modern psychology, until we have a harvest of this false teaching before our eyes today in the wreckage of civilization and the powerlessness of organized Christendom, with an unparalleled condition of men practicing a godless self-sufficiency which has truly given birth to the chaos of the nations of the earth in this hour.

Yes, dear reader, I have lived across the path of a generation in which the falling away which fully meets the first condition Paul named should come to pass before the day of the Lord has been radically fulfilled.

TAKE YOUR COMPANY TO CHURCH

George Washington's pastor said of him: "No company ever kept him away from church. I have often been at Mt. Vernon on the Sabbath morning when his breakfast table was filled with guests. Instead of staying at home out of fancied courtesy to them, he used constantly to invite them to accompany him."—Selected.