

GETTING READY FOR "THAT DAY"

Dr. John Paul

Christ was from eternity, "before the world was" (John 17:5), and he is to eternity. His advent into this world was just a big incident in the story of the Eternal Son. His appearance here was the appearance of God "manifest in the flesh." The object was to bring many sons to glory. He appeared first, equipped to become a sin-offering; to provide and effect redemption from sin. He taught that his first appearance was to be completed or complemented by a second coming, at which there should be no more sin-offering needed; but in which our salvation would reach its climax. Heb. 9:28—"Once offered to bear the sins of many . . . he shall appear the second time."

At his first coming he was "a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief;" "despised and rejected of men." His second coming will be with the celebration of angels. There will be no smiting Pharisees, no Judas, no Gethsemane, no bargaining Pilate, and no cross of Calvary. There will be light where there were shadows before; clouds of glory where there were clouds of sorrow. If there are to be tragic scenes, they will be among them who finally chose to reject him. The obvious note in the wake of his appearing will be a note of joy; for gathered there will be the saints of all ages, along with us who live and look for his appearing and for our change. And we think this will include not only them that have intelligent instruction on the Second Coming. There will be many whose understanding of prophecy is not orthodox, but whose heart is in the right place. Many obscure believers are hid away from public view, speaking different tongues; and in ecclesiastical circles with which we have no fellowship, who nevertheless are listening for his call; whose hearts would be as responsive as a camp meeting choir to sing—

"When He calls me, I will answer;

When He calls me, I will answer;

I'll be somewhere listening for His voice."

John says that every man having "this hope" in him is interested in the purity of heart and life. There is something of the universal in John's remark, "every man;" meaning every human being. With all of these, the coming of the Lord is called a hope. There is always pleasure in that word hope, because it means desire and expectation; but Paul emphasizes the pleasure by referring to Christ's return as the blessed hope of his glorious appearing. It is that event of the future that thrills the heart of all who have their destiny tied up with the future of the Man of Galilee.

Two distinct passions result from that hope—the passion of joy and the passion for heart purity. Whatever may be one's background of doctrinal teaching, when he learns to look for the return of the Lord he wants a clean, sanctified heart. He may have read no books on the Second Coming, representing this or that school of thoughts. He may have no settled views on the issues of prophecy over which there is disagreement among brethren who cherish the blessed hope. He may never have read a book or heard a sermon on the "Wesleyan doctrine" of sanctification; but he knows that he is a son of God, and that he is due to be like Jesus when he shall appear. With such a hope, he wants now to be as much like Jesus as possible.

Man lost the image of God in the fall of

Adam; at least he lost it in large measure. We are so far removed from our best that none of us can tell all that is included in the image of God. This will appear when Jesus comes. The grand finals of our transformation will come automatically and unconditioned, in that glorious morning. But they will come only provided we seek that quality in his image which is conditioned, and which is to be had in this life. If we do not know all that is included in the divine image, we do know that purity is its fundamental, around which all of the other qualities cluster. At this point we can sing with W. A. Spencer: "We shall not wait till that glorious morning Breaks on our vision so fair; Now we may welcome the heavenly dawning, Now we His image may bear."

A TEACHER'S REWARD

Canon Dyson Hague tells of a man who was ministering to a dying soldier. The soldier wanted to leave a message to his Sunday School teacher. He said, "Tell her I die a Christian, and I have never forgotten her teaching."

He wrote the message to the teacher, and a few weeks later received a reply, the substance of which was, "God have mercy upon me! Only last month I resigned my Sunday School class, for I felt that my teaching was doing no good, and scarcely had I, through my cowardly, faithless heart, given up my appointed work, when I got a message from you telling me that my teaching had been the means of winning a soul to Christ. I am going back to my Rector at once to tell him that I will try again in Christ's name and I will be faithful to the end."

After relating this incident Canan Hague continues, "Oh, that I could speak with a loud voice to every Sunday School teacher in the whole world and to every parent in the Christian Church and could say: Teachers, teachers; parents, parents! Go on! Go on! You are sowing seed. God only knows what fruit it is bearing."—The Evangelical Friend.

MY OLD BIBLE

Though the cover is worn,
And the pages are torn,
And though places show traces of tears,
Yet more precious than gold,
Is the Book worn and old,
That can shatter and scatter my fears.

This old Book is my guide,
'Tis a friend by my side,
It will lighten and brighten my way:
And each promise I find,
Soothes and gladdens my mind,
As I read it and heed it each day.

When I prayerfully look,
In the precious old Book,
Many treasures I see;
Many tokens of love,
From the Father above,
Who is nearest and dearest to me.

To this Book I will cling,
Of its worth I will sing:
Though great losses and crosses be mine,
For I cannot despair,
Though surrounded by care,
While possessing this blessing divine.

—Gospel Banner

THE HABIT OF JUDGING

R. Barclay Warren

When Jesus said, "Judge not that ye be not judged" (Matt. 7:1). He was not speaking of the ordinary execution of justice which is necessary in a sinful world. Neither did He mean that we should not have any sense of discernment between good and evil; He Himself said, "Ye shall know them by their fruits." He addressed the religious leaders of His day as hypocrites, whited sepulchres, and a generation of vipers.

But our Lord was reproving the habit of finding fault with others and condemning them. Such a habit is beset with dangers, for one may condemn on insufficient evidence. Men have been hanged because all the evidence was not given. Reputations have been besmeared and their possessors subjected to unspeakable anguish because they have been condemned on insufficient evidence. Moreover, it is hard to prove motive from evidence. Nevertheless, people have been condemned as proud because they stood erect, or malicious because they missed shaking hands with some sensitive person after church. Be careful. Your interpretation of motive might be wrong.

Those who are most ready to condemn are invariably least fitted for it. While they would remove the tiny particle from the eye of another, a whole beam is sticking in their own. "First cast the beam out of thine own eye; and then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the mote out of thy brother's eye."

Sinners are often prone to condemn inconsistencies, real or imagined, in the lives of professing Christians, while they overlook their own beam of rebellion to the claims of Jesus Christ.

Another reason against this evil habit is to be found in the words: "For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged." We shall be measured on our own scales, both by our fellowmen and at the great Judgment.

Lord, give us more of Thy love that we may not be looking for the faults but for the virtues in our fellow men. For more love we pray. Amen.

IF YOU WANT TO BE LOVED—

Don't contradict people, even if you are sure you are right.

Don't be inquisitive about the affairs of even your most intimate friend.

Don't under-rate anything just because you do not possess it.

Don't believe that everybody else in the world is happier than you.

Don't conclude that you have never had any opportunities in life.

Don't be rude to your inferiors in social position.

Don't repeat gossip, even if it does not interest the crowd.

Learn to hide your aches and pains under a pleasant smile.

Learn to attend to your own business.—The Friend.

The feeling incident to an unforgiving spirit is liable to increase. There is no telling where it will stop, or to what it will lead. An unforgiving spirit is a prejudiced spirit. It seeks the condemnation of the offender and the justification of self. The longer such a spirit is allowed to continue, the more difficult forgiveness becomes and the less likely it is to be granted.—Selected.