

The Necessity of the Redeemer

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Transcript

The Redeemer's Return

THE NECESSITY OF THE REDEEMER'S RETURN

Chapter 1

"We have also a more sure Word of Prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the Day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts"

2 Pet. 1:19

Is there any real need for Christ to return? So far as God's children are concerned only one answer is possible to this question. There is. Christians of every shade of religious belief are agreed that there is an imperative need for our Lord to come back again. As to the precise character of that need, as to the particular urgency of that need, opinions may vary, but concerning the need itself this is universally admitted. Even post-millenarians teach that Christ must come back at the end of time to judge the wicked and reward the righteous. But we hope to show that the need for His return is much deeper and much wider than the reason put forth by the post-millenarians. Suppose Christ never returns—then what? Has this alternative been weighed as it deserves? The present order of things cannot continue indefinitely; such a supposition is unthinkable. No one is satisfied with present conditions. Even those who despise the teachings of God's Word, hope for a better day, a Golden Age, an era of blessedness such as this earth has never yet witnessed. And pre-millenarians believe that this Golden Age can be ushered in by nothing short of the personal return of Christ Himself. Here then, in general, is the reason why we believe the Redeemer must come back again. We say "in general," for in the remainder of this chapter we shall seek to show there is at least a tenfold necessity for our Lord's Second Advent. I. The Redeemer's Return Is Necessitated By The Declarations Of Old Testament Prophecy. It is very apparent to any one who has read thoughtfully through the Old Testament that the First Advent of our Lord did not exhaust the burden and scope of the numerous predictions which had been made concerning Him. Many of the things foretold of Israel's Messiah were not accomplished during the days when He tabernacled among men. Many of the promises found in God's Word connected with the Person of Christ still await their ratification. While it is true that the First Advent of the Lord Jesus literally and remarkably fulfilled many of the Old Testament prophecies concerning Him, yet, it is also true that many others were not then fulfilled, (It is this very thing which has proven such a stumbling-block to the Jews and, humanly speaking, has been the reason why so many of them have failed to see in "Jesus of Nazareth" the Messiah of Israel. But, as we shall show,

those Messianic prophecies found in the Old Testament which were not fulfilled at His First Advent will be fulfilled at His Second.) To several of these we shall now call our readers' attention. "And I will put enmity between thee (the "serpent") and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel" (Gen. 3:15). There is much in this remarkable verse which we cannot now consider in detail, yet we will endeavor to present an outline of its contents. This is not a single prophecy but a compound one and at least seven separate predictions are included in it:— First, the woman is to have a seed: as we know, this pointed forward to our Lord's humanity. Second, He was to be peculiarly the woman's "seed," not the man's, hence we read, "When the fullness of time was come, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman" (Gal. 4:4, Greek). Third, the woman's "Seed" was to bruise the Serpent: in other words, Satan was to be His particular antagonist. Fourth, He was to bruise the Serpent's head. Fifth, He Himself was to be bruised in the "heel" by the Serpent; and hence it is written, He was "bruised for our iniquities" (Isa. 53:5). Sixth, there was to be "enmity" between the Serpent and the one who gave birth to the "Seed," namely Israel (cf. Revelation 12:1-6). And then after making mention of the enmity between the Serpent and the woman, we read, Seventh, "And between thy seed—the Serpent's "seed," i. e., the Son of Perdition—and her "Seed." In other words, this age-long "enmity" was to head up in a conflict between the Antichrist and the true Christ. For our present purpose it is sufficient to single out the fourth and fifth of the above items, which, in their historical order, have been reversed. "Thou shalt bruise His heel." That old Serpent the Devil was to be permitted to attack and wound the only vulnerable part of our Lord's person—His humanity, here intimated by the word "heel." How this portion of the prophecy was fulfilled our readers will know. No sooner was the Lord Jesus born in Bethlehem of Judaea than the "Dragon" sought to encompass His destruction (Rev. 12:4). Immediately following His baptism, which was the inauguration of His public ministry, He was tempted or "tried" by the Devil for forty days (Mark 1:13). On the eve of His crucifixion our Lord expressly declared, "This is your hour, and the Power of Darkness" (Luke 22:53). Thus was Satan allowed to bruise the "heel" of the woman's Seed. But we also read, "It shall bruise thy head," that is, Christ shall bruise Satan's "head." The head is the seat and source of power, and in the Scripture we are now considering is placed in sharp antithesis with the "heel" of the woman's Seed. Stripped of its prophetic symbolism, it can only mean that Christ is to depose Satan and reduce him to a state of impotency. This interpretation is fully confirmed in Revelation 20 where we learn that a day is coming when the Devil shall be bound and cast into the Bottomless Pit to remain there securely confined throughout the Millennial Era. What we now desire to emphasize particularly is, that, this part of the Edenic prophecy was not fulfilled when our Lord was upon earth before, and has not yet been fulfilled. Therefore, if this prediction is to be realized our Lord must return to this earth and deprive the Devil of his power, for He alone is competent for such a task. Again; we read in Isaiah 9:6, 7, "For unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given; and the government shall, be upon His shoulder: and His name shall be called Wonderful, Counselor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace. Of the increase of His government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever." Here again we meet with a prophecy which has already received a partial fulfillment, but which has not yet been completely realized. Unto Israel a Child was "born," unto Israel a Son was "given;" but, during the days of His First Advent the "government" was not "upon His shoulder" for He Himself paid tribute to Caesar (Matthew 17:27), nor did He rule in "peace" for He declared "I came not to send peace, but a sword" (Matthew 10:34). Nor has He yet assumed the "government" for He is not yet seated upon His own "throne" (see Revelation 3:21). Observe particularly that, above, it is repeated "of the increase of His government and peace there shall be no end." His "government" and "peace" are inseparably connected. The latter part of this prophecy therefore looks forward to the time of His Second Advent, for "When the Son of Man shall

come in His glory, and all the holy angels with Him, then shall He sit upon the throne of His glory" (Matthew 25:31). Then will it be that He shall inaugurate a Reign of Peace, for then it shall be (and not till then) that "He shall judge among many people, and rebuke strong nations afar off; and they shall beat their swords into ploughshares, and their spears into pruninghooks: nation shall not lift up a sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more" (Mic. 4:3). Thus we see that the declarations of the Prophetic Word require and necessitate the personal return of Christ to this earth, for only thus and only then will they be literally and completely fulfilled. Many other Old Testament predictions could be cited to the same effect, but one more must suffice. "Behold the days come, saith the Lord, that I will raise unto David a righteous Branch, and a King shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgment and justice in the earth. In His days Judah shall be saved, and Israel shall dwell safely: and this is His name whereby He shall be called, the Lord our Righteousness. Therefore, behold the days come, saith the Lord, that they shall no more say, the Lord liveth, which brought up the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt; But, the Lord liveth, which brought up and which led the seed of the house of Israel out of the North country, and from all countries whither I had driven them; and they shall dwell in their own land" (Jer. 23:5-8). In the first place, observe, here, that unto David (Israel) God promised to raise up a King who should reign and prosper. Without a doubt this prophecy refers to our Lord Jesus Christ who was born "King of the Jews" (Matthew 2:2), for it was uttered shortly after the Jews were carried down into Babylon, since which they have had no human King. It needs no argument to prove that the terms of this prophecy were certainly not fulfilled at the time of our Lord's First Advent, for then, the Jews would not own Him, but demanded His death, and when Pilate inquired of them, "Shall I crucify your King?" (John 19:15), the leaders of the nation answered, "We have no king but Caesar." Furthermore, this prophecy was not fulfilled when our Lord took His seat at the right hand of the Majesty on high, for note, it says that Israel's King shall "execute judgment and justice in the earth," not "from the heavens." Again; we observe that it declares, "In His days Judah shall be saved, and Israel (the ten tribes) shall dwell safely" which certainly did not come to pass during the days of our Lord's humiliation. No; this prophecy, like scores of other Messianic predictions recorded in the Old Testament looks forward to the time of our Lord's Second Advent to the earth, which Advent is imperative if the terms of this prophecy are to be realized.

II. The Redeemer's Return Is Necessitated By His Own Affirmations. During the course of His public ministry our Lord made frequent reference to His Second Coming. When we consider how few of His discourses have been transmitted to us and how brief is the inspired record of His teachings as found in the New Testament Scriptures, we are deeply impressed with the importance of Our present inquiry as we note how much there is in the Gospel narratives which relates to our Redeemer's Return. Not only do we find main incidental references, but most of His "parables" treat of these things which have to do with His Second Advent, and, furthermore, several whole chapters in the Gospels are devoted to a fuller setting forth of the same great event. Unto our Lord's own teaching, then, upon His Second Coming we turn our attention. We cannot now review all that He said upon the subject, but must content ourselves with singling out two or three of His utterances thereon. In Matthew 24 and 25 we have two whole chapters occupied with this theme, and in them we find that again and again our Lord made mention of His Return—"For as the lightning cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west: so shall also the coming of the Son of man be" (24:27), which means that our Lord's Return to this earth will be visible, public, and attended with awe-inspiring glory. The same ideas are presented in the 30th verse of the same chapter—"And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory." Further down in the chapter, our Lord bids His people make preparation for His appearing because He may return at any moment. "Therefore be ye also ready: for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of Man cometh" (vs. 44). In the next chapter, in the Parable of

the Virgins the subject of the Bridegroom's Coming is again brought before us, while the closing verses furnish us with a detailed description of His judgment of the living nations which introduces the setting up of His Millennial Kingdom—"When the Son of Man shall come in His glory, and all the holy angels with Him, then shall He sit upon the throne of His glory: and before Him shall be gathered all nations: and He shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats" (Matthew 25:31, 32). In the nineteenth of Luke we have the Parable of the Nobleman which is very plain and pointed: "He said therefore, A certain nobleman went into a far country to receive for himself a kingdom, and to return. And He called His ten servants, and delivered them ten pounds, and said unto them, Occupy till I come. But his citizens hated Him, and sent a message after Him, saying, We will not have this man to reign over us. And it came to pass, that when He was returned, having received the kingdom, then He commanded these servants to be called unto Him, to whom He had given the money, that He might know how much every man had gained by trading" (Luke 19:12-15). The "Nobleman" is the Lord Jesus. The "journey into the far country" was His Ascension to heaven. The "Kingdom" which He went to "receive" is His Millennial Kingdom for which He taught His disciples to pray. The "return" is His Second Advent to this earth. The "servants" are believers. The "money" (marg. "silver," which in Scripture symbolizes redemption) seems to typify the Gospel, which has been committed into our hands to proclaim to a lost world. The "occupying till He comes" is the faithful giving out of the Gospel and the daily witnessing for Him during the time of His absence. The "message" sent by "His citizens" refers to the continued rejection of Christ and His Gospel by the Jews during the days of the apostles and particularly under the ministry of Stephen. The rewarding of the servants at the time of His Return, is the allotting to them of places of honor in His Millennial Kingdom. That to which we would specially call attention is the fact that our Lord here expressly declares He will "return," come back again to this earth. Perhaps the most explicit of all the statements which the Lord Jesus made upon our present theme is that recorded in the opening verses of John 14. Our Lord was alone with His disciples. He was about to be separated from them. For three years they had companied with Him, but now the cross with all its sufferings and shame lay athwart His path. The realization of His approaching death had filled His followers with fear and anguish. Their hearts were heavy and sad. Turning to them in their grief, the Master speaks words of solace and cheer—"Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in Me. In My Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto Myself; that where I am, there ye may be also" (John 14:1-3). These words of our Lord can have only one possible meaning: He was going away, but He would return again, return in person to receive His own unto Himself. Such was His positive and unconditional promise. Thus we see that the fulfillment of His promises, the keeping of His Word, necessitates the personal Return of our blessed Redeemer. The testimony of our Lord given while He was here upon earth was confirmed, and rendered even more unequivocal, if that were possible, by His post-ascension utterances. Fifty years after He had returned to Heaven the Lord Jesus sent His angel to the beloved John on the Isle of Patmos to give unto him "The Revelation" and in it we hear our Lord saying, no less than six times, "Behold, I come quickly." This is His last promise, His final word to His people now on earth. He is coming back again. He Himself has said so. He said so repeatedly during the days of His earthly ministry. He said so in language about which there was no ambiguity whatsoever. He said so both to His friends and to His enemies. He said so again fifty years after His ascension to Heaven. And He cannot lie. He is Himself the "Truth"—the truth incarnate. He is "The Faithful and True Witness," therefore He must keep His Word, fulfill His promises, and return in person. III. The Redeemer's Return Is Necessitated By The Ratification Of The Holy Spirit. While our Lord was here upon earth and on the eve of His crucifixion, He promised to send His disciples another Comforter, even the Spirit of Truth. He further promised the apostles that, when the Spirit

came to them, He would guide them "into all truth." Therefore, it is to the Divinely inspired writings of these apostles we must turn if we would learn all that God has been pleased to reveal concerning our present inquiry. As we read the Epistles of the New Testament it is highly important for us to keep in mind the fact that we have in them not the suppositions and speculations of their human writers but reliable and authoritative information communicated by the Holy Spirit Himself, for "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God" (2 Tim. 3:16). As we turn to the Epistles we find that each writer made some contribution to our present theme: Peter and Paul, James, John, and Jude all referred to the prospect and certainty of the Return of our Redeemer. The apostle Paul wrote to the Corinthian saints, "I thank my God always on your behalf, for the grace of God which is given you by Jesus Christ; that in every thing ye are enriched by Him, in all utterance, and in all knowledge; even as the testimony of Christ was confirmed in you. So that ye come, behind in no gift; waiting for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ: who shall also confirm you unto the end, that ye may be blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Cor. 1:4-8). To the Philippian saints he wrote, "For our citizenship is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ: who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto His glorious body, according to the working whereby He is able even to subdue all things unto Himself" (Phil. 3:20, 21). To the Colossians he wrote, "When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with Him in glory" (Col. 3:4). To the Thessalonians he wrote, "For what is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? Are not even ye in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at His coming?" (1 Thess. 2:19). To the Hebrews he wrote, "So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for Him shall He appear the second time without sin unto salvation" (9:28). The apostle James wrote, "Be patient, therefore, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord. Behold, the husband-man waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, and hath long patience for it, until he receive the early and latter rain. Be ye also patient; stablish your hearts: for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh" (5:7, 8). The apostle Peter wrote, "Wherefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ" (1 Pet. 1:13). "And when the Chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away" (1 Pet. 5:4). The apostle John wrote, "Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when He shall appear, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is. And every man that hath this hope in Him putifieth himself, even as He is pure" (1 John 3:2, 3). And again, "For many deceivers are gone forth into the world, even they that confess not that Jesus Christ cometh in the flesh" (2 John 7, R.V.). The apostle Jude wrote, "Keep yourselves in the love of God. looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life" (vs. 21). Here then is an argument simple but conclusive. Each Epistle writer of the New Testament makes mention of the Redeemer's Return. These men were not hallucinated. They were not giving expression to impracticable ideals which would never be realized. Their writings were Divinely inspired. These holy men were "moved by the Holy Spirit" and recorded truth "not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Spirit teacheth" (1 Cor. 2:13). The very fact, then, that the Holy Spirit of God has, through the apostles, testified again and again, ratifying the declarations of Old Testament prophecy and the affirmations of Christ Himself, necessitates and demands the personal Return of our Lord. IV. The Redeemer's Return Is Necessitated By The Humiliation Of The Cross. The degradation which the Lord Jesus endured when He was here upon earth before, requires that He shall come back again in power and glory in order to vindicate Himself. Is it reasonable to suppose that the last view which this world shall have of our blessed Lord before He takes His seat upon the Great White Throne to judge the wicked dead, shall be that of the "lowly Nazarene"? Surely not. Need we remind our readers of the depths of humiliation into which our Redeemer descended? Born in a manger, with the beasts of the field for His first companions, and a bed of straw for His cradle! Sharing the home of humble Jewish peasants and spending His youth and early

manhood at the carpenter's bench! During His public ministry, so poor and so lightly esteemed that the common courtesies of hospitality were denied Him—"He had not where to lay His head!" Despised and rejected of men; the butt of Pharisaic contempt and the center of Jewish ridiculer His life seemingly ending in defeat as He hung helpless upon the cross, enduring the shame of a criminal's execution and taunted by his heartless enemies! Is this the only sight which the earth is to have of the Lord of Glory? Is the Son of God to retire from this world in apparent defeat without any subsequent opportunity for vindicating Himself? Surely not. Is it not evident then that He who was here before in humiliation must yet come back to be glorified in His saints and to be admired in all them that believe? Does not the very fitness of things, do not the claims of equity and righteousness, insist, that He who was the willing Victim shall yet return as the triumphant Victor? Does not the Cross of Calvary necessitate that our Lord shall yet come back to our earth in order to substantiate His claims and ratify His promises? "For dogs have compassed Me: the assembly of the wicked have enclosed Me: they pierced My hands and My feet. I may tell all My bones: they look and stare upon Me. They part My garments among them, and cast lots upon My vesture" (Ps. 22:16-18); Such was the picture that was painted by prophecy. But this scene was not to be the finale. In this very same Psalm we read, "All the ends of the earth shall remember and turn unto the Lord: and all the kindreds of the nations shall worship before Thee. For the kingdom is the Lord's: and He is the Governor among the nations" (vv. 27, 28). "And they that had laid hold on Jesus led Him away to Caiaphas the high priest, where the scribes and the elders were assembled" (Matthew 26:57). See our blessed Lord standing there before the Jewish Sanhedrin, arraigned before His own creatures! Mark Him as He offers no defense in response to the false witnesses that testified against Him, and then ask, Is this to be the last thing? Is there to be no sequel to this? We do not have to seek far for an answer, for on this very occasion the Redeemer declared, "Nevertheless I say unto you, Hereafter shall ye see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven" (Matthew 26:64). And again, it is written, "Behold, He cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see Him, and they also which pierced Him." Yes, the Crucified Savior is coming back again, coming back to vindicate Himself in a world where He once endured the contradiction of sinners against Himself, and, coming back to rule and reign as He first appeared in order to suffer and die. V. The Redeemer's Return Is Necessitated By The Present Exaltation Of Satan. One of the greatest, mysteries in all God's creation is the Devil. For any reliable information concerning him we are shut up to the Holy Scriptures. It is in God's Word alone that we can learn anything about his origin, his personality, his fall, his sphere of operations, and his approaching doom. One thing which is there taught us about the great Adversary of God and man, and which observation and experience fully confirms, is, that he is a being possessing mighty power. It would appear from a study of the Bible, that Satan is the most powerful creature (not "Being") in all the Universe. He has access to the Heaven of heavens and appears before God day and night to accuse His saints (Rev. 12:10). In Old Testament prophecy he is denominated "The anointed Cherub" (Ezek. 28:14) and from other Scriptures we learn that the "cherubim" are the highest order among the celestial hierarchies. Satan is represented as being at the head of an organized kingdom of evil, with hosts of wicked spirits ever ready to perform the bidding of their mighty chief. He is likened to a "roaring lion"—the King of the beasts—going about seeking whom he may devour (1 Pet. 5:8). When our Lord was here upon earth, Satan had the power to carry Him to a pinnacle of the Temple and to "shew unto Him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time" (Luke 4:5). From the Epistle of Jude we learn that, "Michael the archangel, when contending with the Devil he disputed about the body of Moses, durst not bring against him a railing accusation, but said, The Lord rebuke thee" (Jude 1:9). Sufficient has been said to show that Satan is a creature wielding tremendous power. But not only does God's Word enlighten us upon the great power which our Enemy possesses, it also informs us about the sphere in which he works and makes known the

location of his kingdom. In the very first mention in Scripture of that old Serpent, the Devil, he is seen in Eden having unbarred access to our first parents. In the next reference, we read of him coming before the Lord, as one who came "From going to and fro in the earth, and from walking up and down in it" (Job 1:7). This earth of ours is the scene of his present activities. Milton's conception of Satan now seated upon a throne in Hell is altogether lacking in Scriptural verification. The New Testament is in perfect agreement with the Old. In his conflict with our Lord, the Devil declared that all the kingdoms of the world had been delivered unto him (Luke 4:6) and Christ never repudiated or even challenged his claim, nay, He three times acknowledged that Satan is "The Prince of this world" (John 12:31, etc.). In 2 Corinthians 4:4 he is termed the "god of this age" (Greek), that is, the director of its false religions and the object worshipped by their devotees—compare 1 Corinthians 10:20. While in 1 John 5:19, R.V. we are told, "The whole world lieth in the Evil One." We have thus seen that Satan is an exalted creature possessing and wielding prodigious power and that this world of ours is his present kingdom. For six thousand years he has been the avowed enemy of God and man. But are things going to continue thus throughout all time? Is Satan to be allowed "free rein" for ever? Surely there will yet be an end made to his power and dominion. But what and who is going to depose him? Humanity is helpless before him. Man is unable to chain him. The Church, cannot dethrone him, or it would have done so long ago. Legislation is impotent, for human governments cannot Vote him out of the world. Who then shall Overthrow the Kingdom of Darkness? There is only one answer possible. There is only One sufficient for such a task, and that is the Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, the very tact of Satan's present exaltation and man's utter inability to overthrow him, demands and necessitates the personal Return of our Redeemer to vanquish the Devil and imprison him in the Bottomless Pit.

VI. The Redeemer's Return Is Necessitated By The Present Disorganization Of Israel. Israel—the mystery and miracle of history! Israel—about whom more than half the Bible is concerned! Israel—to whom God gave the Land of Palestine. Israel—concerning whom it is written, "And the Lord hath avouched thee this day to be His peculiar people, as He hath promised thee, and that thou shouldest keep all His commandments. And to make thee high above all nations which He hath made, in praise, and in name, and in honor; and that thou mayest be a holy people unto the Lord thy God as He hath spoken" (Deut. 26:18, 19). Israel—from whom, according to the flesh, Christ came! Of old, Israel was honored of God as was no other nation. To them were entrusted the Holy Oracles, to them was given the Holy Law, to them came the Holy One. But look at Israel today and what do we see? Ten of their Tribes "lost;" and those who compose the remaining two, more despised and hated than any other people upon earth. Instead of being a blessing to all people, Israel seems to be a curse. Instead of enjoying the inheritance of the Promised Land they are homeless wanderers, while Jerusalem is trodden down by the Gentiles. Instead of rejoicing in God their Savior Israel knows Him not, a "veil" being over their hearts. But God's purposes in connection with Israel have not yet been fully realized. A wonderful history lies behind them and a wonderful history stretches before them. True, their sorrow is not yet ended. True, a dark valley yet lies before them. True, they must yet pass through the time of Jacob's trouble (Jer. 30:7). True, God has not yet fully avenged the Crucifixion of His beloved Son. But, ere long He will have done so and then shall they be brought back again into favor with Him. Many are the promises which speak of Israel's restoration. In Isaiah 14:1, 2 we read, "For the Lord will have mercy on Jacob, and will yet choose Israel, and set them in their own land: and the strangers shall be joined with them and they shall cleave to the house of Jacob. And the people shall take them, and bring them to their place: and the house of Israel shall possess them in the land of the Lord for servants and handmaids: and they shall take them captives, whose captives they were: and they shall rule over their oppressors." Again, in Jeremiah 16:14-16 we are told, "Therefore, behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that it shall no more be said, The Lord liveth, that brought up the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt; But, the Lord liveth, that brought up the children

of Israel from the land of the north, and from all lands whither He had driven them: and I will bring them again into their land that I gave unto their fathers." But, how are the above promises to be realized? When shall these prophecies be fulfilled? The answer is, at the Second Advent of Christ. He declared, "For I say unto you, Ye shall not see Me henceforth, till ye shall say, Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord" (Matthew 23:39). And a day is coming when Israel will say this. As it is written, "And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications: and they shall look upon Me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for Him, as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for Him, as one that is in bitterness for his firstborn. In that day shall there be a great mourning in Jerusalem, as the mourning of Hadadrimmon in the valley of Megiddon" (Zech. 12:10,11). Then, and thus, shall Israel repent for their awful sin of rejecting and crucifying their own Messiah. "Simeon hath declared how God at the first did visit the Gentiles, to take out of them a people for His name. And to this agree the words of the prophets; as it is written, after this, I will return, and will build again the tabernacle of David (Israel) which is fallen down: and I will build again the ruins thereof, and I will set it up" (Acts 15:14-16). And again, we read in Romans 11:26, "And so all Israel shall be saved: as it is written, There shall come out of Zion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob" (Rom. 11:26). It is to be observed that in these two Scriptures Israel's restoration is linked to the Return of their Messiah. Here then is a further necessity for the Second Advent of Christ—the present humiliation and disorganization of Israel and the promises of God to restore and rehabilitate them, requires that our Lord shall come back again to this earth.

VII. The Redeemer's Return Is Necessitated By The Present Degradation And Desolation Of The World. Here is a reason which ought to carry conviction to every mind. If there is anything which imperatively needs our Redeemer to Return it is surely this poor sin-cursed world of ours! Look at it and what do we see? A world everywhere racked with suffering and out of joint. A world convulsed with misery entailed by the Fall. A world now in its very death-throes with hope almost completely gone. Everything that man could devise to better conditions and make this world a happier place has been tested and proven a failure. Every possible form of human government has been tried, each new one being as unsuccessful as the previous ones. Theocracy, democracy, and mobocracy (the French Revolution, and Russia today) have each been weighed in the balances and found wanting. Legislation, education and civilization have all been built upon, only to find in the day of testing that they were merely foundations of sand. Look where you will, on land or sea, in the air or beneath the waters, and you witness sin and death holding high carnival. The world is dying for want of a competent Ruler. On all sides iniquity is abounding more and more. Crime is increasing, morality is decreasing; godlessness and lawlessness are growing apace; while over all, hangs the dreadful pall of world-war. In the physical world, despite all our enlightenment, modern discoveries and the organized activities of medical science, disease is carrying off an ever increasing multitude year by year. The educational world is mainly under the control of infidels and agnostics, raider whose leadership the rising generation is taught that the faith once for all delivered to the saints is an idle superstition. or at best a religious garment which we have now outgrown. In the economic world greed and dishonesty are rapidly eating out the very vitals of commercial stability, while the fight between, capital and labor threatens a revolution such as this world has not witnessed since the days when the streets of Paris ran with blood. In the political realm there is so much chicanery, and "graft" and "party" principles are so selfishly pursued, that the self-respecting man is becoming loath to get mixed up with such filth and rotteness. Each "party" is as corrupt as the other, and the believer in Christ who is subject to God's Word will not hesitate to separate himself from that which offers his Lord no place and has no concern for His glory. In the moral realm, decay and putrefaction are witnessed upon all sides. Temperance Reform Societies, Purity-campaigns and Civic-righteousness Leagues are powerless to stem the tide of evil. The Drink-Bill of every civilized (?) nation is growing

heavier every year. Immorality, both among the masses and those in high places, prevails to such a fearful extent, that our large cities are modern Sodoms and Gomorrah's. In the religious world, we gaze upon an apostate Christendom. Our Theological Seminaries, with very rare exceptions, are teaching Darwinianism and Higher Criticism, while our pulpits are busily occupied with 'echoing' these God-dishonoring and Scripture-denying heresies, and on all sides the Gospel is supplanted by political harangues or moral essays. The majority of our churches are more than half empty, while the mid-week prayer meeting is almost entirely a thing of the past. The few faithful servants of God that are left on earth are boycotted, maligned and persecuted. The Lord's Day has become a day of pleasure-seeking and now, Sabbath-desecration, in the form of seven days a week work on the farms and in the munition factories, has been legalized by every nation that is now at war. And, as we have said, over all hangs the dreadful pall of this World War! Literally millions of men in the prime of their manhood have already been slaughtered, while millions more have been maimed for life in the vain effort to destroy militarism and establish a lasting peace. Innumerable homes have been plunged into grief, and there is no guarantee or even prospect but what millions more will suffer a like fate. Today the world stands helpless before the rushing tide of evil which threatens to decimate almost half of the human race, and in its impotency a grief-stricken humanity is everywhere lifting up piteous hands to Heaven as it cries for a Deliverer. True, the cry may not always be articulated,—yet it is audible nevertheless. True, the world, as a whole, is blind to its spiritual wretchedness and apostate condition. True, the carnal mind is still enmity against God, yet, intelligent men realize that the present order of things is a complete failure and are ready and longing for a New Order. The world cries for deliverance, what shall be Heaven's response? Again we say that only one answer is possible. While the Holy Scriptures reveal the fact that the severest of God's judgments have not yet been poured upon this world, which has so long lived in pleasure and wantonness; while the Holy Scriptures reveal the fact that the darkest hour of the night of earth's sufferings and sorrows has not yet arrived; yet, they also teach, that at the close of this night, the Sun of Righteousness shall arise with healing in His wings (Mal. 4:2). "Say to them that are of a fearful heart, Be strong, fear not: behold, your God will come with vengeance, even God with a recompense; He will come and save you. Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped. Then shall the lame man leap as a hart, and the tongue of the dumb sing: for in the wilderness shall waters break out, and streams in the desert. And the parched ground shall become a pool, and the thirsty land springs of water: in the habitation of dragons, where each lay, shall be grass with reeds and rushes. And a highway shall be there, and a way, and it shall be called the way of holiness; the unclean, shall not pass over it; but it shall be for those: the wayfaring men, though fools, shall not err therein. No lion shall be there, nor any ravenous beast shall go up thereon, it shall not be found there: but the redeemed shall walk there: And the ransomed of the Lord shall return, and come to Zion with songs, and everlasting joy upon their heads: they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away" (Isa. 35:4-10). That will be Heaven's response to earth's agonized cry! Therefore we say that the present degradation and desolation of the world necessitates our Redeemer's Return to take the government upon His shoulder and to rule and reign in righteousness, for then, and not till then, will every world problem find its solution. VIII. The Redeemer's return is necessitated by the lamentation of all creation. The effects of the Fall have been far-reaching—"By one man sin entered the world" (Rom. 5:12). Not only was the entire human family involved but the whole "Kosmos" was affected. When Adam and Eve sinned, God not only pronounced sentence upon them and the Serpent but He cursed the ground as well—"And unto Adam He said, Because thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten of the tree, of which I commanded thee, saying, Thou shalt not eat of it, Cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life: thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee" (Gen. 3:17, 18). These words suggest a

solemn and far-reaching line of thought—Sin not only brings punishment to the actual transgressor but it also involves others in its terrible consequences. The punishment which was meted out to the antediluvians was not limited to the human family, it fell upon the lower orders of creation as well—all were swept away by the flood! The judgments which God sent upon the haughty Pharaoh extended to the fishes in the rivers and the cattle in the fields as well as to all his subjects! When the Angel of Death passed through the land of the Nile, he slew all the first-born of beasts as well as the first-born of the Egyptians (Ex. 12:12). When Jehovah's wrath visited the land of Palestine in the days of Israel's apostasy it descended upon the animal kingdom as well as the human for we read "How do the beasts groan! the herds of cattle are perplexed, because they have no pasture; yea, the flocks of sheep are made desolate" (Joel 1:18). And again, "How long shall the land mourn, and the herbs of every field wither for the wickedness of them that dwell therein? the beasts are consumed, and the birds; because they said, He shall not see our last end" (Jer. 12:4). To what extent the entire universe has suffered the evil consequences of sin it is impossible to say, but certain it is that they are not limited to our earth. Adam was not the first offender, for before his fall Satan also had apostatized from his Maker. What other worlds were affected by Satan's fall Scripture does not inform us, yet we may infer from these principles which are revealed in God's Word that the awful consequences of Satan's rebellion were far-reaching in their scope. Astronomical observation reveals the fact that there are numbers of far-distant worlds upon which no life exists, while Scripture speaks of "wandering stars." The moon is a ruined planet where Death holds absolute sway and death is the wages of sin. If then Adam's transgression brought down upon the earth which he inhabited a curse from God, may we not soberly conclude that the fall of the highest of all God's creatures brought down a Divine curse upon those worlds over which he may have exercised a delegated rulership? Be this as it may, Scripture does reveal the fact that the consequences of sin have reached far beyond the four corners of our earth. We read "The heavens are not clean in His sight" (Job 15:15), and again, in Romans 8:22 we are told, "For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now." In the last mentioned Scripture we learn that the whole creation is in pain and misery. Surely this is abnormal. Surely things were not like this at the beginning, nor were they; and sorely things will not continue thus for ever, nor will they. We quote now the entire passage in which the above statement is found—"For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed to usward. For the earnest expectation of the creation waiteth for the revealing of the Sons of God. For the creation was subjected to vanity, not of its own will, but by reason of Him who subjected it in hope that the creation itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the liberty of the glory of the children of God" (Rom. 8:18-21, R.V.). The order of thought here appears to be as follows:—The whole of God's creation, which is directly concerned and connected with our earth, (the "whole creation" can not be taken absolutely for the unfallen angels must be excluded) suffered the consequences of Adam's sin, being brought under the bondage of corruption as the direct result. But this "bondage" is not to last for ever. A hope is set before creation: a promise has been given that it shall be "delivered" and in expectation of the fulfillment of this promise and the realization of this hope creation now "waits." The "hope" of creation is linked with "the manifestation of the sons of God" and "the liberty of their glory." The sons of God will be manifested or revealed with their Redeemer at the time of His Return for it is written "When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with Him in glory" (Col. 3:4). It is at the Second Coming of Christ, His return in "glory" that His people shall enter into the liberty of their glory. Then will it be that creation shall be delivered from its present bondage of corruption. Thus we learn that though the whole creation has suffered in consequence of sin, yet shall it soon share in the glorious benefits of the Death of Christ who came to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself. How clear then is the need of our Redeemer's Return! None but creation's Creator (John 1:3) can emancipate it from its

sufferings. Hence we say that the present lamentations of Creation necessitate and demand the personal Return of our Lord. IX. The Redeemer's return is necessitated by the supplications of the church. While our Lord was here upon earth He gave His disciples a pattern prayer saying, "After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father which art in heaven. Hallowed be Thy name. Thy kingdom come" (Matthew 6:9, 10). The Redeemer taught His saints to look forward to the future, to be occupied with God's interests and purposes, and to pray for the coming of His Kingdom, i. e., the Millennial Kingdom. Thus we learn that our hope has to do, not with the present kingdoms of this world, but with the coming Kingdom of God, which hope will be realized at the return of the Redeemer Himself. It is clear from a number of Scriptures that the coming of God's Kingdom synchronizes with the Return of Christ (see Luke 19:12; Revelation 11:15, etc.). The Hope of the Church centers in Christ and has to do with the future rather than with the present, for "hope" always looks forward. Therefore it is that the prayers of the Church must conform to and correspond with its hope. The last promise ever made by our Lord, made some fifty, or sixty years after His ascension, given to the beloved John on the Isle of Patmos but recorded for the encouragement and joy of all His people throughout the Christian dispensation, was "Surely I come quickly" (Rev. 22:20). The response to this promise is the prayer inspired by the Holy Spirit, "Even so, come, Lord Jesus." As this dispensation draws to its close and as the Return of Christ is daily coming nearer, the Holy Spirit is causing many to make this prayer their own. As the result of the recovery of the "Blessed Hope" which throughout the Dark Ages was lost to the Church, and as the result of the proclamation which is now being sounded forth far and wide, "Behold, the Bridegroom cometh, go ye out to meet Him," companies of God's saints all over the earth are now daily crying, "Even so Come Lord Jesus." And our God is a prayer-hearing and a prayer-answering God! He who has inspired this hope within the bosom of the Church, He who has taught so many of its members to long and pray for the Return of their Savior must satisfy that longing and answer that prayer. Therefore we say that the expectations and supplications of the Church of God which He purchased with His own Blood necessitate the personal Return of our Redeemer. X. The Redeemer's Return Is Necessitated By The Expectation Of The Dead In Christ. This argument may be summarized thus:—The Intermediate state into which the souls of the redeemed pass at death is not the perfect state, it is but an 'unclothed' (2 Cor. 5:1-3) condition. Like their brethren who are still upon earth, those now in Paradise are "waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body" (Rom. 8:23). A countless multitude of those who fell asleep in Jesus are yet in the disembodied state, and in that state they are "waiting," waiting for the time when this corruptible shall put on incorruption and when this mortal shall put on immortality. Those, who while on earth, looked and longed for the Return of their Redeemer, and who are still waiting that blest event shall not wait thus for ever, as it is written, "For the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first. Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord" (1 Thess. 4:16, 17). In the last Book of the Bible, where the veil that separates between the present and the future and between this world and the next is pulled aside, we find a Scripture that bears closely upon the point now under consideration. We refer to Revelation 6:9, 10—"And when he had opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of them that were slain for the Word of God, and for the testimony which they held. And they cried with a loud voice, saying, How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost Thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?" This passage, stripped of its symbolism, signifies that martyred believers now in the Intermediate state are waiting with eager expectation the time when God shall avenge their death, which time is reached immediately before our Lord returns to this earth. That which we wish to specially emphasize is the fact that souls now in Paradise are here represented as crying "How long?" Thus we learn that those "present with the Lord," as well as believers still "in the body,"

are eagerly expecting and waiting for the time of their Redeemer's Return. The answer made to these disembodied "souls" is very striking: "And white robes were given unto every one of them; and it was said unto them, that they should rest yet for a little season, until their fellow-servants also and their brethren, that should be killed as they were, should be fulfilled" (Rev. 6:11). The "dead in Christ" are waiting in hope, waiting for the fulfillment of that promise, "So also is the resurrection of the dead. It is sown in corruption; it is raised in incorruption. It is sown in dishonor; it is raised in glory; it is sown in weakness, it is raised in power. It is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body" (1 Cor. 15:42-44). Is their hope nothing more than an idle dream? Are they to wait thus for ever? No, blessed be God. His Word declares that at the time of our Redeemer's Return, "Them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with Him" (1 Thess. 4:14). Therefore we say that the present unclothed condition of the dead in Christ with their expectation of the Resurrection morn requires and necessitates the personal Return of our Lord. To sum up. At least ten reasons require that Christ shall come back again—the declarations of Old Testament prophecy; the affirmations of our Lord Himself; the ratification of the Holy Spirit through the writers of the New Testament Epistles; the humiliation of the Cross, requiring a corresponding vindication of Christ in power and glory; the present disorganization of Israel; the exaltation of Satan and the powerlessness of man to depose him; the degradation and desolation of the world; the lamentations of a Creation waiting to be delivered from its bondage of corruption; the supplications of the Church crying "Even so, come, Lord Jesus;" and the expectation of the dead in Christ waiting for their glorification, singly and collectively necessitate and demand the personal Return of our Redeemer.

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