

Sermon Outlines

The Advent in the Thessalonian Epistles

*"The coming of our Lord Jesus Christ."
1 Thessalonians 5:23*

THERE are three mountain peaks in the New Testament: the First Coming of Christ, the Coming of the Holy Spirit, and the Second Coming of Christ. Each is vitally important and should have due attention. The third of these is often neglected, even though it is mentioned 300 times in the New Testament. It is often thought that the Second Coming is impractical and has no bearing on life, and this in spite of 1 John 3:3 and 2 Peter 3:11, 14.

"There is nothing," says Dean Alford, "that so much takes a man out of himself; nothing that so much raises and widens his thoughts and sympathies; nothing that so much purifies and elevates his hopes, as this preparation for the coming of the Lord."

Of the earliest Epistles of Paul, seven are addressed to churches. These may be divided into four groups: those which have as their primary purpose (1) doctrinal foundation; (2) church life; (3) Christian experience; and (4) the coming of the Lord. In this fourth group are the two Epistles to the Thessalonians, of which every chapter treats of the Second Advent but one, and even that includes it indirectly. The Lord's Coming is shown to imply:

I. Hope (I, 1:3, 10)

1. Essential part of Christian life - all three, faith, hope and love, mentioned (v. 3).
2. Essential part of evidence proving original Gospel (v. 10).

II. Work (I, 2:17-19)

1. Present love of soul winner (vs. 17, 18).
2. Future Prospect - association, presentation (v. 19).

III. Holiness (I, 3:12, 13)

Heart in Scripture includes mind, emotion and will, i.e., whole personality.

1. What? "Unblameable in holiness" - then.
"Stablished in love" - now.
2. Where? "Before God."
3. When? "At the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ."

IV. Comfort (I, 4:13-18)

1. Problem (v. 13).
2. Solution (v. 14).
3. Revelation (vs. 15-17).
4. Consolation (v. 18).

V. Character (I, 5:all)

1. Edification (vs. 1-11)
"You" (vs. 1, 2); "they" (v. 3); "we" (v. 5); therefore, "let us" (vs. 6-8); "be sober" (vs. 6, 8); in order to "edify" (v. 11).
2. Preservation (vs. 12-14)
 - a. Aspects of life (vs. 12-22).
 - b. Anticipation of future (v. 23).
 - c. Assurance of fulfilment (v. 24).
 - d. Therefore, let us be alert, helpful, thorough.

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VI. Vindication (II, 1)

1. Rest after persecution (vs. 6, 7).
2. Glory after opposition (v. 10).

VII. Steadfastness (II, 2)

1. Information (vs. 1-12).
2. Exhortation (vs. 13-17).

VIII. Patience (II, 3)

Cf. verse 5 with James 5:8.

Conclusion

Christ has come - Bethlehem

Christ is coming - Pentecost

Christ will come - Olivet

. . . . W.H. Griffith Thomas, D.D.