

Remes (hint or amplification); *Deruch*, or *homiletic application*; *Sød* (mystery, or *Kabbalah*). This, at any rate, is obvious, that we must not too harshly condemn and exalt the kings of Judah on grounds respecting which the earlier and more accurate authority is silent, and of which we find traces in the Books of Chronicles alone.

F. W. FARRAR.

NEW TESTAMENT TEACHING ON THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST.

II. THE TEACHING OF ST. PAUL.

IN this paper I shall endeavour to reproduce St. Paul's conception of the Second Coming of Christ; and to determine the place and comparative importance of this topic in his conception of the Gospel as a whole. In so doing, I shall take his Epistles in chronological order. And with these I shall compare a single reference to the same subject in an address recorded in the Book of Acts.

In 1 Thessalonians i. 10, St. Paul describes his readers' conversion as a turning "from the idols to serve a living and true God and to wait for His Son from heaven." This implies that during the few weeks in which he had founded the church at Thessalonica he had taught his young converts that Christ, "raised from the dead," would return from heaven to earth; and implies also that an expectation of His return was a conspicuous element of the new life and hope which they had received.

In chapter ii. 19 we read, "what is our hope or joy or crown of our exultation? Are not even ye before our Lord Jesus at His coming?" Similarly in chapter iii. 13: "establish your hearts unblameable in holiness before our God and Father at the coming of our Lord Jesus with all His saints." In chapter iv. 13-18, St. Paul seeks to remove

sorrow caused by the death of some members of the church by pointing to the return of Christ and to the consequent resurrection of the dead. In contrast to those for whom his readers mourn, the Apostle speaks of himself and them as "being left behind for the coming of the Lord." In each of these three passages, and in others similar, the English rendering *coming* represents the conspicuous Greek word *παρουσία*, which now demands attention.

Like the verb *παράσσει*, the substantive *παρουσία* denotes the presence of someone standing by. So Philippians ii. 12, where it is contrasted with *ἀπουσία*, "not as in my *presence* only, but now much more in my absence": and 2 Corinthians x. 10, "the *presence* of the body (*i.e.* St. Paul's bodily presence) is weak." More frequently it denotes the presence of a fresh arrival. So 1 Corinthians xvi. 17, "I rejoice at the *coming* (*ἐπὶ τῇ παρουσίᾳ*) of Stephanas"; 2 Corinthians vii. 6, 7, "the *coming* of Titus," twice; Philippians i. 26, "my *coming* again to you." The same word is used to describe the coming of Christ for which the Christians at Thessalonica were waiting, in 1 Thess. ii. 19, iii. 13, iv. 15 quoted above; in chapter v. 23, 2 Thess. ii. 1, 8, 1 Corinthians xv. 23, as also in James v. 7, 8, 2 Peter i. 16, iii. 4, 12, 1 John ii. 28, Matthew xxiv. 3, 27, 37, 39. This use of the same word with the same reference by different writers of the New Testament proves it to be a technical term of the early followers of Christ denoting their master's expected return. And its suitability is at once apparent. Touching His bodily form, Christ is now *absent* in heaven: on that day He will be visibly *present* on earth. And His presence will bring in at once the great consummation for which His followers are waiting.

The *coming* of Christ and its immediate consequences are described with graphic detail in 1 Thessalonians iv. 16, 17: "the Lord Himself, with shout, with voice of archangel, with trumpet of God, (notice the climax,) will come down

from heaven ; and the dead in Christ will rise first." Then will the living, who, as St. Paul writes, are "being left behind" by the hand of death while others are taken away, be snatched up, along with those just raised from the dead, into a supermundane region, surrounded by clouds, to meet their Lord. And, "in this way" entering into His presence they will be with Him for ever.

The word *first* emphasises the priority of their resurrection to the meeting of the living ones with Christ. It thus supports the assertion in verse 15: "We, the living ones, . . . shall in no wise precede those that have fallen asleep." It finds a counterpart in verse 17: "the dead in Christ will rise *first*; then the living ones . . . shall be caught up." This simple and complete explanation of these words, forbids us to infer from them a later resurrection of the dead without Christ. Of these last nothing whatever is here said. Writing as a servant of Christ, the Apostle thinks only of His fellow-servants, dead and living. Evidently the words "we the living" refer only to believers. For they only "will be for ever with the Lord." All others lie outside the writer's thought. We have simply the shout, the descent, the resurrection, and the snatching up of the living servants of Christ to meet Him in the air.

In 1 Thess. v. 2 we read that the "day of the Lord so cometh as a thief at night." The words *ἡμέρα Κυρίου* are already familiar to us as the LXX. rendering of "the day of Jehovah" in the passages from the prophets quoted in my last paper. It is impossible to doubt that here the day of the Lord is the time of the return of Christ already mentioned in each of the first four chapters of this epistle. And, if so, verse 3 asserts that the coming of Christ, which to His servants dead and living will be a reunion with their Lord, will be to others "sudden destruction." This is in close agreement with the passages from the Old Testament quoted in my last paper in which the day of Jehovah is

described as a time of punishment to the wicked and of blessing to the righteous. It implies that at Christ's coming there will be sin and sinners upon earth.

Then follows a beautiful metaphor based on the word *day*. To the wicked, the return of Christ will come suddenly and unexpectedly, "as a thief at night," under cover of darkness. But St. Paul's readers "are not in darkness." Consequently, "the day" will not "lay hold" of them "as does a thief." They are "sons of light and sons of day." The Apostle bids them act as such, as men do who walk in light, whom no thief can surprise. The same metaphor meets us again, in a later group of St. Paul's letters, in Romans xiii. 11-13: "The hour has come that we at once awake from sleep . . . The night is far spent, the day has drawn near. Let us then put off the work of darkness and put on the weapons of the light. As in the day, let us walk decently." In contrast to the Day of the Lord, the present life seemed to this great teacher to be but the passing hours of a *night*. And already to the eye of faith the dawning light proclaims that the day is near.

The word *παρουσία* meets us for the fourth time in this short epistle in chapter v. 23, where St. Paul prays that his readers may be "preserved blamelessly in the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ." He desires that in the day of judgment they may be found blameless.

In a second letter to the same Church at Thessalonica, the Apostle writes to correct, apparently, a misunderstanding of his earlier letter. He speaks in chapter i. 6 of a just recompense, viz. affliction for those who afflict, and for those who are afflicted rest; and speaks of this as taking place "at the revelation of Jesus Christ from heaven with angels of His power." We have here another phrase describing evidently the coming of Christ for which the Thessalonican Christians were waiting, "the revelation (or unveiling) of the Lord Jesus." He is now hidden from our

view; but in that day the veil will be rent, and the hidden One will appear. In other words, the coming of Christ will be not only audible but visible. Since the veiled One is in heaven, and on that day will appear on earth, the unveiling is said to be "from heaven"; as in 1 Thessalonians iv. 16, we read that He "will come down from heaven." He will be accompanied by inhabitants of heaven, ministers of His power; and by *fire*, the most searching of natural forces.

The punishment and persons punished, already described in verse 6, and the punishment said in verse 7 to be inflicted at the revelation of the Lord Jesus, are in verses 8, 9 further specified. He will inflict vengeance on "those who know not God, and who obey not the Gospel." Their penalty will be "eternal destruction," removing them "from the face" of Christ and from the splendour which belongs to the power which on that day He will put forth.

The time of this punishment is further described as "when He shall come to be glorified in (or among) His saints, and to be wondered at in all those that believed." The words "when He shall come," used evidently as an equivalent to "at the revelation of the Lord Jesus" in verse 7, still further identify this last phrase as a description of the event for which the readers of this epistle were waiting. The words "in that day" recall the same words in Isaiah ii. 11 and eleven times in Zechariah xii.-xiv., as quoted in my last paper. It is another link between the Day of the Lord in the New Testament and the Day of Jehovah in the Old.

In chapter ii. 1, St. Paul speaks again "about the coming (*τῆς παρουσίας*) of our Lord Jesus Christ and our gathering together before Him." He warns his readers against supposing that "the day of the Lord has come," *i.e.* is now beginning; thus linking together, as technical terms for the same event, the *παρουσία* and "the Day of the Lord." He

adds that Christ will not come (chapter i. 10) until "the Apostacy come first"; that there will be no "revelation of the Lord Jesus" (chapter i. 7) until "the man of sin be revealed." This "son of destruction" is then further described. Something now holds him back, in order that he "may be revealed in his (appropriate) season." The revelation of this "lawless one" is in verse 9 described as a *παρουσία* and as accompanied by a manifold and mighty activity of Satan which will deceive and destroy those who refuse to believe the truth. This use of the same words *παρουσία* and *revelation* (or *revealed*) to describe the advent of the "son of destruction" and that of Christ places these two antagonistic forces in conspicuous and awful contrast.

This teaching implies that the coming of Christ will be preceded by the appearance of a new and terrible form of evil. In marked contrast to this future *revelation* we are told in verse 7 that "the *mystery* of lawlessness is already working," although under restraint. When this restraint is removed, it will be *revealed*, *i.e.* will work, no longer secretly, but openly. This revelation marks a conspicuous development of evil on earth. What this new form of evil will be, we know not except as it is dimly shadowed forth in this chapter. But, that its manifestation is to be a new era in the working of the kingdom of darkness, implies that it will be altogether different from all the kinds of evil now seen at work around us. We must be content with the general description here given, *viz.* that it will be an activity of Satan, that it will claim divine honours, and will delude those who reject the light of the Gospel.

The course of events is further described in verses 7, 8. We have a restraining influence, "until it be taken out of the way: and then will the Lawless One be revealed, whom the Lord Jesus will slay with the breath of His mouth and will bring to nothing by the appearance of His coming": *τῇ ἐπιφάνειᾳ τῆς παρουσίας*. This implies that the

coming of Christ will be visible, that up to the moment of His appearance a new and terrible form of evil will be in power, and that this hostile power will fade into nothing at the voice and appearance of Christ.

Such is the clear and harmonious teaching of the Epistles to the Thessalonians. St. Paul was looking for a definite time when Christ will audibly and visibly return from heaven to earth, to raise His dead servants, to welcome all His servants dead and living into endless and blessed intercourse with Himself, and to destroy all who refuse to obey the Gospel. He taught also that this revelation of Christ, who is now hidden from our view, will be preceded by an outward manifestation, in some new and awful form, of that evil which is already secretly operating among men, and that this new manifestation of it will continue in power until it be dethroned by the appearance of Christ.

The frequent occurrence in these early epistles of the terms *παρουσία*, *day of the Lord*, *revelation*, *appearance*, which we shall find used frequently not only in the other epistles of St. Paul but also in other parts of the New Testament, proves that they were already technical terms used to describe the expected return of Christ.

Similar teaching is found in St. Paul's other letters; but not with equal prominence. The Corinthian Christians, as we read in 1 Corinthians i. 7, 8, were "waiting for the revelation of our Lord Jesus Christ"; and the Apostle hoped that "in the day of our Lord Jesus" they will be without reproach. So familiar to his thought was that time that he speaks of it in chapter iii. 13 as "the day," and declares, in close agreement with 2 Thessalonians i. 8, that "it will be revealed in fire," and that the fire will test every man's work and determine his reward. In chapters iv. 5, xi. 26, we have casual references to the coming of Christ.

In 1 Corinthians xv. 20-23 St. Paul asserts, as already in 1 Thessalonians iv. 14, 16, that just as Christ rose from the

dead so will His servants rise : “ as firstfruit, Christ, then they who are Christ’s at His coming (*ἐν τῇ παρουσίᾳ αὐτοῦ*), then the end.” Here, as in 1 Thessalonians iv. 16, St. Paul speaks only of the resurrection of the servants of Christ. All others are throughout the chapter left entirely out of sight. So especially in verse 43, “ it is sown in dishonour, it is raised in glory ; it is sown in weakness, it is raised in power,” words true only of the saved. This being so, we have no right to infer from the passage before us that at the coming of Christ only His people will rise.

The resurrection of the righteous is more fully described in verses 50-57. We have here not only a definite day but a definite moment, and we have again the sound of a trumpet, a sound never to be repeated ; “ in a moment, in a twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet.” And, as before, the trumpet will be at once followed by resurrection of the dead. As before, the raising of the dead will affect the living. We are now told that these last will be changed. This change is made needful by the constitution of their bodies, which unfits them for the kingdom of God : “ flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God.” But the corruptible and mortal will clothe itself with incorruption and deathlessness. This will be the last victory over the last enemy.

The resurrection of believers mentioned in this chapter is evidently bodily : “ it is sown a soul-governed body, it is raised a spiritual body.” So Romans viii. 11, “ will make alive your mortal body ” : and Philippians iii. 21, “ will transfigure the body of our humiliation.” Consequently, the resurrection of Christ must also be bodily. For a merely spiritual manifestation of Christ after His death could not remove objections to a bodily resurrection of believers. And if the resurrection of Christ and of His people be bodily, Christ’s return to earth must also be bodily. In other words, St. Paul expected that the body of

Christ raised (Romans viii. 34) from the grave to heaven will in that day return from heaven to earth.

This expectation does not imply that the resurrection body of believers will contain the same particles of matter as that laid in the grave. Indeed these particles do not continue the same during life. But it seems to me to imply that our spirits will again clothe themselves in bodily forms ; in forms related probably, in some way to us inconceivable but real, to the bodies laid in the grave.

In 1 Corinthians xv. 51, as in 1 Thessalonians iv. 15, St. Paul puts himself among those who will survive the coming of Christ : " we, the living, who are being left for the coming of Christ," and " we shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed." This implies fairly that the Apostle did not know that long ages would elapse between his own day and the day of Christ. But we have no right to infer that he had a definite and confident expectation that he would himself survive to that day. For, in rhetorical figure he often identifies himself with that which he describes : *e.g.* Romans iii. 7, " If the truth of God by my lie abounded for His glory, why am I also still judged as a sinner ? " Probably in this matter hope and fear alternated with his circumstances and his frame of mind. In 2 Corinthians v. 6-8, he certainly ponders the possibility of his own death ; influenced perhaps by the deadly peril referred to in chapter i. 9. Still, finding himself preserved from day to day, and not knowing how soon Christ will appear, he might easily look upon, and write about, Himself as " being left for the coming of Christ," in contrast to those who had fallen asleep.

This hope, thus faintly expressed, was not destroyed by St. Paul's knowledge that the appearance of " the lawless one " must precede the coming of Christ. For, the wonderfully rapid progress of the Kingdom of God during the last twenty-five or thirty years permitted a hope that the

remaining years of his life might suffice for the appearance and short reign of the man of sin and for his destruction by the appearance of Christ. In any case, St. Paul's hope of himself surviving the coming of Christ, which finds indefinite expression only in these two passages, is no essential part of his plain and abundant and conspicuous teaching that Christ will return to raise the dead and judge all men.

It is worthy of note that the clearest expression of this hope is in the earliest of St. Paul's letters; and that the only other expression of it is in the earliest letter, probably, of the second group. In another letter of the same group, he weighs the possibility of his death; and does this more seriously in a letter of the third group, that to the Philippians. In the last of his letters, the second to Timothy, he contemplates the near approach of death.

Resurrection of the dead is mentioned in 2 Corinthians iv. 14: "He that raised the Lord Jesus will raise us with Jesus." In chapter v. 10, the Apostle asserts that himself and his readers "must be made manifest before the judgment seat of Christ, in order that each one may receive the things done through the instrumentality of the body . . . whether good or bad." This suggests irresistibly a simultaneous judgment of good and bad men. In Romans xiv. 10, we have similar teaching.

The Epistle to the Galatians contains no clear reference to the second coming of Christ. But we have in chapter vi. 7, 8, a solemn assertion of exact retribution.

In Romans ii. 5, we read of a "day of anger and of revelation of the righteous judgment of God, who will give back to each one according to his works"; and in verse 16 of a "day when God will judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ." In chapter viii. 19-23 St. Paul declares that the whole "creation is waiting for the revelation of the sons of God;" and that himself and his readers are "waiting for

the redemption of the body." This passage implies that salvation will not be complete until the bodies of the adopted sons of God are rescued from the grave. In chapter xi. 25, 26 he speaks of hardening as having come to Israel until the fulness of the Gentiles come in ; and says that then Israel will be saved. This implies real progress of the kingdom of God under the present order of things. Beyond this progress, we must place the great apostacy mentioned in an earlier epistle. Romans xiii. 11-13, xiv. 10 have been already referred to.

In Philippians i. 6, in the third group of St. Paul's letters, we read of the "day of Jesus Christ" as the time of the completion of the good work already begun in the Christians at Philippi. In chapter iii. 11, he speaks of "the resurrection from the dead" (*ἐκ νεκρῶν*) as the ultimate goal of his desire and effort. The phrase here used is found elsewhere only in Luke xx. 35, for the resurrection of believers, and in Acts iv. 2, 1 Peter i. 3, for that of Christ. It suggests a removal of the risen ones from among the dead ; and is therefore inapplicable to, and is never used for, the lost. For they "shall not see life" (John iii. 36), and will be still dead and among the dead even when risen. But this by no means implies or suggests an earlier resurrection of the saved. For two very different resurrections may take place at the same time, as we read in John v. 29.

In Philippians iii. 20, 21 we read, in close harmony with the passages quoted above, "our commonwealth is in heaven whence we wait for a Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ, who will transfigure the body of our humiliation conformed to the body of His glory, according to the working whereby He is able even to subject all things to Himself." This transfiguration must include the raising of the dead and the complete change of those who survive the coming of Christ. Each of these will demand a putting forth of the infinite power of Christ. These verses prove that the

alternative of death and life which in chapter i. 20-24 St. Paul ponders so seriously did not prevent him from joining in the joyful hope shared by all the servants of Christ in his day.

In Ephesians iv. 30, the readers are reminded that in the Holy Spirit they "were sealed for the day of redemption." This "redemption" can be no other than that of the body which will rise from the bondage of death on the day of Christ's return. The appearance of Christ is mentioned in Colossians iii. 4, "When Christ who is our life shall be manifested, then shall ye also with Him be manifested in glory." These casual references, amid topics quite different, reveal, deeply rooted in the thought of St. Paul, an expectation of the return of Christ to complete the salvation already begun.

In the last group of his epistles, in 1 Timothy vi. 14, we read "without reproach till the appearance (*τῆς ἐπιφανείας*, as in 2 Thess. ii. 8) of our Lord Jesus Christ." So Titus ii. 13, "waiting for the blessed hope and *appearance* of the glory of the great God and of our Saviour Christ Jesus." In 2 Timothy i. 10 the same word is used of the first coming of Christ, thus putting it in conspicuous relation to His second coming. In verse 18 St. Paul prays that Onesiphorus "may find mercy from the Lord *in that day*." So verse 12, "able to guard *to that day*." These last words, already found in 2 Thessalonians i. 10, occur again in 2 Timothy iv. 8, "the crown which the Lord will give me *in that day*, the righteous Judge, and not to me only but to all them that love His *appearance*." This last word (*ἐπιφανεία*) is that already found in 2 Thessalonians ii. 8, 1 Timothy vi. 14, Titus ii. 13, 2 Timothy i. 10, iv. 8. It occurs also in 2 Timothy iv. 1: "I charge thee in the sight of God and of Christ Jesus, who will judge the living and the dead, and by His appearance and His kingdom."

In St. Paul's address at Athens recorded in Acts xvii.

22-31 we read, in verse 31, "He hath set a day in which He will judge the world in righteousness, in a Man whom He hath marked out." Otherwise, the Second Coming of Christ is not expressly mentioned in his recorded speeches.

From the foregoing it will appear that St. Paul's teaching about the Second Coming of Christ is, both in thought and phraseology, the same in all his epistles. Indeed the chronological order of his letters does not reveal in this subject, as it does in some others, development of thought. Evidently his thought on this topic was fully matured when he wrote his earliest epistles.

It is also worthy of note that in these letters, written to recent converts, the subject before us occupies a much larger place than it does in those written later to older churches. This suggests that St. Paul looked upon the Second Coming of Christ as belonging to the rudiments of the Christian faith. And this we can well understand. In the synagogue at Thessalonica he preached, as we read in Acts xvii. 3, that Jesus is the Anointed Deliverer and that He had risen from the dead. He certainly added (cp. Acts xiii. 38) that through Him is proclaimed forgiveness of sins for all who believe His words. It was natural for him to add, as we infer from 1 Thessalonians v. 1, that He who was raised from the dead will return to reward or punish those who accept or reject His offered salvation. But when converts were gathered together into churches, they would need other teaching about the practical bearing of the Gospel upon the details of personal and social life. This further and more varied teaching would occupy attention, and thus leave less room in the later epistles, as there was less need, for teaching about a topic already sufficiently understood. And, as we have seen, occasional references are not wanting, even in these later letters. The large space occupied by this subject in 1 Thessalonians was also caused apparently by the unexpected death of some church-members

and the sorrow caused thereby: the second letter was written (ch. ii. 1) in part to correct a misunderstanding caused by the first.

The Second Coming of Christ can scarcely be reckoned among the great fundamental doctrines of the Gospel as St. Paul understood it. In the systematic exposition of that Gospel given in the Epistle to the Romans, it has no prominent place; and it receives only casual mention in the profound Epistles to the Ephesians and to the Colossians. But, while occupying only a subordinate place, it is, as the above quotations prove, an essential part (cp. Romans ii. 16) of the Gospel of Paul.

Much less important is the Apostle's faint hope of himself surviving the return of Christ. For this hope finds casual and indefinite expression only in two places in his epistles.

We may now sum up the expectation of the greatest of the Apostles of Christ touching the future. St. Paul looked forward to continued progress of the Gospel, to the gathering in of the fulness of the Gentiles and then of Israel. But beyond this progress he foresaw an awful manifestation, in a new and conspicuous form, of the evil already working in the wicked. This new revelation of evil, in the moment of its power, Christ will dethrone and destroy by His sudden and audible and visible appearance from heaven. At His coming, His dead servants will wake up from their long sleep; and with the changed forms of these still living will enter into the eternal and glorious kingdom of Christ and of God.

With this teaching, I shall in my next paper compare the teaching of Christ as recorded in the Synoptist Gospels.

JOSEPH AGAR BEET.