

Lecture 1 — The Morning Star.

1 Cor. 15; Heb. 9: 24-28.

Behold the Bridegroom!

Ten lectures on the second coming and kingdom of the Lord Jesus.

by W. T. P. Wolston, M.D.

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Preface to Third Edition.

The rapid sale of two large editions, rendering a third so quickly necessary, is happy evidence of the wide-spread interest in the glorious truths connected with the Second Coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

In no respect does this edition differ from the first, but I take this opportunity of endeavouring to clear up a point briefly touched on in Lecture 6, concerning which inquiry has been made, viz., Who are the guests at the marriage supper of the Lamb? Of them it is written, "Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb." These clearly are not the Bride, but are "the friends of the Bridegroom." I judge them to be all the heavenly saints — all the risen and glorified saints — other than the Church, which, as being the body — the Bride of Christ — is composed only of believers from the day of Pentecost to the rapture of the saints. Old Testament saints — who are specifically alluded to in Heb. 12: 23 as "the spirits of just men made perfect," will, I apprehend, greatly rejoice in the day of the Lamb's joy, though they be not in the peculiar place of intimacy, which, as the Bride, grace now gives to those who know the Lord, and are, by the Holy Ghost, united to Him in this, the day of His rejection. John the Baptist already anticipated this unselfish joy when he said, "He that hath the bride is the bridegroom; but the friend of the bridegroom, which standeth and heareth him, rejoiceth greatly because of the bridegroom's voice; this my joy therefore is fulfilled" (John 3: 29). So, again, will it be when the heavenly guests sit at the marriage supper of the Lamb. Well may we sing

"Oh day of wondrous promise,

The Bridegroom and the Bride

Are seen in glory ever:

O God! how satisfied."

May the gracious Lord yet further deign to use this little volume to awaken interest in His own near return.

W. T. P. W.

Edinburgh, *Feb.* 15, 1895.

Preface to First Edition.

The origin of the following little volume is this. A year ago a short course of Lectures, on the Lord's Second Coming, was given. Great interest in the subject was evinced, and, by many, a desire expressed, that the truths ministered, might appear in a permanent form, for quiet perusal. As, however, no notes either pre-existed, or were taken, this was then impossible. This spring the Author again felt led of the Lord, to take up the subject of His return, going more into detail, and the shorthand notes, then taken, are now in the reader's hands. They have been revised, and emended, as well as the leisure of a Physician's busy life afforded — subject as it is to constant calls, and interruptions, which do not lend themselves to literary work. To erudition, or scholarship, the book has no claim, and makes no pretensions. That the truth is in it, the Author has no doubt, and the only thought before his mind, in publication, is the profit of souls, if unsaved, and the helping of some of the Lord's dear children, to a better understanding of His prophetic Word, and, a more simple daily waiting, for Him, who says, "Behold, I come quickly."

Delivered, as these Lectures were, to large, and mixed audiences, of believers, and unbelievers, the felt, and often, expressed need of the latter, made the introduction of the simple Gospel, a necessity, as well as a joy to the speaker. These statements, and appeals, have not been eliminated, for the book may fall into similar hands, and the Lord may be graciously pleased to use the printer's mark, as He did the living voice, to thereby awaken the careless, and bring rest to the troubled. May He do so for His name's sake!

None can be more conscious than the Author, of the many imperfections that exist in his treatment of his subject, so immense is it. But he trusts his attempt, to give a somewhat connected view, of yet future events, will lead the reader to imitate the Bereans, who, when they heard the same testimony as the Thessalonians — the near coming of the Lord — "searched the scriptures daily, whether these things were so" (Acts 17: 11).

The Lord grant to reader, and writer, to be "like unto men that wait for their Lord" (Luke 12: 36).

W. T. P. W.

46 Charlotte Square,

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Lecture 1 — THE MORNING STAR.

1 Cor. 15; Heb. 9: 24-28.

There are three positions in Scripture where the Lord Jesus Christ is presented to us, and all three we have in these few verses of Heb. 9 which I have just read. In the most forcible, and yet the tersest possible language, has the Spirit of God condensed, in these closing verses of Heb. 9, these three positions, in which we behold the blessed Lord Jesus Christ, viewed of course as a man. What He was in eternity is not the question here, — although that was all true, — but we have Him, in these verses, seen in this world, on the cross, dying, yea, dead. You have Him then gone up into heaven, at God's right hand, where He now is; and, finally, He is presented as coming again. You have therefore the whole truth of Christ — known in this world, seen in this world, and to be seen — brought out in this passage. Of course there are many others, which I must refer to, in which the actions of the Lord Jesus Christ are brought before us, but I want just simply to fix this scripture upon the mind first of all. You have here Christ's three appearings.

In verse 26 we find: — "But now once, in the end of the world, hath he appeared, to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself." Then in verse 24 we find this: — He "is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us." For us is an exceedingly blessed word. Whom does it mean? Those of whom 1 Corinthians 15 speaks, when it says, — "They that are Christ's at his coming." He now appears in the presence of God for us. He represented us once in death; He represents us now in life; and what is the next thing? "Unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time, without sin, unto salvation." He is coming to take us to glory. The truth of the Lord's coming is one of the happiest things possible for the Christian, while it is a very solemn thing for a man who is not a Christian. By Christian I mean a real believer; I do not mean what you call a professor. When I say Christian, I mean the real thing, one who knows Christ, — one who really knows the Lord Jesus Christ as his Saviour. What a blessed thing to look for that Saviour! People may say, — "But you do not expect the Lord to come yet, do you?" That is exactly what I do expect; and the testimony of Scripture is so clear, and distinct, as to the Lord's second coming, that I desire, with His help, to indicate the salient points thereof.

If you take the trouble to search the Scriptures, you will find that, of the twenty-seven sections of which the New Testament is composed, no less than twenty-two speak to you of the return of the Lord Jesus. All the gospels, the Acts, every epistle of Paul (saving three), James, Peter, Jude, John (except his two minor epistles), and the Revelation, testify to it. Thus in almost every part of the New Testament Scriptures His return is always presented to us, as that which should be daily expected.

But why the exceptions, and what are they? The exceptions are these, — the epistles to the Galatians, Ephesians, and Philemon, and the two minor epistles of John. These do not refer to the Lord's second coming, and the reason, I think, is not far to seek. Why not the Galatians? Because they did not understand the value of His first coming. They were not clear about the Gospel, about redemption. They were going to be saved by law, by works, and therefore Paul has to begin *de novo*, and tell them the value and efficacy of Christ's first coming. Then why not the Ephesians? Because you are exactly at the other end of the line of truth. The blessed truth

brought out in the Ephesians is this, that the believer is already "accepted in the beloved"; for, as the Ephesians 2 says, — "God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ (by grace ye are saved); and hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus." The Christian, the believer, is viewed, according to the truth of Ephesians, as now being in Christ, where Christ is, in heavenly places. Then Philemon is a loving little pastoral letter, from the beloved apostle, to a master, about a runaway slave, whom he sends back to his duty. A very nice, good thing to do, and therefore I should not expect Paul to refer to the Lord's second coming in such a case. The two minor epistles of John, similarly, are occupied with specific instructions addressed to an individual.

The teaching of the book of Revelation, above all, is, that the Lord is coming back, and that He is coming back for His people first, and then to set the earth right. I know that the general thought abroad is, that when the Lord comes back, the next time, it is for the purpose of judging the world. There is no doubt He will judge. There is no doubt that the return of the Lord Jesus to deal with the earth is perfectly certain; but let me say this about it — and it was a great help to my own soul when I saw this point — that the return of the Lord, in that character, is connected with what Scripture treats of as prophecy. That is not the Christian hope. The Christian hope is totally distinct from the "sure word of prophecy" (2 Peter 1: 19). We find plenty of prophecy in the Old Testament Scriptures; but, observe, all prophecy relates to the earth, whereas the Christian hope relates to heaven. Now the Lord Jesus Himself has gone, as man, into heaven, and He proposes to take up to Himself there those that belong to Him.

I repeat, then, that the hope of the Christian is not the earth being set right, — although, thank God, it will be set right, — but the hope of the Christian is Christ Himself, and Christ as coming for His blood-bought people. Why have we the Lord presenting Himself to us as the "Bright and Morning Star" in Rev. 22: 16? Every person understands what the morning star is. It is not daylight. You never saw a man wakened up in the morning by the morning star. You must get up early to see the morning star. What wakes people up in the morning is the sunlight, — it is daylight. What you have in this passage is, that the hope of the Christian is Christ, now known in heaven as the Saviour, and as the One who is coming back for His own people, and the manner of our going up to be with Him is most blessed. The Morning Star is Christ for the watching Christian, *while the world is buried in slumber*.

This expression occurs three times in the New Testament. You will find an allusion in the book of Isaiah to the day-star, but the day-star of the Old Testament is the enemy of Christ, not Christ Himself. The expression is, "O Lucifer! [day-star, *see margin*], son of the morning" (Isa. 14: 12). He is Christ's enemy, and is to be judged and destroyed. The morning star of the New Testament is always the blessed Lord Jesus Christ Himself. The apostle Peter is the first to speak of it, in his second epistle. He says, referring to the mount of transfiguration (2 Peter 1: 16), "We have not followed cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eyewitnesses of his majesty. For he received from God the Father honour and glory, when there came such a voice to him from the excellent glory, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. And this voice which came from heaven we heard, when we were with him in the holy mount. 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 [morning star] arise in your hearts." What did Peter see on that mount? There was the blessed Lord Jesus, with Moses and Elias, the type of two classes, — Moses, a man who had died, and who appears in glory; Elias, a man who never had died, but who passed up to heaven without death. There are these two men with the Lord in glory. Then you have Peter, James, and John, round about, figures of men upon the earth. This is the picture, in miniature, of the coming kingdom of Christ. You have the heavenly side, and the earthly side, of the coming kingdom of the Lord.

One of the most wonderful sides of the Gospel is this, that the believer has title to pass into glory without death, because the One, on whom death had no claim, went down into death for us. This you see prefigured in Elijah. But Peter adds, "We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a lamp that shines in a dark place." A lamp is all very good for a man in a dark night, but lamp-light is not daylight. I can turn to prophecy, which is the lamp, and the light of prophecy will show me how to pick my way through this world, which is under judgment; but there is something better than that. As Christians now, we are brought into the full light. We are children of the light, and of the day. Thus daylight dawns in the heart of the Christian before the day shines on the world; and the day-star — Christ Himself in heavenly grace — is apprehended by the soul, in this character, before He arises as the Sun of righteousness. The lamp of prophecy is good; the light of Christianity is infinitely superior.

Again, in Revelation 2, the Lord Jesus says to the overcomer in Thyatira, "I will give him the morning star." What is the meaning of that? He Himself, the coming One, gives the Thyatiran overcomer the morning star. It was the darkest age of the Church's declension, and then it was that the hope of the Lord's return was first presented, to cheer the heart of the overcomer.

I turn you now to what the Lord says in the last chapter of Revelation (Rev. 22: 16), "I Jesus have sent mine angel to testify unto you these things in the churches. I am the root and the offspring of David, and the bright and morning star." He presents Himself, His own blessed, glorious person, and "the Spirit and the bride say, Come" to Him immediately. This is the Spirit's cry in the whole Church, and shows what should be the attitude of the Church to the end.

Can you, dear friends, say to the Lord Jesus tonight, "Lord, come"? "Oh, but," you say, "that would be a very serious thing." It would, if you are not ready. But I will ask you that are ready, Would you not like to meet your blessed Saviour? You that love the Lord Jesus, would you not like to meet Him? That is the very thing our hearts are waiting for. Of course it is for the heart that loves Him. The heart must be first won for Christ; and where there is affection for the Bridegroom, but hitherto lack of intelligence, the Spirit adds, "Let him that heareth say, Come." It is not only that the intelligent is entitled to say "Come," but he who "heareth," for the first time, is also to say, "Come," *i.e.*, "Lord, come!"

The immediate return of the Lord Jesus is that which is, above all, grateful and suitable to the heart that really knows and loves Him; and in one way or another, nearly all through the New Testament, the coming of the Lord Jesus is thus presented. I will not take you through the Scriptures, because it will take a great deal more time than I have at my disposal to turn to all the passages. Suffice it to repeat, that in every section of the New Testament, save the five I have

already mentioned, the truth of the Lord's second coming is presented to us as the next thing before the believer, and nothing is supposed necessarily to intervene to defer that coming.

I will touch briefly on John 14, because there the Lord unfolds this truth most simply, and sweetly, just as He was leaving the earth. "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." Now people say, "I thought that meant death." I never heard anything so curious in my life. Death has not gone away. "No," you reply, "but I thought that was the Lord coming to the saint in death." The saint, passing away, gets the sweet sense of the Lord's presence, that he may not taste death, which is a very blessed thing; but He says here, "If I go away, I will come again." The truth is this, there is the blood-bought mansion, the blood-bought home, the scene of light and glory, in the Father's house on high, bought for us by the blood of the Saviour, and at the fitting moment, He will come, to take up those who are His own — raising the dead, changing the living — and they will be with Him, and in His likeness for evermore. This is the Christian hope.

But, then, what is the basis of the Christian hope? The basis of that hope is the wonderful truth unfolded in the scripture, which I first read this evening, and I ask you therefore to go back to 1 Corinthians 15, because it is absolutely impossible that either you, or I, can quietly, or simply wait for the Lord Jesus, or think of His coming peacefully, and joyfully, if our souls are not clear before God, as to the value, and effect of the work which He has wrought. It is perfectly impossible for any person to think of the return of the holy, blessed Saviour, unless the conscience is purged, and the heart at rest, in the sense that all sins are forgiven. Now this chapter unfolds the Gospel most simply, and develops the truth of the resurrection, and what was connected with the resurrection. You will see, therefore, what is the basis of our hope, as Christians. By our, I mean the whole family of God; I mean every believer in the Lord Jesus Christ. The hope of the Christian is what Scripture presents as the blessed desire of every heart that knows the Lord Jesus Christ. It rests on the fact of His death and resurrection; and therefore I invite your attention to this scripture, to note the way in which the Spirit of God couples the death of Christ, and His resurrection, and the rising of the saints, at the second coming of the Lord, all together. The latter are all connected with Him who died, on whom death had no claim.

What is the way in which the Lord Jesus Christ comes? "In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye." Will the world see, or be aware of that coming? I do not think so. The coming of the Saviour, as the Bridegroom, is for the bride, it is for the saved — His own beloved people.

Let us get hold clearly, and distinctly, of the object, the nature, the effect, and the value of the first coming of the Saviour, and then this truth is as clear as possible. Now see, at Corinth, they had evidently given up the clear hold of the Gospel. Satan came in and denied the resurrection of the body. But observe Paul's argument: Give up the resurrection of the body, and what do you do? You give up Christ. Satan's object always is, in some way or other, to lower the Lord Jesus Christ. The apostle Paul therefore, refutes this error by relating the Gospel, saying, "I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand; by which also ye are saved." The Gospel, when received, saves men, out and out. But why does he say this: — "By which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I

preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain"? What does he mean by "*in vain*"? He means this. If all this was a myth, or a fable, then there was nothing to rest upon. But, do you not see, it was not a fable, but is the truth, and therefore he repeats it, — "How that Christ died for our sins, according to the scriptures." Wonderful news in a world of death! Christ died. "How that Christ died for our sins." Well, I believe that. Are you clear of your sins? Are they forgiven? He died for our sins. Suppose I were deeply in debt, and you undertook to go, and did go, and pay all that debt for me, what should I be? I should be accounted clear. Of course, that is the very object for which you paid the debt, you wanted to deliver me, and did so.

Christ, then, was "delivered for our offences." He "died for our sins according to the scriptures." The judgment of God upon man for his sin is that he dies. Consequently men say, There is only one thing you are sure of, and that is death. I stand here, and I say boldly, that is the very thing I am not sure of And why? Because I fully believe the lovely tidings that Christ died for me. Every believer is entitled to say, "He died for me." "He died for our sins, according to the scriptures." Quite true, that the wages of sin is death, but then what does Hebrews 9 say? "So Christ was once offered." Look at the "as" and the "so." "As it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment, so Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many." There we see the inevitable consequences of man's sin — death, and judgment at the hand of God. But what has taken place? Blessed be God for the news! After our sin, and before the day of judgment, when the whole question of our sins must be raised between God and our souls, what has taken place? The blessed Son of God has stepped in, and He has died for us, for our sins, for sinners. And what is the result? You, who believe in Him, have now crossed the frontier, you have crossed the boundary line, you stand on the other side of death and judgment. It is a wonderful thing to know that.

The man who knows Christ, stands on the very ground where the fire has been. I suppose you all know how to act, if you are in a prairie on fire, and you discover the devouring element coming up behind you. The fire is coming rapidly along. It will not do to run. There is only one way of sure escape, — get the spot upon which you stand burned; set fire to the grass with your own hand. And what is the result? Up comes the devouring flame, and there is nothing to touch, nothing to burn, it has all been consumed. Now, apply that to yourself. How are you going to face God about your sins, if you cannot rest upon Christ? But here is wonderful tidings for sinners — anxious sinners — Christ "died for our sins," and took the consequences thereof, death and judgment, which were our due, and He was buried, and He was raised again the third day, according to the Scriptures. Paul says, "He was seen of above five hundred brethren at once; . . . And last of all he was seen of me." I have seen Him in glory, and you come to tell me that there is no resurrection? Why, how can that be? "If there be no resurrection of the dead, then is Christ not raised." I think that a most wonderful conclusion. He reasons from us to Christ; because He was once as dead as any man in this audience ever can be. Blessed news! I learn that the One on whom death had no claim whatever, who "knew no sin," whom the Father proclaimed His "beloved Son," goes at length, in the grace of His heart, to the cross, and there, in the darkness of that scene that no eye could ever penetrate, He takes up, between God and Himself, the whole question of our sins — our guilt before God. "For man the Saviour bled." He dies, on whom death had no claim, in the room and stead of the poor guilty sinner. And what is the consequence? Life and blessing for the one who clings to Him, and who looks to Him. The love of Christ constrains the heart to simply trust Him.

Now note, if there be no resurrection of the dead, then, says Paul, "Christ is not raised"; and he argues immediately that if Christ be not raised, our preaching is vain, and, more than that, we have been telling lies about God, for we said that God had raised Him. "And if Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins." But what is the converse? If Christ be raised, for every person who trusts Him, then *you are not in your sins*. That is the Gospel. That is the Gospel I believe in. Thank God, I know my sins are forgiven. Moreover, this forgiveness, this salvation, has been bought for us by the dying agonies of the Son of God; and I love to speak of that blessed Saviour who has gone into death — into the very dominion of death. And what has He done? He has met the claims of God in righteousness, He has glorified His nature about sin, He has defeated Satan, and broken his power, annulled death, and risen from the dead. Christ has won a victory, that sets every soul that clings to Him free, and brings that soul into the enjoyment of the spoils of the victory which Jesus has wrought for us. What demonstrates the power and the fulness of the Gospel? That the One who died for us is raised from among the dead. If Christ be not raised, ye are yet in your sins; but if He be raised, what then? The two consequences of sin — death and judgment — the blessed Saviour took on the cross, and the result is this, that the veil is rent, the way right up into God's presence is laid open, and there is the blood of atonement that give? you title to draw near to God.

Before this is apprehended there will be a work in the soul. It must be brought to feel itself of no importance — a sinner; and the moment the heart bows before God, with the sense of its guilt, there is the blessed unfolding, by the Spirit of God, of the atoning suffering, and the value of the blood-shedding, of the Lord Jesus Christ. That once finished work avails absolutely, and to the uttermost, for every soul that simply believes in Him, who died and rose again. Why not turn, to Him now? Look at that risen Saviour, who has gone up, with the trophy of His victory by His side. He has gone right down into the depths of death, that He might deliver, and bring out every soul that simply believes and confides in His own blessed name.

But the apostle adds, — "Now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the first-fruits of them that slept." The point is this, that the resurrection of the Lord Jesus was the proof, and evidence of the absolute favour of God, towards that blessed One. There are two resurrections spoken of in the New Testament, — there is the resurrection unto life, and the resurrection unto judgment (John 5: 29). The resurrection of the Lord Jesus is the pattern of the resurrection of those that belong to Him. As the first man brought in death, by man also came resurrection from among the dead. How? Because Jesus was a man upon whom death had no claim whatever; He goes down into death, and takes the sting out of it — is the conqueror and victor over it; and is the risen Saviour. What is the root of the persecution in Acts 4? Why were the apostles put in prison? "Because they taught the people, and preached through Jesus the resurrection from among the dead." You tell people that there is a general resurrection, and that all the dead will rise together, by-and-by, and that then things are going to be settled, as to whether they are to be saved or not, and that will be accepted, as very nice, orthodox doctrine; but tell them this, that the resurrection of the Lord's people will be after the pattern of Christ's, and one thousand years before the resurrection of the unbelieving dead, and what will be stirred up? Sometimes a good deal of feeling.

But that is just what Scripture tells us. That is the first resurrection, of which Christ Himself was the first-fruits. In Revelation we read, "Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the

first resurrection; on such the second death hath no power." What about the other resurrection? "The rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished" (Rev. 20: 5, 6). And observe, the Holy Ghost does not call that the second resurrection. What He calls it is "the second death" (see verses 6, 14). God save every soul here from such a resurrection as that, because, mark, it is "the resurrection unto judgment." Nowhere in Scripture is there found the dogma of a general resurrection of saved, and unsaved, all together. The resurrection of the saints is before the millennial reign of Christ. The resurrection after His millennial reign is a "resurrection unto judgment," and the Holy Ghost stamps that as "the second death." I think to die once is quite enough. But I rejoice to stand here this evening, and tell out good news to the man who is troubled about death. There is no need, if you are a Christian, that you should die at all. I do not say, I shall not die. All I say is, I am not waiting for it. Death may come, not must. The Lord will come. Death may come; not will, not must. The blessed tidings is this, that Christ has gone into death for us, and has come up out of it; and, therefore, those who belong to Him, redeemed with His blood, are brought to God, and stand before Him, on the ground of the work Jesus has accomplished. His resurrection is the proof of the value of that work; and the resurrection of Christ is the pattern of the resurrection of those that belong to Him, in the day of His coming again.

More than that, 1 Corinthians 15 tells us "we shall not all sleep." When does Christ become the head of His body? Not till He is alive from the dead, and gone into glory. It is the risen Christ that your heart turns to. It is not merely that the blessed Saviour died. Quite true; but He rose again. The stone is rolled away, and now He is risen. All who belong to Him are to share the fruit of the wonderful work that He has accomplished. Christ is become the first-fruits of them that slept. Suppose the Lord came tonight — and there is no reason why He should not — what would be the result? All "that are Christ's" must rise to meet Him. There are many in the grave, there are many who have passed away, but they will be raised in the likeness of the blessed Saviour. It is those that are Christ's at His coming, and only those that are Christ's, that have part in the first resurrection. You must be quite clear about that.

But then, when will that be? No one knows. I am not here to indicate to you, in the slightest degree, that any moment can be fixed for the return of the Lord Jesus, but only to point out this, that the hope of the early Christians was the return of the Lord, and our hope is the same. Look at the 1 Corinthians 15: 51: "Behold, I show you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed." Nothing can be more clear than that. "We must all die," people sometimes say. No; "we shall not all sleep," is the distinct testimony of the Holy Ghost; and supposing that blessed Bridegroom were to come this evening in the air, and call up His blood-bought, and tenderly loved Bride, then we should not fall asleep, but we should all be changed, because "flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God." "We shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye." No warning! The trumpet shall sound, but that trump is not the trump that is going to raise all by-and-by. No, it only calls those "that are Christ's at his coming." What then? "The dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory" (1 Cor. 15: 52-54).

What about those that are not Christ's? The scripture is very plain. "The rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished." It is an awfully solemn thing not to be Christ's; and therefore, with all the fervour of my heart, would I say, Oh! my friends, decide for Christ; believe on Christ; come to Christ. Turn to Him, and be ready for His coming. In the twinkling of an eye that trump may be heard, and then? The Gospel door closes. No more will news of grace — heavenly grace and pardon — fall on the ear of the sinner. No more Gospel preaching then. The door of heaven is shut, and its ambassadors called home. What a fearful agony of surprise will possess the half-decided soul, that discovers this, just *after* the Lord has come, and all chance of salvation is for ever lost!

The manner of the Lord's coming is most distinctly developed in 1 Thessalonians, 4. In the 13th verse Paul says, — "I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died, and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him. For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent [*i.e.*, anticipate, or go before] them which are asleep. 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." When He comes back in glory, then He will bring His people with Him, but, before that, He comes into the air, and gathers His own to Him. There are two stages, — His coming as the Bridegroom into the air, and our rising to meet Him; then the coming of the King, in the day of His glory, when He returns to deal with the earth. We rise, at the call of the Bridegroom, and meet the One we love in the air. A little while afterwards, when He appears on earth as Son of Man — as King of kings and Lord of lords — He brings with Him all His heavenly saints.

If her Majesty, coming into Edinburgh from the south, were to send a message, that any, who wished to show their loyalty to her person, were invited to go out and meet her at Portobello, and join her retinue, would not many go to meet her, and come to Edinburgh in her train? Without any doubt. Similarly the blessed Lord is coming, by-and-by, to deal with this earth, but, before that, He is coming into the air, and He gets His followers, true and real, — those "that are Christ's at his coming," — to meet Him there. I ask you now, Are you sure that you will be "Christ's at his coming"? Oh make sure, for this moment of rapturous joy draws near. It is most graphically described: — "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." Not a word about the wicked dead — the unbelieving, the unrepentant dead. "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. Wherefore comfort one another with these words." I know no greater comfort, than to think that before the clock strikes eight we may meet the blessed Lord in the air. I am persuaded that every Christian in this room would delight to meet the Lord this evening.

But you say, — "I do not know that I am ready." Well, get ready. "Whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely." Have you never drunk of the water of life? Drink it while you sit, tonight. Turn to Jesus. What are you living for? I ask you solemnly, before God, with eternity before you, and the coming of the Lord in view, is it only for self? Ah! turn to Him, and live for

Him who died for us. That is the only really right thing to do. Turn to the Lord Jesus, or else what must happen? Why, just what happened in the striking parable in the 25th of Matthew, where we have the coming of the Bridegroom, and the history of the ten virgins. There were ten virgins, five wise, and five foolish; five ready, the others not ready. They all went to sleep while the Bridegroom tarried. The hope of the Lord's coming has been lost sight of for nearly seventeen hundred years, but now the Spirit has sent forth the midnight cry, — "Behold, the Bridegroom cometh!" Why? because the Bridegroom is just coming; because the Lord is coming. Are you not ready yet? What will be the result? Listen: — "At midnight there was a cry made, Behold, the bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet him. Then all those virgins arose, and trimmed their lamps." What took place? The foolish found they possessed no oil. They had the lamp, quite truly, in their hands — the lamp of profession.

I suppose the great majority of my hearers present tonight are professors, — but, are you possessors of Christ? Are your sins forgiven? If you cannot answer that question honestly, you will be surprised in the day of the Lord's coming. You will be stirred up, and you will turn and say, — "Give me of your oil." But the answer will be, — "Go and buy for yourselves. And while they went to buy, the bridegroom came." Content with a name to live, and yet dead; content to live without knowing the real Name, they learn He knows them not. Do not lay your head on the pillow tonight without having the matter of your soul's eternal salvation settled, — really, and definitely, and solemnly settled before God. Why? Because the Lord is coming. "While they went to buy, the bridegroom came; and they that were ready went in with him to the marriage: and *the door* was shut." Ah! how many of us are ready in this hall this evening? Are you ready? Are all ready? Am I ready? Through infinite mercy, yes, through the blood of the Saviour, who died for me and rose again. Dear unsaved one, come now, drink of the living water, and then you will be one of the ready ones; and in the moment when you hear the shout, you will rise and meet the blessed Lord, and say, — This is the Lord that I have been waiting for.

This, then, is the Gospel, and our hope. Christ has died, put away our sins, annulled death, endured judgment; and we, believing in Him, stand on the other side of death and judgment, and just wait for Him. When He came the first time, He took our sins away; when He comes the next time, He will take us away to scenes of rest and glory, to be the everlasting partners of His joy. As the bright and morning star, He presents His own coming as the next thing before us. May, each one be really waiting, and watching for Him.