

Our Weekly Sermons By Celebrated Divines.

Written specially for the LADIES PICTORIAL WEEKLY.

Till He Come.

"All the time until He come." 1. Cor. i, 26.

An expression which finds a strict parallel in these words with which the nobleman in the parable left his servants as he went forth to a far country to receive a kingdom and to return "occupy (or trade ye) until I come"; enjoining a patient earnest activity which does not spend its strength on fools' errands, in beating the air, or in finding no end in wandering mazes lost, but which has a present practical purpose and a definite ending. Trade with your talents, be they what they may, for the Master has need thereof and will return; "do good and communicate," proclaim the glad tidings of cross, for He is not dead but living, the kingdoms of this world are yet to become the kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ and He shall reign for ever and ever, "His kingdom is righteousness and joy and peace."

That we may be strengthened in thus proclaiming the Lord's death till He come, our thoughts shall be directed to some of the aspects of His coming in their relations to ourselves. Where opinions differ it seems almost impossible to avoid controversy, yet there is no comfort in controversy, it makes cruelly keen the intellect, makes partisans, and paralyzes all the affections of the heart. Our endeavor therefore will be to present some New Testament teachings in their practical or rather, their experimental bearing upon our life, allowing differences to settle themselves. In so doing let this proposition be stated:—

I. The character of the coming one will determine the character or the spirit of the coming. The thunder-bolt comes with sudden terror, and smites with terrible might; very different, though sudden, is the return of a friend. True, there are those to whom the manifestation of the Brighter one will be as a terror; bats flee the light, and evil deeds seek darkness, but for those who proclaim His death, the coming Saviour is a joy and strength. "I came that they might have life," are the words that declare the brightness of His presence, and the joy his coming imparts. The coming of the Savior is the coming of a friend, the imparting of love with all its fruits, the putting to flight of all night shadows, the bringing to an end of sin, and the ushering in of an everlasting righteousness. This fact that Jesus is the light and the life of man, and is coming is not, nor is it designed to be, a cause either of discord or of dread, but of joyful preparation and a gladly certain hope. May it be such to each of us, not a dogma which make the Pharisee, but a life that makes the Christian.

II. The character of the coming one should determine the character to be manifested on the part of those who occupy, shew forth or wait "till He come." There are some of us, I doubt not, have felt, perchance, even now are feeling, the life weariness of our sojourning and toiling here; the longing of the storm-tossed mariner for home, who are ready with the dream of sunny isles and syren song to say:

"We have had enough of action, and of motion we
Roll'd to starboard, roll'd to larboard, where the surge was seething
free—

Surely, surely, slumber is more sweet than toil, the shore
Than labor in the deep mid-ocean, wind, wave and oar!"

Thus felt the wind and storm exulting prophet who had called down drought and famine on apostate Israel, and after the terrible execution of Baal's prophets at Carmel fled before the Tyrian Queen's threat to a cave in the wilderness. There came to him there a voice, "What dost thou here Elijah. Go forth and stand upon the mount." In like manner "till He come," calls upon us each to use his talent or talents, to find no cave rest or gloom, but in the very brunt of the storm to stand upon the mount before God, to keep our vineyard, prune and train the vine; to watch and pray lest the temptation to sleep or to be idle overtake us to our ruin. And here let us dwell for a little upon a simple but important truth. "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven," but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. Love to God and to Christ only becomes real by the doing of His will. I am not concerned with enquiring whether the sentiment or the action has priority, but "as the body apart from the spirit is dead, even so faith apart from works is dead." There is no showing forth of the Lord's death all the time until He come without the life of humble faith and of living deeds. This is the difference between cant and testimony. Cant talks and does not, "Oh, brave Talkative!" testimony shines from the life, let lips speak or be in silence. The true waiter for his Lord's coming is ever doing the Master's will even as his great exemplar, who went about *doing good*, and found his meat and drink therein. You remember Milton's stately lines:

"Thousands at His bidding speed
And post o'er land and ocean without rest:
They also serve who only stand and wait.

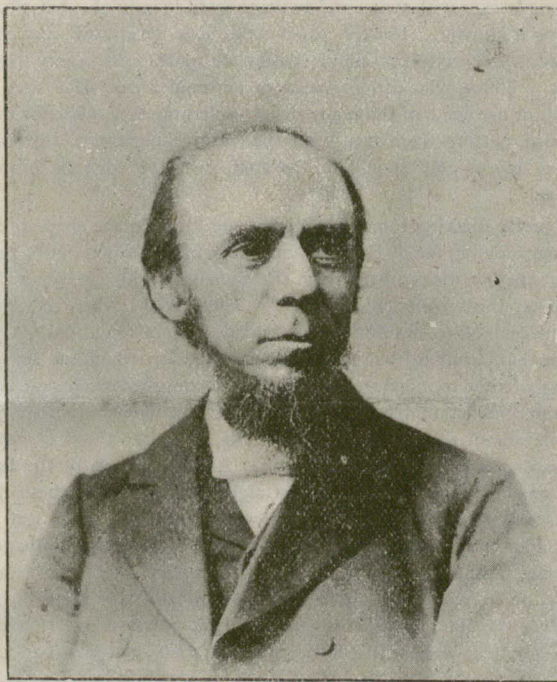
only their waiting is constant readiness to speed like their fellows at His bidding.

III. There are various manifestations of the coming Saviour. That the early church daily, hourly expected a coming—the great and dreadful day of the Lord—is manifest. Equally manifest the fact that the last decade of nineteen centuries is passing as others have passed, watching wearily the clouds of heaven for Him. Did they wrongly interpret the sign of His coming? or do we mistake their reading of the same? Little matter if we but for ourselves and our children read carefully, truthfully, trustingly, that the word of his salvation saith, Let us endeavor.

I. There can be no doubt but that in large measure, if not entirely, the coming of Matthew xxiv was fulfilled in the destruction

of Jerusalem and the consummation of the Jewish age; and that the desolate ruins on the plain shadowed by the Imolous mount, watered by the Pactoles river, are marks of that coming in which the church that had but a name to live was judged, the candlestick removed, and Sardis numbered with the things that had been, and now are not. Led by such teaching the observant christian can discern his Lord's coming in the straitness felt as commercial dishonesty abounds; in the struggle and unrest accompanying political unrighteousness; in the social disasters which mark with ruin the path of those who will hasten to be rich; in the mourning an absent Lord on the part of those who pervert the ways of Zion by divisions and all uncharitableness; as well as in the revolutions which convulse a people and urge the lessons of righteousness by the judgments that are abroad in the earth.

2. But nearer to our present purpose, though not a whit less true, are those comings to which our Lord refers when to his disciples he said "I come again and receive you unto myself." Of all that band to whom those words were first spoken not one remains on this side the dark cloud that divides the seen and temporal from the eternal and the unseen. To them that coming has been; not indeed as the world would have marked it out, nor as the imperfectly educated disciples when they impatiently asked of their risen Lord: "Dost thou at this time restore the kingdom to Israel!" but real nevertheless. Look at the first martyr. Nothing can exceed in bitterness a mob infuriated by religious hate. In the midst of such a mob Stephen looked steadfastly into heaven, and saw amid the Glory of God, Jesus; and when bruised, mangled he cried: "Receive my spirit" did not the Lord Jesus in that martyrdom come and receive His servant to Himself? telling us most plainly that life's most bitter experiences cannot keep the Saviour away, that nothing "shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord." Nor do the storm clouds always herald His coming. "Part remain until now; some are fallen asleep," are Paul's simple words distinguishing the living



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from the dead. "He was not, for God took him," is the word of his departure who in antediluvian days "walked with God." Thus comes the Saviour for those who fall asleep in Him. "Even so come Lord Jesus" has been and is the breathing of many trustful, loving hearts that wait for Him, showing forth His death till he come.

3 "I stand at the door and knock" says He who waiteth patiently to be gracious that he may "come in to such as will receive Him and sup with them and they with Him." Ah! how patiently at the noontide hour, in the midnight dream. Thus seeking His own comes the patient loving Saviour.

"And still He comes, from place to place His holy footprints we can trace
Ye tempted ones there's refuge nigh: Jesus of Nazareth passeth by."

4. There remaineth still another coming, *parousia*, the consummation of all the rest, when every night shadow shall have passed and the light shine clear of an endless day. In this will be fulfilled all the promises and the comings of which the gospel words are full. Even as all the varied lights and shadows of the dawn melt at last into the glorious day. The watchman impatiently watching for the morning with gaze towards the east sees the first gray on the distant horizon, and cries Lo the dawn! The watcher in the lonely chamber has not seen that harbinger, but by-and-by a little cloud appears edged with light, only then to her "the morning breaks." And now, though the valley still rests in gloom, the hill top flashes with rosy gleam, another voice cries exultant, Behold the day! At length the sun comes out of his chambers rejoicingly to run his race, the landscape beams in brightness, the day has come and all walk in its light. Thus the Saviour is ever coming, until His last coming which crowns all with glory. Jesus comes to the Church as in Pentecostal days by His spirit, to the suffering ones in martyr visions, in every manifestation of His redeeming power, all of which and more are but the dawning tokens of that coming day when the kingdom shall be established which knows no end, and

the reign of righteousness made manifest, when the tabernacle of God shall be with men, and He shall dwell with them, and they shall be His peoples, and God Himself shall be with them and be their God." Even so Lord Jesus come quickly!

We proclaim His death all the time till He come. Lift up His cross as the one thing sure and firm where uncertainty reigns and things are constantly being changed; occupy with our talents that we may render our account with acceptance, watch and pray, and press on till He shall come, the King in His beauty bringing in the golden age, which lies onward, not backward as a regret, not as a Grecian fable a memory of the past: but a hope of the future, a goal to which we are surely hastening, a victory to crown earth's direst struggle; therefore stablish your heart for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh.

"Till He come!" Oh, let the words
Linger on the trembling chords;
Let the "little while" between
In their golden light be seen;
Let us think, how heaven and home
Lie beyond that "Till He come!"
When the weary ones we love
Enter on that rest above,
When their words of love and cheer
Fall no longer on our ear,
Hush! be every murmur dumb,
It is only "Till He come!"
Clouds and darkness round us press:
Would we have one sorrow less?
All the sharpness of the cross,
All that tells the world is loss,
Death and darkness and the tomb,
Pain us only "Till He come!"
See, the feast of love is spread,
Drink the wine and eat the bread
Sweet memorials, till the Lord
Call us round His heavenly board,
Some from earth, from glory come,
Severed only "Till He come!"

The Rev. John Burton, M.A. B.D.

The Rev. John Burton, M.A., B.D., is a native of England, where he spent his boyhood and received an English education. In 1850 he came to Canada, accompanied by his brother, who is a wholesale merchant in Toronto, and settled in Brockville. While in that city, he was induced to study for the ministry, and with that end in view took an arts course in McGill College, Montreal, and a theological course in Knox college, Toronto. While at McGill in 1860, he won the prize for a poem on the occasion of the visit of H. R. H. the Prince of Wales. Four years later, he was ordained by the Presbytery of Brockville, and successively held charges in Lynn, Prescott and Belleville. In 1877, he was elected by the Presbyterian General Assembly a delegate to the first Pan-Presbyterian Council which met in Edinburgh that year. Two years afterwards, Mr. Burton accepted a call to the Northern Congregational Church of this city, of which he is still the earnest and hard-working pastor. He has been chairman of the Congregational Union, and president of the Toronto Ministerial Association. While connected with the former body, Mr. Burton attended, as a delegate, the Jubilee of the Congregational Union of England, which met in Manchester in 1882, taking an active part therein.

In this series have already appeared:

Dec. 26th, 1891: Rev. Benjamin Thomas, D.D., Toronto.
Jan. 2nd, 1892: Rev. Chas. Mockridge, D.D., Toronto.
" 9th, " : Rev. Hugh Johnston, D.D., Toronto.
" 16th, " : Rev. W. S. Ramsford, D.D., New York.
" 23rd, " : Rev. Joseph Wild, D.D., Toronto.
" 30th, " : Rev. S. M. Milligan, B.A., Toronto.
Feb. 6th, " : Rev. O. C. S. Wallace, Toronto.
" 13th, " : Rev. Prof. Clarke, F.R.S.C., Toronto.
" 20th, " : Rev. S. P. Rose, Montreal.
" 27th, " : Rev. John Walsh, D.D., Toronto.
March 5th, " : Rev. Wm. Cochran, D.D., Brantford, Ont.
" 12th, " : Rev. H. F. Bland, Quebec.
" 19th, " : Rev. James Watson, Huntington.
" 26th, " : Rev. Manly Benson, Toronto.

The Trials of Nancy Lee

"The Wandering Jew was a stay-at-home compared with a naval woman," groaned a New York mother, the other day. "Four years ago my daughter became one by marrying a lieutenant in the navy, and since that time I never know where in the habitable globe to expect she will be next. Last year, while her husband went to Africa with the eclipse expedition, she and her dear little three-year-old, who calls her father 'that man,' because she sees him so seldom, stayed with me; to-day they are in California, looking towards Japan, with a chance of coming back to New York next month to sail for the Mediterranean squadron. Two years ago last Thanksgiving, Lieutenant M—, having been home from South America just one week, we had arranged for a gay dinner for my daughter's husband and his friends. Everything went beautifully till about six o'clock. Dinner was set for eight, when the lieutenant, who had been out since luncheon, returned with a long face. His ship, which was at Fortress Munroe, had been ordered to Samoa, his leave was recalled, and before dinner was served he was miles on the road to report for duty, and my daughter spent that winter in California, to be in more direct communication with him. Now, isn't that sort of thing enough to shatter a woman's nerves? But she doesn't seem to mind it in the least. I try to commiserate with her occasionally, and she says she knew what to expect when she married, and to her there is something invigorating to be on the verge of starting for anywhere at any moment. She may like it, but I do not. If I had her to chaperon over again, I shouldn't let her speak to a man in the navy. Her husband is one of the best men I ever knew and a charming companion, but that makes it the harder to have him three thousand miles away. I think," she finished, emphatically, "naval officers should marry in naval circles."