

more spiritualized conceptions. But our Lord Jesus Himself continually said that the thing in His mind was to come back to the earth and establish a new order of things, and live with men and change their life by His own presence. The purpose of His coming would not be to wind things up, but to begin things in a new way. This is His great dominant purpose. This was the dominating impulse of the early Church. And our Lord Jesus has a great way in getting done what He sets Himself to do. Without doubt He will come back on the clouds just as He went away, before the eyes of all men.

There are three chief things to note in speaking of His coming back. These three things may be found in His Olivet talk with the four disciples on the evening of His betrayal. They are these:—There is to be first a great time of awful wickedness on the earth, which He called the "Great Tribulation." The chief characteristic of that will be lawlessness and a spirit of union or combination. It will be a time of persecution for both the Jew and the followers of Jesus Christ. The second thing is that He Himself will come openly in great glory before the eyes of all men and put an end to that tribulation and persecution. At His coming four events will take place: The church will be caught away, the believing dead being raised first; the Jews then living on the earth will be converted by the power of the Holy Spirit and become a new nation; the leader of lawlessness will be slain, and the whole crowd of men on the earth will be penitent over their treatment of Jesus Christ.

Then the third great event is that the new order of things on the earth called the Kingdom, will be begun under the direct supervision of our Lord Jesus Christ in person. Then we will realize the great purpose that Jesus has had for all the earth through all the ages.

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Religion appeals to the reason and to the spirit; it nerves and braces; it elevates and inspires; it puts iron into our resolutions; it infuses the soul with manliness, and the will with strength; it sacrifices the present to the distant and the future; and so advances us in the dignity of human beings. And, on the other hand, sins—the sins of the world, the flesh, and the devil—degrade us into the animal; they unnerve, they effeminate, they debase, they paralyse; they make us care only for the moment with its frivolous, passing pleasures; they bid us listen to the base pleadings of a "miserable, hungry, shivering self," which is, like a crawling serpent, ever rustling amid the dead leaves of our weakened purpose, and ever hissing in our ears: "Only this once." "There is no harm in it." "Thou shalt not surely die."

—Dean Farrar.