

Catechetical Lecture XV

Cyril of Jerusalem

Early Church (pre-Nicene) · Nicene & Post-Nicene · Catechesis

STROMATA 51

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INTRODUCTION

Delivered in Jerusalem around 350, likely within sight of Golgotha itself, this lecture forms part of Cyril's instruction to candidates preparing for baptism at Easter. Taking up the creedal clause on Christ's return, it sets the two advents in deliberate parallel, manger against clouds, silence against judgment, and assembles a dense scriptural case for the kingdom that has no end. Cyril's eschatology here would shape Eastern catechesis for centuries and remains one of the earliest sustained patristic treatments of the Antichrist and the signs preceding the Parousia. Expect catechetical directness: a bishop walking the unbaptized through prophecy line by line, alert to the urgency of what they are about to confess.

On the Clause, And Shall Come in Glory to Judge the Quick and the Dead; Of Whose Kingdom There Shall Be No End.

Daniel 7:9-14

I beheld till thrones were placed, and one that was ancient of days did sit, and then, _I saw in a vision of the night, and behold one like the Son of Man came with the clouds of heaven, etc._

We preach not one advent only of Christ, but a second also, far more glorious than the former. For the former gave a view of His patience; but the latter brings with it the crown of a divine kingdom. For all things, for the most part, are twofold in our Lord Jesus Christ: a twofold generation; one, of God, before the ages; and one, of a Virgin, at the close of the ages: His descents twofold; one, the unobserved, *_like rain on a fleece_*; and a second His open coming, which is to be. In His former advent, He was wrapped in swaddling clothes in the manger; in His second, He *_covers Himself with light as with a garment_*. In His first coming, *_He endured the Cross, despising shame_* Hebrews 12:2; in His second, He comes attended by a host of Angels, receiving glory. We rest not then upon His first advent only, but look also for His second. And as at His first coming we said, *_Blessed is He that comes in the Name of the Lord_*, so will we repeat the same at His second coming; that when with Angels we meet our Master, we may worship Him and say, *_Blessed is He that comes in the Name of the Lord_*. The Saviour comes, not to be judged again, but to judge them who judged Him; He who before held His peace when judged, shall remind the transgressors who did those daring deeds at the Cross, and shall say, *_These things*

have you done, and I kept silence_. Then, He came because of a divine dispensation, teaching men with persuasion; but this time they will of necessity have Him for their King, even though they wish it not.

And concerning these two comings, Malachi the Prophet says, _And the Lord whom you seek shall suddenly come to His temple_ Malachi 3:1-3; behold one coming. And again of the second coming he says, _And the Messenger of the covenant whom you delight in. Behold, He comes, says_ _the Lord Almighty. But who shall abide the day of His coming? Or who shall stand when He appears? Because He comes in like a refiner's fire, and like fullers' herb; and He shall sit as a refiner and purifier_. And immediately after the Saviour Himself says, _And I will draw near to you in judgment; and I will be a swift witness against the sorcerers, and against the adulteresses, and against those who swear falsely in My Name_ Malachi 3:5, and the rest. For this cause Paul warning us beforehand says, _If any man builds on the foundation gold, and silver, and precious stones, wood, hay, stubble; every man's work shall be made manifest; for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed in fire_. 1 Corinthians 3:12 Paul also knew these two comings, when writing to Titus and saying, _The grace of God has appeared which brings salvation unto all men, instructing us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, and godly, and righteously in this present world; looking for the blessed hope, and appearing of the glory of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ_. You see how he spoke of a first, for which he gives thanks; and of a second, to which we look forward. Therefore the words also of the Faith which we are announcing were just now delivered thus ; that we believe in Him, who also ascended into the heavens, and sat down on the right hand of the Father, and shall come in glory to judge quick and dead; whose kingdom shall have no end.

Our Lord Jesus Christ, then, comes from heaven; and He comes with glory at the end of this world, in the last day. For of this world there is to be an end, and this created world is to be re-made anew. For since corruption, _and theft, and adultery_, and every sort of sins _have been poured forth over the earth, and blood has been mingled with blood_ Hosea 4:2 in the world, therefore, that this wondrous dwelling-place may not remain filled with iniquity, this world passes away, that the fairer world may be made manifest. And would you receive the proof of this out of the words of Scripture? Listen to Esaias, saying, _And the heaven shall be rolled together as a scroll; and all the stars shall fall, as leaves from a vine, and as leaves fall from a fig-tree Isaiah 34:4_. The Gospel also says, _The sun shall be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven Matthew 24:29_. Let us not sorrow, as if we alone died; the stars also shall die; but perhaps rise again. And the Lord rolls up the heavens, not that He may destroy them, but that He may raise them up again more beautiful. Hear David the Prophet saying, _You, Lord, in the beginning laid the foundations of the earth, and the heavens are the work of Your hands; they shall perish, but You remain_. But some one will say, Behold, he says plainly that _they shall perish_. Hear in what sense he says, _they shall perish_; it is plain from what follows; _And they all shall wax old as does a garment; and as a vesture shall Thou fold them up, and they shall be changed_. For as a man is said to perish, according to that which is written, _Behold, how the righteous perishes, and no man lays it to heart_ Isaiah 57:1, and this, though the resurrection is looked for; so we look for a resurrection, as it were, of the heavens also. _The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood_. Joel 2:31 Here let converts from the Manichees gain instruction, and no longer make those lights their gods; nor impiously think, that this sun which shall be darkened

is Christ. And again hear the Lord saying, _Heaven and earth shall pass away, but My words shall not pass away_ Matthew 24:35; for the creatures are not as precious as the Master's words.

The things then which are seen shall pass away, and there shall come the things which are looked for, things fairer than the present; but as to the time let no one be curious. For _it is not for you_, He says, _to know times or seasons, which the Father has put in His own power_. Acts 1:7 And venture not thou to declare when these things shall be, nor on the other hand supinely slumber. For he says, _Watch, for in such an hour as you expect not the Son of Man comes_. But since it was needful for us to know the signs of the end, and since we are looking for Christ, therefore, that we may not die deceived and be led astray by that false Antichrist, the Apostles, moved by the divine will, address themselves by a providential arrangement to the True Teacher, and say, _Tell us, when shall these things be, and what shall be the sign of Your coming, and of the end of the world_ ? We look for You to come again, but _Satan transforms himself into an Angel of light_; put us therefore on our guard, that we may not worship another instead of You. And He, opening His divine and blessed mouth, says, _Take heed that no man mislead you_. Do you also, my hearers, as seeing Him now with the eyes of your mind, hear Him saying the same things to you; _Take heed that no man mislead you_. And this word exhorts you all to give heed to what is spoken; for it is not a history of things gone by, but a prophecy of things future, and which will surely come. Not that we prophesy, for we are unworthy; but that the things which are written will be set before you, and the signs declared. Observe thou, which of them have already come to pass, and which yet remain; and make yourself safe.

Take heed that no man mislead you: for many shall come in My name, saying, I am Christ, and shall mislead many. This has happened in part: for already Simon Magus has said this, and Menander , and some others of the godless leaders of heresy; and others will say it in our days, or after us.

A second sign. _And you shall hear of wars and rumours of wars_. Is there then at this time war between Persians and Romans for Mesopotamia, or no? Does nation rise up against nation and kingdom against kingdom, or no? _And there shall be famines and pestilences and earthquakes in various places_. These things have already come to pass; and again, _And fearful sights from heaven, and mighty storms_. _Watch therefore_, He says; _for you know not at what hour your Lord does come_ Matthew 24:42 .

But we seek our own sign of His coming; we Churchmen seek a sign proper to the Church. And the Saviour says, _And then shall many be offended, and shall betray one another, and shall hate one another_. Matthew 24:10 If you hear that bishops advance against bishops, and clergy against clergy, and laity against laity even unto blood, be not troubled ; for it has been written before. Heed not the things now happening, but the things which are written; and even though I who teach you perish, you shall not also perish with me; nay, even a hearer may become better than his teacher, and he who came last may be first, since even those about the eleventh hour the Master receives. If among Apostles there was found treason, do you wonder that hatred of brethren is found among bishops? But the sign concerns not only rulers, but the people also; for He says, _And because iniquity shall abound, the love of the many shall wax cold_. Matthew 24:12 Will any then among those present boast that he entertains friendship unfeigned towards his neighbour? Do not the lips often kiss, and the countenance smile, and the eyes

brighten forsooth, while the heart is planning guile, and the man is plotting mischief with words of peace?

You have this sign also: _And this Gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations, and then shall the end come_. Matthew 24:14 And as we see, nearly the whole world is now filled with the doctrine of Christ.

And what comes to pass after this? He says next, _When therefore you see the abomination of desolation, which was spoken of by Daniel the Prophet, standing in the Holy Place, let him that reads understand_. And again, _Then if any man shall say unto you, Lo, here is the Christ, or, Lo, there; believe it not_. Hatred of the brethren makes room next for Antichrist; for the devil prepares beforehand the divisions among the people, that he who is to come may be acceptable to them. But God forbid that any of Christ's servants here, or elsewhere, should run over to the enemy! Writing concerning this matter, the Apostle Paul gave a manifest sign, saying, _For that day shall not come, except there came first the falling away, and the man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition, who opposes and exalts himself against all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he sits in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God. Do you not remember that when I was yet with you, I told you these things? And now you know that which restrains, to the end that he may be revealed in his own season. For the mystery of iniquity does already work, only there is one that restrains now, until he be taken out of the way. And then shall the lawless one be revealed, whom the Lord Jesus shall slay with the breath of His mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of His coming. Even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan, with all power and signs and lying wonders, and with all deceit of unrighteousness for them that are perishing_. 2 Thessalonians 2:3-10 Thus wrote Paul, and now is the falling away. For men have fallen away from the right faith ; and some preach the identity of the Son with the Father , and others dare to say that Christ was brought into being out of nothing. And formerly the heretics were manifest; but now the Church is filled with heretics in disguise. For men have fallen away from the truth, and _have itching ears_. 2 Timothy 4:3 Is it a plausible discourse? All listen to it gladly. Is it a word of correction? All turn away from it. Most have departed from right words, and rather choose the evil, than desire the good. This therefore is _the falling away_, and the enemy is soon to be looked for: and meanwhile he has in part begun to send forth his own forerunners , that he may then come prepared upon the prey. Look therefore to yourself, O man, and make safe your soul. The Church now charges you before the Living God; she declares to you the things concerning Antichrist before they arrive. Whether they will happen in your time we know not, or whether they will happen after you we know not; but it is well that, knowing these things, you should make yourself secure beforehand.

The true Christ, the Only-begotten Son of God, comes no more from the earth. If any come making false shows in the wilderness, go not forth; if they say, _Lo, here is the Christ, Lo, there, believe it not_. Matthew 24:23 Look no longer downwards and to the earth; for the Lord descends from heaven; not alone as before, but with many, escorted by tens of thousands of Angels; nor secretly as the dew on the fleece ; but shining forth openly as the lightning. For He has said Himself, _As the lightning comes out of the east, and shines even unto the west, so shall also the coming of the Son of Man be_ Matthew 24:27; and again, _And they shall see the Son of Man coming upon the clouds with power and great glory, and He shall send forth His Angels with a great trumpet_ ; and the rest.

But as, when formerly He was to take man's nature, and God was expected to be born of a Virgin, the devil created prejudice against this, by craftily preparing among idol-worshippers fables of false gods, begetting and begotten of women, that, the falsehood having come first, the truth, as he supposed, might be disbelieved; so now, since the true Christ is to come a second time, the adversary, taking occasion by the expectation of the simple, and especially of them of the circumcision, brings in a certain man

who is a magician , and most expert in sorceries and enchantments of beguiling craftiness; who shall seize for himself the power of the Roman empire, and shall falsely style himself Christ; by this name of Christ deceiving the Jews, who are looking for the Anointed , and seducing those of the Gentiles by his magical illusions.

But this aforesaid Antichrist is to come when the times of the Roman empire shall have been fulfilled, and the end of the world is now drawing near. There shall rise up together ten kings of the Romans, reigning in different parts perhaps, but all about the same time; and after these an eleventh, the Antichrist, who by his magical craft shall seize upon the Roman power; and of the kings who reigned before him, _three he shall humble_ , and the remaining seven he shall keep in subjection to himself. At first indeed he will put on a show of mildness (as though he were a learned and discreet person), and of soberness and benevolence : and by the lying signs and wonders of his magical deceit having beguiled the Jews, as though he were the expected Christ, he shall afterwards be characterized by all kinds of crimes of inhumanity and lawlessness, so as to outdo all unrighteous and ungodly men who have gone before him; displaying against all men, but especially against us Christians, a spirit murderous and most cruel, merciless and crafty. And after perpetrating such things for three years and six months only, he shall be destroyed by the glorious second advent from heaven of the only-begotten Son of God, our Lord and Saviour Jesus, the true Christ, who shall slay Antichrist _with the breath of His mouth_ , and shall deliver him over to the fire of hell.

Now these things we teach, not of our own invention, but having learned them out of the divine Scriptures used in the Church , and chiefly from the prophecy of Daniel just now read; as Gabriel also the Archangel interpreted it, speaking thus: _The fourth beast shall be a fourth kingdom upon earth, which shall surpass all kingdoms_. And that this kingdom is that of the Romans, has been the tradition of the Church's interpreters. For as the first kingdom which became renowned was that of the Assyrians, and the second, that of the Medes and Persians together, and after these, that of the Macedonians was the third, so the fourth kingdom now is that of the Romans. Then Gabriel goes on to interpret, saying, _His ten horns are ten kings that shall arise; and another king shall rise up after them, who shall surpass in wickedness all who were before him_ Daniel 7:24; (he says, not only the ten, but also all who have been before him;) _and he shall subdue three kings_; manifestly out of the ten former kings: but it is plain that by subduing three of these ten, he will become the eighth king; _and he shall speak words against the Most High_. A blasphemer the man is and lawless, not having received the kingdom from his fathers, but having usurped the power by means of sorcery.

And who is this, and from what sort of working? Interpret to us, O Paul. _Whose coming_, he says, _is after the working of Satan, with all power and signs and lying wonders_ ; implying, that Satan has used him as an instrument, working in his own person through him; for knowing that his judgment shall now no longer have respite, he wages war no more by his ministers, as is his wont, but henceforth by himself more openly. And _with all signs and lying wonders_; for the father of falsehood will make a show of the works of falsehood, that the multitudes may think that they see a dead man raised, who is not raised, and lame men walking, and blind men seeing, when the cure has not been wrought.

And again he says, _Who opposes and exalts himself against all that is called God, or that is worshipped_; (_against every God_; Antichrist forsooth will abhor the idols,) _so that he seats himself in the temple of God_. 2 Thessalonians 2:4 What temple then? He means, the Temple of the Jews which has been destroyed. For God forbid that it should be the one in which we are! Why say we this? That we may not be supposed to favour ourselves. For if he comes to the Jews as Christ, and desires to be worshipped by the Jews, he will make great account of the Temple, that he may more completely beguile them; making it supposed that he is the man of the race of David, who shall build up the Temple which was erected by Solomon. And Antichrist will come at the time when there shall not be left one stone upon another in the Temple of the Jews, according to the doom pronounced by our Saviour; for when, either decay of time, or demolition ensuing on pretence of new buildings, or from any other causes, shall have overthrown all the stones, I mean not merely of the outer circuit, but of the inner shrine also, where the Cherubim were, then shall he come _with all signs and lying wonders_, exalting himself against all idols; at first indeed making a pretence of benevolence, but afterwards displaying his relentless temper, and that chiefly against the Saints of God. For he says, _I beheld, and the same horn made war with the saints_; and again elsewhere, _there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation upon earth, even to that same time_. Dreadful is that beast, a mighty dragon, unconquerable by man, ready to devour; concerning whom though we have more things to speak out of the divine Scriptures, yet we will content ourselves at present with thus much, in order to keep within compass.

For this cause the Lord knowing the greatness of the adversary grants indulgence to the godly, saying, _Then let them which be in Judæa flee to the mountains_. Matthew 24:16 But if any man is conscious that he is very stout-hearted, to encounter Satan, let him stand (for I do not despair of the Church's nerves), and let him say, _Who shall separate us from the love of Christ and the rest_ Romans 8:35? But, let those of us who are fearful provide for our own safety; and those who are of a good courage, stand fast: _for then shall be great tribulation, such as has not been from the beginning of the world until now, no, nor ever shall be_. Matthew 24:21 But thanks be to God who has confined the greatness of that tribulation to a few days; for He says, _But for the elect's sake those days shall be shortened_; and Antichrist shall reign for three years and a half only. We speak not from apocryphal books, but from Daniel; for he says, _And they shall be given into his hand until a time and times and half a time_. A time_ is the one year in which his coming shall for a while have increase; and _the times_ are the remaining two years of iniquity, making up the sum of the three years; and _the half a time_ is the six months. And again in another place Daniel says the same thing, _And he swore by Him that lives for ever that it shall be for a time, and times, and half a time_. Daniel 12:7 And some perhaps have referred what follows also to this; namely, _a thousand two hundred and ninety days_; and this, _Blessed is he that endures and comes to the thousand three hundred and five and thirty days_. For this cause we must hide ourselves and flee; for perhaps _we shall not have gone over the cities of Israel, till the Son of Man be come_ Matthew 10:23 .

Who then is the blessed man, that shall at that time devoutly witness for Christ? For I say that the Martyrs of that time excel all martyrs. For the Martyrs hitherto have wrestled with men only; but in the time of Antichrist they shall do battle with Satan in his own person. And former persecuting kings only put to death; they did not pretend to raise the dead, nor did they make false shows of signs and wonders. But in his time there shall be the evil inducement both of fear and of deceit, _so that if it be possible the very elect shall be deceived_. Matthew 24:24 Let it never enter into the heart of any then alive to ask, What did Christ more? For by what power does this man work these things? Were it not God's will, He would not have allowed them. The Apostle warns you, and says beforehand, _And for this cause God shall send them a working of error_; (_send_, that is, _shall allow to happen_;) not that they might make excuse, but _that they might be condemned_. Wherefore? _They_, he says, _who believed not the truth_, that is, the true Christ, _but had pleasure in unrighteousness_, that is, in Antichrist. But as in the persecutions which happen from time to time, so also then God will permit these things, not because He wants power to hinder them, but because according to His wont He will through patience crown His own champions like as He did His Prophets and Apostles; to the end that having toiled for a little while they may inherit the eternal kingdom of heaven, according to that which Daniel says, _And at that time your people shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the book_ (manifestly, the book of life); _and many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt; and they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and of the many righteous_, _as the stars for ever and ever_.

Guard yourself then, O man; you have the signs of Antichrist; and remember them not only yourself, but impart them also freely to all. If you have a child according to the flesh, admonish him of this now; if you have begotten one through catechizing, put him also on his guard, lest he receive the false one as the True. For the _mystery of iniquity does already work_. 2 Thessalonians 2:7 I fear these wars of the nations; I fear the schisms of the Churches; I fear the mutual hatred of the brethren. But enough on this subject; only God forbid that it should be fulfilled in our days; nevertheless, let us be on our guard. And thus much concerning Antichrist.

But let us wait and look for the Lord's coming upon the clouds from heaven. Then shall Angelic trumpets sound; _the dead in Christ shall rise first_ 1 Thessalonians 4:16 — the godly persons who are alive shall be caught up in the clouds, receiving as the reward of their labours more than human honour, inasmuch as theirs was a more than human strife; according as the Apostle Paul writes, saying, _For the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the Archangel, and with the trumpet 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_.

This coming of the Lord, and the end of the world, were known to the Preacher; who says, _Rejoice, O young man, in your youth_, and the rest; _Therefore remove anger from your heart, and put away evil from your flesh_;... _and remember your Creator_... _or ever the evil days come_, _or ever the sun, and the light, and the moon, and the stars be darkened_, _and they that look out of the windows be darkened_ ; (signifying the faculty of sight;) _or ever the silver cord be loosed_ ; (meaning the assemblage of the stars, for their appearance is like silver;) _and the flower of gold be broken_ ; (thus veiling the mention of the golden sun; for the camomile is a well-known plant, having many

ray-like leaves shooting out round it;) _and they shall rise up at the voice of the sparrow, yea, they shall look away from the height, and terrors shall be in the way_. What shall they see? _Then shall they see the Son of man coming on the clouds of heaven; and they shall mourn tribe by tribe_. And what shall come to pass when the Lord has come? _The almond tree shall blossom, and the grasshopper shall grow heavy, and the caper-berry shall be scattered abroad_. Ecclesiastes 12:5 And as the interpreters say, the blossoming almond signifies the departure of winter; and our bodies shall then after the winter blossom with a heavenly flower. _And the grasshopper shall grow in substance_ (that means the winged soul clothing itself with the body,) _and the caper-berry shall be scattered abroad_ (that is, the transgressors who are like thorns shall be scattered).

You see how they all foretell the coming of the Lord. You see how they know _the voice of the sparrow_. Let us know what sort of voice this is. _For the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the Archangel, and with the trump of God_. 1 Thessalonians 2:16 The Archangel shall make proclamation and say to all, _Arise to meet the Lord_. And fearful will be that descent of our Master. David says, _God shall manifestly come, even our God, and shall not keep silence; a fire shall burn before Him, and a fierce tempest round about Him_, and the rest. The Son of Man shall come to the Father, according to the Scripture which was just now read, _on the clouds of heaven_, drawn by _a stream of fire_ , which is to make trial of men. Then if any man's works are of gold, he shall be made brighter; if any man's course of life be like stubble, and unsubstantial, it shall be burnt up by the fire. And the Father _shall sit_, having _His garment white as snow, and the hair of His head like pure wool_. Daniel 7:9 But this is spoken after the manner of men; wherefore? Because He is the King of those who have not been defiled with sins; _for_, He says, _I will make your sins white as snow, and as wool_ Isaiah 1:18, which is an emblem of forgiveness of sins, or of sinlessness itself. But the Lord who shall come from heaven on the clouds, is He who ascended on the clouds; for He Himself has said, _And they shall see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven, with power and great glory_ Matthew 24:30 .

But what is the sign of His coming? Lest a hostile power dare to counterfeit it. _And then shall appear_, He says, _the sign of the Son of Man in heaven_. Ib Now Christ's own true sign is the Cross; a sign of a luminous Cross shall go before the King , plainly declaring Him who was formerly crucified: that the Jews who before _pierced Him_ and plotted against Him, when they see it, may _mourn tribe by tribe_ Zechariah 12:12, saying, This is He who was buffeted, this is He whose face they spat on, this is He whom they bound with chains, this is He whom of old they crucified, and set at nought. Whither, they will say, shall we flee from the face of Your wrath? But the Angel hosts shall encompass them, so that they shall not be able to flee anywhere. The sign of the Cross shall be a terror to His foes; but joy to His friends who have believed in Him, or preached Him, or suffered for His sake. Who then is the happy man, who shall then be found a friend of Christ? That King, so great and glorious, attended by the Angel-guards, the partner of the Father's throne, will not despise His own servants. For that His Elect may not be confused with His foes, _He shall send forth His Angels with a great trumpet, and they shall gather together His elect from the four winds_. Matthew 24:31 He despised not Lot, who was but one; how then shall He despise many righteous? _Come, you blessed of My Father_ , will He say to them who shall then ride on chariots of clouds, and be assembled by Angels.

But some one present will say, I am a poor man, or again, I shall perhaps be found at that time sick in bed; or, I am but a woman, and I shall be taken at the mill: shall we then be despised? Be of good courage, O man; the Judge is no respecter of persons; _He will not judge according to a man's appearance, nor reprove according to his speech_. He honours not the learned before the simple, nor the rich before the needy. Though thou be in the field, the Angels shall take you; think not that He will take the landowners, and leave you the husbandman. Though thou be a slave, though thou be poor, be not any whit distressed; He who _took the form of a servant_ Philippians 2:7 despises not servants. Though thou be lying sick in bed, yet it is written, _Then shall two be in one bed; the one shall be taken, and the other left_. Luke 17:34 Though thou be of compulsion put to grind, whether thou be man or woman ; though thou be in fetters , and sit beside the mill, yet He _who by His might brings out them that are bound_ Exodus 11:5, will not overlook you. He who brought forth Joseph out of slavery and prison to a kingdom, shall redeem you also from your afflictions into the kingdom of heaven. Only be of good cheer, only work, only strive earnestly; for nothing shall be lost. Every prayer of yours, every Psalm you sing is recorded; every alms-deed, every fast is recorded; every marriage duly observed is recorded; continence kept for God's sake is recorded; but the first crowns in the records are those of virginity and purity; and you shall shine as an Angel. But as you have gladly listened to the good things, so listen again without shrinking to the contrary. Every covetous deed of yours is recorded; your every act of fornication is recorded, your every false oath is recorded, every blasphemy, and sorcery, and theft, and murder. All these things are henceforth to be recorded, if you do the same now after having been baptized; for your former deeds are blotted out.

When the Son of Man, He says, _shall come in His glory, and all the Angels with Him_. Matthew 25:31 Behold, O man, before what multitudes you shall come to judgment. Every race of mankind will then be present. Reckon, therefore, how many are the Roman nation; reckon how many the barbarian tribes now living, and how many have died within the last hundred years; reckon how many nations have been buried during the last thousand years; reckon all from Adam to this day. Great indeed is the multitude; but yet it is little, for the Angels are many more. They are _the ninety and nine sheep_, but mankind is the single _one_. For according to the extent of universal space, must we reckon the number of its inhabitants. The whole earth is but as a point in the midst of the one heaven, and yet contains so great a multitude; what a multitude must the heaven which encircles it contain? And must not the heaven of heavens contain unimaginable numbers ? And it is written, _Thousand thousands ministered unto Him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before Him_ Daniel 7:10; not that the multitude is only so great, but because the Prophet could not express more than these. So there will be present at the judgment in that day, God, the Father of all, Jesus Christ being seated with Him, and the Holy Ghost present with Them; and an angel's trumpet shall summon us all to bring our deeds with us. Ought we not then from this time forth to be sore troubled? Think it not a slight doom, O man, even apart from punishment, to be condemned in the presence of so many. Shall we not choose rather to die many deaths, than be condemned by friends?

Let us dread then, brethren, lest God condemn us; who needs not examination or proofs, to condemn. Say not, In the night I committed fornication, or wrought sorcery, or did any other thing, and there was no man by. Out of your own conscience shall you be judged, your _thoughts the meanwhile accusing or else excusing, in the day when God shall judge the secrets of men Romans 2:15-16_ . The terrible countenance of the Judge will force you to speak the truth; or rather, even though thou speak not, it will convict you. For you shall rise clothed with your own sins, or else with your righteous deeds. And this has the Judge Himself declared — for it is Christ who judges — _for neither does the Father judge any man, but he has given all judgment unto the Son_ John 5:22, not divesting Himself of His power, but judging through the Son; the Son therefore judges by the will of the Father; for the wills of the Father and of the Son are not different, but one and the same. What then says the Judge, as to whether you shall bear your works, or no? _And before Him shall they gather all nations_ Matthew 25:32: (for in the presence of Christ _every knee must bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth_ Philippians 2:10:) _and He shall separate them one from another, as the shepherd divides his sheep from the goats_. How does the shepherd make the separation? Does he examine out of a book which is a sheep and which a goat? Or does he distinguish by their evident marks? Does not the wool show the sheep, and the hairy and rough skin the goat? In like manner, if you have been just now cleansed from your sins, your deeds shall be henceforth as pure wool; and your robe shall remain unstained, and you shall ever say, _I have put off my coat, how shall I put it on_ ? By your vesture shall you be known for a sheep. But if you be found hairy, like Esau, who was rough with hair, and wicked in mind, who for food lost his birthright and sold his privilege, you shall be one of those on the left hand. But God forbid that any here present should be cast out from grace, or for evil deeds be found among the ranks of the sinners on the left hand!

Terrible in good truth is the judgment, and terrible the things announced. The kingdom of heaven is set before us, and everlasting fire is prepared. How then, some one will say, are we to escape the fire? And how to enter into the kingdom? _I was an hungered_, He says, _and you gave Me meat_. Learn hence the way; there is here no need of allegory, but to fulfil what is said. _I was an hungered, and you gave Me meat; I was thirsty, and you gave Me drink; I was a stranger, and you took Me in; naked, and you clothed Me; I was sick, and you visited Me; I was in prison, and you came unto Me_. Matthew 25:35 These things if you do, you shall reign together with Him; but if you do them not, you shall be condemned. At once then begin to do these works, and abide in the faith; lest, like the foolish virgins, tarrying to buy oil, thou be shut out. Be not confident because thou merely possessest the lamp, but constantly keep it burning. Let the light of your good works shine before men Matthew 5:16, and let not Christ be blasphemed on your account. Wear thou a garment of incorruption , resplendent in good works; and whatever matter you receive from God to administer as a steward, administer profitably. Have you been put in trust with riches? Dispense them well. Have you been entrusted with the word of teaching? Be a good steward thereof. Can you attach the souls of the hearers ? Do this diligently. There are many doors of good stewardship. Only let none of us be condemned and cast out; that we may with boldness meet Christ the Everlasting King, who reigns forever. For He does reign for ever, who shall be judge of quick and dead, because for quick and dead He died. And as Paul says, _For to this end Christ both died and lived again, that He might be Lord both of the dead and living_ Romans 14:9 .

And should you ever hear any say that the kingdom of Christ shall have an end, abhor the heresy; it is another head of the dragon, lately sprung up in . A certain one has dared to affirm, that after the end of the world Christ shall reign no longer ; he has also dared to say, that the Word having come forth from the Father shall be again absorbed into the Father, and shall be no more ; uttering such blasphemies to his own perdition. For he has not listened to the Lord, saying, The Son abides forever. John 8:25 He has not listened to Gabriel, saying, And He shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever, and of His kingdom there shall be no end. Luke 1:33 Consider this text. Heretics of this day teach in disparagement of Christ, while Gabriel the Archangel taught the eternal abiding of the Saviour; whom then will you rather believe? Will you not rather give credence to Gabriel? Listen to the testimony of Daniel in the text ; I saw in a vision of the night, and behold, one like the Son of Man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days.....And to Him was given the honour, and the dominion, and the kingdom: and all peoples, tribes, and languages shall serve Him; His dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and His kingdom shall not be destroyed. Daniel 7:13-14 These things rather hold fast, these things believe, and cast away from you the words of heresy; for you have heard most plainly of the endless kingdom of Christ.

The like doctrine you have also in the interpretation of the _Stone, which was cut out of a mountain without hands_, which is _Christ according to the flesh_ ; _And His kingdom shall not be left to another people_. David also says in one place, _Your throne, O God, is for ever and ever_ ; and in another place, _You, Lord, in the beginning hast laid the foundations of the earth, etc., they shall perish, but You remain, etc.; but You are the same, and Your years shall not fail_ : words which Paul has interpreted of the Son Hebrews 1:10-12 .

And would you know how they who teach the contrary ran into such madness? They read wrongly that good word of the Apostle, _For He must reign, till He has put all enemies under His feet_ 1 Corinthians 15:25; and they say, when His enemies shall have been put under His feet, He shall cease to reign, wrongly and foolishly alleging this. For He who is king before He has subdued His enemies, how shall He not the rather be king, after He has gotten the mastery over them.

They have also dared to say that the Scripture, _When all things shall be subjected unto Him, then shall the Son also Himself be subjected unto Him that subjected all things unto Him_ — that this Scripture shows that the Son also shall be absorbed into the Father. Shall you then, O most impious of all men, you the creatures of Christ, continue? And shall Christ perish, by whom both you and all things were made? Such a word is blasphemous. But further, how shall all things be made subject unto Him? By perishing, or by abiding? Shall then the other things, when subject to the Son abide, and shall the Son, when subject to the Father, not abide? For He shall be subjected, not because He shall then begin to do the Father's will (for from eternity He _does_ always _those things that please Him John 8:29_), but because, then as before, He obeys the Father, yielding, not a forced obedience, but a self-chosen accordance; for He is not a servant, that He should be subjected by force, but a Son, that He should comply of His free choice and natural love.

But let us examine them; what is the meaning of until or as long as? For with the very phrase will I close with them, and try to overthrow their error. Since they have dared to say that the words, _till He

has put His enemies under His feet_, show that He Himself shall have an end, and have presumed to set bounds to the eternal kingdom of Christ, and to bring to an end, as far as words go, His never-ending sovereignty, come then, let us read the like expressions in the Apostle: _Nevertheless, death reigned from Adam till Moses_. Did men then die up to that time, and did none die any more after Moses, or after the Law has there been no more death among men? Well then, you see that the word unto is not to limit time; but that Paul rather signified this —And yet, though Moses was a righteous and wonderful man, nevertheless the doom of death, which was uttered against Adam, reached even unto him, and them that came after him; and this, though they had not committed the like sins as Adam, by his disobedience in eating of the tree.

Take again another similar text. _For until this day...when Moses is read, a veil lies upon their heart 2 Corinthians 3:14-15_. Does _until this day_ mean only until Paul? Is it not _until this day_ present, and even to the end? And if Paul say to the Corinthians, _For we came even as far as unto you in preaching the Gospel of Christ, having hope when your faith increases to preach the Gospel in the regions beyond you_, you see manifestly that _as far as_ implies not the end, but has something following it. In what _sense then should you remember that Scripture, till_ He has put all enemies under His feet 1 Corinthians 15:25? According as Paul says in another place, _And exhort each other daily, while it is called today_ Hebrews 3:13; meaning, continually. For as we may not speak of the beginning of the days of Christ, so neither suffer thou that any should ever speak of the end of His kingdom. For it is written, _His kingdom is an everlasting kingdom_.

And though I have many more testimonies out of the divine Scriptures, concerning the kingdom of Christ which has no end for ever, I will be content at present with those above mentioned, because the day is far spent. But you, O hearer, worship only Him as your King, and flee all heretical error. And if the grace of God permit us, the remaining Articles also of the Faith shall be in good time declared to you. And may the God of the whole world keep you all in safety, bearing in mind the signs of the end, and remaining unsubdued by Antichrist. You have received the tokens of the Deceiver who is to come; you have received the proofs of the true Christ, who shall openly come down from heaven. Flee therefore the one, the False one; and look for the other, the True. You have learned the way, how in the judgment you may be found among those on the right hand; guard _that which is committed to you_ 1 Timothy 6:20 concerning Christ, and be conspicuous in good works, that you may stand with a good confidence before the Judge, and inherit the kingdom of heaven:— Through whom, and with whom, be glory to God with the Holy Ghost, for ever and ever. Amen.

Source: Translated by Edwin Hamilton Gifford. From Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Second Series, Vol. 7. Edited by Philip Schaff and Henry Wace. Buffalo, NY: Christian Literature Publishing Co., 1894.

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