

Unknown

Rev Richard Veldman

Of all the months of the year, none has greater significance for the church of God, has more to say to us, carries with it more sentiment, than this month of December, which is with us once again. How soon! How time does fly!

First of all, first also in the minds of young and old, it is the month wherein we commemorate that most blessed of all events, the birth of our Lord Jesus Christ, the coming of the Son of God in the flesh to redeem us from our sins and to exalt us to heavenly glory, the fulfillment of that ancient yet wonderfully vivid prophecy, “Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel.” How wonderful beyond all human comprehension! How worthy of all the joy and happiness God’s church can possibly express! December means: Christmas.

However, December also comes to us with a message of an altogether different nature—the message of the end. It is the last month of the year, and thus brings with it its last week, its last day, its last hour. Christmas is the first day of that week of which the last day marks the close of the entire year. It is of the latter that we are thinking now. The end of the year speaks of the end of all things. It reminds us of the end of our entire lives, which may be here who knows how soon. Perhaps it is December, also in this respect, for you or me. It speaks, too, of the end of this entire dispensation, of the whole world and all it contains. Presently the day will be here when the second coming of our Lord Jesus Christ will make an end forever of all present things. All the signs of the times seem to indicate that in this respect, as far as the calendar of all history is concerned, we are certainly in the month of December. Better and better do we understand the word of the apostle, “Little children, it is the last hour.” The carnal world does not want to think about these things. All it craves is a new lease on life; a new year wherein to sin and seek the satisfaction of the flesh. Therefore, it spends the year’s last evening as it does—in revelry and riot, in drunkenness and hilarity such as marks no other evening of the entire year. The church of Christ, however, would face reality and spends this same evening, the last of the year, in solemn contemplation and worship.

* * * * *

The day of the Lord *will* come, says Peter, as a thief in the night.

Then—then great and terrible things will take place in and with all God’s present creation. Of course they will, for that day of the Lord Jesus Christ, the “December 31” of all history, as it were, will be the day of GOD; the day wherein our covenant God will manifest Himself in all His power and glory; the day wherein the counsel of God will be realized with respect to all things, God’s tabernacle with men will be made perfect and all that is of the world and sin will be destroyed forever.

You’ve read what Scripture has to say about those things that will soon come to pass. “The heavens shall pass away with a great noise and the elements shall melt with fervent heat,

the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up.” II Peter 3:10. The incomparable Isaiah saw it more than 2500 years ago in prophetic vision and he writes, “And all the host of heaven shall be dissolved, and the heavens shall be rolled together as a scroll: and all their host shall fall down, as a leaf falleth from off the vine, and as a falling fig from the fig tree.” Is. 34:4. And the seer on Patmos testifies, “And I beheld when he had opened the sixth seal, and, lo, there was a great earthquake; and the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the moon became as blood; and the stars of heaven fell unto the earth, even as a fig tree casteth her untimely figs, when she is shaken of a mighty wind. And the heaven departed as a scroll when it is rolled together; and every mountain and island were moved out of their places.” Rev. 6:12-14.

Indeed, great and terrible things will take place in that day, when the Maker of the atom will Himself do the splitting and all present things will be no more. The very heavens, the firmament and all it contains, the sun and the moon and the stars, all will be set ablaze and consumed with fire. Also the earth and all it contains, in fact the very elements whereof all present things are composed, shall be set on fire and burned up. Everything that is of the earth earthy shall disappear forever. Absolutely nothing of man and of this world shall survive that final catastrophe to enter into the New Jerusalem. “All these things shall be dissolved.” II Pet. 3:11. All the fruits of human labor and ingenuity. All the accomplishments of art and science, the poet and the sculptor. All that eye can see and ear can hear and the hand can touch.

But is this all? Is there no more? Then, surely, the thought of the end is a terrible one—unutterably so. Will nothing take the place of these present things? ‘Oh, indeed, something will; something inconceivably great; a *new* heaven and earth. We look, not only for the final dissolution of all present things, but for an entirely new creation. In fact, it is only with a view to the latter that the former must take place. In that new heaven and earth only righteousness will dwell. How wonderful! There sin and corruption will have no place and all will be in perfect harmony with the will of God. In that new creation all will be heavenly. It will not be a glorified version of this present creation. All will be different, new, heavenly, spiritual, glorious. There the tabernacle of God will be with men forever. There all tears will be wiped from our eyes, death and sorrow will be no more; there we shall see face to face, know as we are known, and walk and talk with our covenant God, in Christ Jesus, in endless perfection. No, we cannot comprehend these things now, but we somewhat sense the glory of it all, do we not?

* * * * *

Of all these things we are reminded anew as we approach the end of another year. With a view to it all “what manner of persons ought we to be?”

This question is pertinent. It is the application of all the preceding to Christian living,—the “toepassing”. What shall be our attitude toward it all, and how should this attitude reflect itself in our daily conduct?

Looking, first of all, at these present things and their ultimate dissolution in the day of Christ, what should be our attitude? Shall we cling to these things that are speeding toward their end with all possible haste, to set our hearts on them, put our trust in them, live only for them, sacrifice all we are and have for them? That the world does, the natural man—the fool. Ought we

to be such manner of persons? God forbid! No, we shall not desire this present life. We have a life to live here, a duty to perform, and to the execution of that task we shall set ourselves with all the consecration to duty of the conscientious Christian. But we shall not set our hearts on “these things”. We shall labor and plan, we shall plow and sow as in a world that will soon be no more. Our attitude toward all that is, shall be determined by the reality concerning them and that with relation to the things which soon shall be.

“What manner of persons ought we to be?” We ought to be a people that is looking for and hastening unto the coming of the day of God, that is anticipating that day as the day of our complete deliverance, that is looking for its Saviour God much as children look for their father to come home from work at night. And looking for that day we should sanctify ourselves, eschew all that is of sin and this present wicked world and walk in a new and holy life.

Then all will be well and we shall have nothing to fear. Then we shall be confirmed in the assurance that that new heaven and earth will also be our dwelling place forever. Then we can think of the end of all things, not with regret, but with anticipation and hope, knowing that the impending dissolution of all present things will be for us the beginning of that which is eternal and heavenly. In that hope we may join the church of all ages in that song of blessed anticipation:

When I in righteousness at last
 Thy glorious face shall see,
When all the weary night is past,
 And I awake with Thee
To view the glories that abide,
 Then, then I shall be satisfied.

Originally Published in:

Vol. 6 No. 3 December 1945