

Applying the Touchstone and Lodestar of *Scripture* To The Morassy Foundation and Principles of *Preterism*

Chapter 5

Doctrine Forms Behavior

Preterism's Denial of the Blessed Hope

Doctrine Forms Behavior

"Let me refer to a modern development as a sample . . . which adopts J. S. Russell's Parousia, London, 1878. . . . [The] Parousia delusion It starts with the assumption that the Lord's second coming or presence took place at the destruction of Jerusalem A.D. 70! and that thenceforward the promised glory is fulfilled, so that we are now reigning with Christ! and therefore the fullest change so long looked for in both O. and N.T. has already taken place!!

"Hence dogmatic and practical Christianity are alike and absolutely annulled in such a pseudo-scheme. For the N.T. contemplates us and our communion; and our walk and our worship are in view of the blessed presence of Christ to receive us glorified to Himself for the Father's house, where He is now (not we till then). Not only the Gospels cease to apply but the Epistles, to say nothing of the Revelation; for they unquestionably exhort us to a path of suffering, both for righteousness' sake and for Christ's name, in a world wholly opposed to Him and His reign. When He really appears, God will use His solemn judgments, so that the world will learn righteousness, especially as Satan cannot then seduce. In short, the enemy has beguiled these visionaries into an entire abolition of all the state and duties of believers on which the Bible insists till 'that day,' when all things become new, however true now to our faith and hope, as they will then be in fact and to every eye."—William Kelly (*The Second Epistle of Peter*, pp.122-123)

What we truly believe, i.e., *doctrine* (whether true or false) *forms behavior*. Those who live without *any* expectation in their hearts of the blessed hope of the coming of our Lord Jesus are sure to be increasingly earthly-minded . . . increasingly feeling more and more at home in this evil, Christ-rejecting world. Preterism is a perfect case in point.

"The error [of which Preterism partakes] substitutes Jewish for Christian relationship to our Lord, destroys that bridal separateness which is enjoined on the church (2 Cor. 11:2, etc.), and consecrates desires and ways of undisguised worldliness to the dishonour of God and His word about us."

"The special Christian relationship, our calling, inheritance, and hope, are unfolded only in the New Testament. It is 'the mystery concerning Christ and concerning the church,' founded on redemption, and formed by the Spirit sent from heaven to baptise us into the one body of the ascended Head. The effect of ignorance on this score is as disastrous for practice. For Christians have slipped from their rejected lot and the fellowship of Christ's sufferings, as they await heavenly glory, and thus become earthly like Israel in desires and walk and worship. Whereas we are not of the world as He is not, and are not to think it strange if fiery trouble come for our trial, but, as we share in Christ's sufferings, to rejoice that when His glory shall be revealed we may rejoice also with exceeding joy. It is a settled thing for the believer that the present age is an evil one, instead of the vain hope of man to make it a good age by education, science, moral suasion, or religious influence. The gospel, as God sends it, essays no such aim, but is the testimony of God to separate us from its evil in order to be with Christ on high. Him, therefore, we are continually to await,

knowing that He will judge the habitable earth in that day, and thus bring in the new age of righteousness and peace.”—William Kelly (*Isaiah*)

“[I]n searching into the prophetic word, [some] have not felt the difficulty of reconciling the undoubtedly **normal posture of the church in daily waiting for Jesus with the long train of successive events** presented in the Revelation. . . . **I cannot truthfully expect Jesus from heaven from day to day if I am looking out for a series of numerous, and some of them unprecedented, and all of them solemn, incidents to occur on earth, the gradual and accumulative evidence of His approach.** But it is certain that in the apostolic times, when the grace of God was proclaimed in its real power and freshness, when His word was most prized and best understood, and when it produced its loveliest effects, the saints were **habitually expecting** Jesus to come.”

“And the Thessalonians (1 Thess. 1), who were trained, from their birth to God, in looking for their Deliverer, were they mistaken enthusiasts? Or did not the blessed work of the Spirit in their case consist in turning them from idols, not only to serve the living and true God, but to wait for His Son from heaven? Did that wise and faithful servant, who knew what it was to mingle the service of a nurse with the affectionate care of a father—did he consider that blessed hope to be unsuited food for such babes? So far from it, that when he writes to them supplying some things that were lacking, **the Holy Ghost impresses this great doctrine in so repeated and different modes as to demonstrate how cardinal a truth it is in the mind of God, and how influential as regards the walk and communion of His saints. It ramifies both epistles, being not only found at least once in every chapter, but in some chapters occupying the most conspicuous place. (See 1 Thess. 1:3, 10; 1 Thess. 2:19, 20; 1 Thess. 3:13; 1 Thess. 4:13-18; 1 Thess. 5:1-10, 23, 24; 2 Thess. 1:5-10; 2 Thess. 2: 1-12; 2 Thess. 3:5.)**”—William Kelly (*Elements of Prophecy*)

“[F]or every truth has its answer in practice, and speaks to the affections. How, then, does this truth find its reflection in our hearts? and what answer does it look for in our practical path day by day?”—William Kelly (*Purchase and Redemption*)

"Beloved, now are we children of God, and what we shall be has not yet been manifested; we know that if it is manifested we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is. And every one that has this hope in Him purifies himself, even as He is pure." (1 John 3:2-3)

"If therefore ye have been raised with the Christ, seek the things which are above, where the Christ is sitting at the right hand of God: have your mind on the things that are above, not on the things that are on the earth; for ye have died, and your life is hid with the Christ in God. When the Christ is manifested who is our life, than shall ye also be manifested with Him in glory." (Col. 3:1-4)

"This also, knowing the time, that it is already time that we should be aroused out of sleep; for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed. The night is far spent, and the day is near; let us cast away therefore the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light." (Rom. 13:11-12)

"For the grace of God which carries with it salvation for all men has appeared, teaching us that, having denied impiety and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, and justly, and piously in the present course of things, awaiting the blessed hope and appearing of the glory of our great God and Saviour Jesus Christ." (Tit. 2:11-13)

"But ye, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Spirit, keep yourselves in the love of God, awaiting the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto life eternal." (Jude 20-21)

"For they themselves relate concerning us what entering in we had to you, and how ye turned to God from idols to serve a living and true God, and to await His Son from the heavens, whom He raised from among the dead, Jesus, our deliverer from the coming wrath." (1 Thess. 1:9-10)

"But we do not wish you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them that are fallen asleep, to the end that ye be not grieved even as also the rest who have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus has died and has risen again, so also God will bring with Him those who have fallen asleep through Jesus. (For this we say to you in the word of the Lord, that we, the living, who remain to the coming of the Lord, are in no way to anticipate [precede] those who have fallen asleep; for the Lord Himself, with an assembling shout, with archangel's voice and with trump of God, shall descend from heaven; and the dead in Christ shall rise first; then we, the living who remain, shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air; and thus we shall be always with the Lord. So encourage one another with these words." (1 Thess. 4:13-18)

"But we being of the day, let us be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love, and as helmet the hope of salvation; because God has not set us for wrath, but for obtaining salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, who has died for us, that whether we may be watching or sleep, we may live together with Him. Wherefore encourage one another, and build up each one the other, even as also ye do." (1 Thess. 5:8-11)

"For our commonwealth has its being in the heavens, from whence also we await as Saviour the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall transform our body of humiliation, conformed to His body of glory according to the working of His ability also to subject all things to Him." (Phil. 3:20-21)

"Now we beg you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our gathering together to Him, that ye be not soon shaken in mind, nor troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter, as if it were by us, as that the day of the Lord is present. Let not any one deceive you in any manner . . ." (2 Thess. 2:1-3a)

"Behold, I tell you a mystery: We shall not all fall asleep, but we shall all be changed, in an instant, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet; for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. . . . So then, my beloved brethren, be firm, immovable, abounding always in the work of the Lord, knowing that your toil is not in vain in the Lord." (1 Cor. 15:51-52, 58)

"Let not your heart be troubled . . . I am coming again and shall receive you to Myself, that where I am ye also may be." (John 14:1a, 3b)

"Rejoice in the Lord always: again I will say, Rejoice. Let your gentleness be known of all men. The Lord is near." (Phil. 4:4-5)

"But this I say, brethren, the season is straitened: henceforth that both those that have wives be as having none, and those that weep as weeping not, and those that rejoice as rejoicing not, and those that buy as possessing not, and those that use the world as not using it for themselves; for the fashion of the world passeth away." (1 Cor. 7:29-31)

"[T]hese [verses] sweep away every thought of a settling down in the world that now is. Not a word brings in formally **the return of our Lord Jesus Christ; but it is all really and profoundly based on that great and most influential truth, as a living constant expectation.** What does the entire course of the world depend on? It takes for granted ages to come for man and man's progress here below; it thus denies virtually, and often openly, **the Lord's coming as a real hope, or even truth.** . . . All the aspirations of the world, all that men here pant after as objects, and push forward as ways and means, are founded on an uninterrupted future. They confidently look for amelioration and advance. Just as infidel but credulous geologists, naturalists, etc., imagine an indefinite past here below, so they generally build all their hopes of the progressive and triumphant future, not on God's word, or Christ's coming and reign, but on an assumed infinite series of improved methods and inventions, till they reach a perfection of their own for the human race on earth.

"But the coming again of the Lord at any moment cuts up by the root all such unbelieving and presumptuous speculations of men. Hence their angry opposition to that truth. Hence **the guilt and shame of the church's failure to walk in that light.** Not believing it herself, she says in her heart, My Lord delayeth His coming, eats and drinks with the drunken, and beats most those who have been most faithful in serving Him. The consequence is, she does not confess this grave but also bright testimony of divine truth, as He meant it, before the world; **for people must walk and worship in the truth they utter (if even, alas! they do utter it, for many deny it), in order to have power with others.** Everything good flows really from faith working by love, the springs of which are in God. When souls show that the heart is filled with Christ, when the ways are according to the truth they confess, then even enemies feel that for them it is a living reality. We know what the blessed hope was to the apostles and the church of that day: what has it been since?

"Here, in the apostle's exhortation to all, **we see its influence so mighty that,** without a word of direct reference, it shows the time straitened. Not that it does not reveal a period of true and holy blessedness for the earth afterwards; but there will be a total change, compared with which the greatest of revolutions is as nothing; for the powers of the heavens shall be shaken, not the earth only but also heaven, and the world-kingdom of the Lord and His Christ shall come, not to speak of **the still brighter portion of the glorified saints in the Father's house. Thus the scriptural expectation effectually blots out from heart and mind a long future for man's enjoyment as he is.** "It remaineth that both they that have wives be as though they had none; and they that weep as though they wept not; and they that buy as though they possessed not; and they that use the world as not abusing it; for the fashion of this world passeth away"

(vers. 29-31). **It is not, of course, that Christ ignores relationship, sorrow, joy, business, or position; but He brings in an energy of the Spirit for each, which, while deepening sensibility, and respecting everything which God established in nature and on earth, raises superior to all and attaches to Christ in heaven about to come again. The apostle thus would have the saint true to Christ on the one hand, and on the other to form a just estimate of the world as already condemned, and only awaiting the Lord's coming to have the sentence executed.** For not more surely has He been lifted up from the earth and does He draw all to Him, than the judgment of the world is now, though its prince has yet to be actually expelled. The apostle would have us in faith to see the present form passing away."

"This brings in a most sanctifying element for the heart. What a guard for the affections even in the closest ties of life! What a check to otherwise unrestrained grief! And, supposing there is an occasion of joy, what solemnity in the hope that the Lord is at hand! Ought the buyers to forget Him? or they that use this world to use it as their own? This is what I would press with all simplicity, the way in which the truth sets us free, holily free, even here on earth, in which we are now to be entirely the Lord's and only for the Lord, waiting for that bright moment when He will make good His every word. Surely now is the time for faith to confess Him fully; now is the time to exhort one another, and so much the more as we see the day approaching."—William Kelly (*Purchase and Redemption*)

"And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that hears say, Come. . . . [And in the last utterance of the breath of inspiration:] He that testifies these things says, Yea, I come quickly. Amen; Come, Lord Jesus." (Rev. 22:17a, 20)

"But I would not dwell further upon these points of contrast, only praying that we may remember, day by day, that **our place, the church's only right and befitting place, is to wait for Christ from heaven. It is not judgments that we expect to be in;** it is not the hour of temptation we have to await and dread (Rev. 3: 10), for we shall be kept out of it in the grace of Christ. **Our business is to wait, as a heavenly bride, for our heavenly Bridegroom. Those who link the church with earthly circumstances will be misled in their ways now, and at times pass on miserably disappointed.** Not so the hearts which the Spirit directs, animates, and sustains in the longing cry, Come, Lord Jesus. May it be so with us, beloved, increasingly as the moment, unknown to us, draws nearer! Amen."—William Kelly (*Elements of Prophecy*)

" 'The Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come.' Such is the normal position, such the primary testimony which the church renders. After that, it can turn towards others and say, 'And let him that is athirst come,' for living waters already flow there; 'and whosoever will,' etc. **But for Christians this is the Spirit's last behest to the church pointing out her true position. Her sentiments are based upon her relationships to Christ, and the Spirit demands that those who hear should be in unison with this desire of His heart.** Is it wrong to engage those who have heard the voice of the good Shepherd, to **take the position of the bride and to join in the cry, 'Come'**? But the doctrines of the presence of the Holy Spirit here below in the Church, and of the return of Christ, are identified with its unity upon earth, with the position of bride, or rather of her who here below is espoused to be presented as a chaste virgin unto Christ, and with the desire of His coming, **which detaches us from all that is not of Him, and attaches us entirely, exclusively, to Himself.**"—J.N. Darby (*The Collected Writings of J.N. Darby*, Vol. 1, pp. 304-305)

James M Ventilato
December 28, 2004
Updated: July 4, 2013