

APPENDIX TWENTY

The Conditional Nature Of The Time Of The Advent

The Conditional Nature Of The Time Of The Advent

Fairburn says: “Thus, to refer to the predictions ... respecting the second advent of the Lord — there can be no doubt, that (however definitely fixed in the counsels of Heaven) certain things among men are represented as tending, on the one side to hinder, on the other to forward its approach. Our Lord, in one of his parables (Luke xviii.1-8), speaks as if it hung on the steadfast faith and persevering prayer of his elect people. St. Peter uses still stronger language; he exhorts believers to a hopeful, godly and consistent life, that they might hasten on the day of the Lord’s coming, (for such is the plain import of his words, ... 2 Pet. iii.12). And St. Paul not only speaks of a grand development of apostacy (sic) necessarily preceding the arrival of that day, but of certain things, which he does not further characterize, hindering this development, and by implication retarding the personal appearance of the Lord, which in the chain of providences was to be subsequent to the other.” *The Interpretation of Prophecy* (Edinburgh, 1956), pp. 64-65. Fairbairn then spells out his belief for the reason of the delay of the Parousia. “... for the church being then in the full springtide of its life and blessing, burning with holy zeal for the proper fulfilment of its mission, it might well seem, as if that mission were hastening to its accomplishment, and all things were becoming ready for the final harvest of the world. Yet, it must have been impossible for any one to read with care some of the parables of our Lord, or even what was written by St. Paul of the great apostacy (sic) ... without coming to the conviction, that there was still an implied alternative; namely, that if the church of Christ should degenerate in her course, if she should begin to slumber in the work given her to do, still more, if she should become adulterated by the carnal spirit, and the corrupt practices of the world, then the shadows of the evening should need to be lengthened out, and ... the Lord should have to protract the day of His appearing.” *Ibid.*, p. 65. Fairbairn gives several examples from Scripture in support of his thesis. He reminds us, for example, that Christ promised the Twelve (including Judas!) that they would one day sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel — a statement apparently as absolute as Mark 13:30.