

of satyrs, monopods,
He decided it could
So can this.

"Supposing all these em-
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THERE are many rea-
sons why the modern Christian and even the modern
theologian may hesitate to give to the doctrine of
Christ's Second Coming that emphasis which was
usually laid on it by our ancestors. Yet it seems to me
impossible to retain in any recognisable form our belief
in the Divinity of Christ and the truth of the Christian
revelation while abandoning, or even persistently neg-
lecting, the promised, and threatened, Return. "He
shall come again to judge the quick and the dead," says
the Apostles' Creed. "This same Jesus," said the angels
in Acts, "shall so come in like manner as ye have seen
him go into heaven." "Hereafter," said our Lord him-
self (by those words inviting crucifixion), "shall ye
see the Son of Man . . . coming in the clouds of
heaven." If this is not an integral part of the faith once
given to the saints, I do not know what is. In the follow-
ing pages I shall endeavour to deal with some of the
thoughts that may deter modern men from a firm belief
in, or a due attention to, the return or Second Coming
of the Saviour. I have no claim to speak as an expert in

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any of the studies involved, and merely put forward the reflections which have arisen in my own mind and have seemed to me (perhaps wrongly) to be helpful. They are all submitted to the correction of wiser heads.

The grounds for modern embarrassment about this doctrine fall into two groups, which may be called the theoretical and the practical. I will deal with the theoretical first.

Many are shy of this doctrine because they are reacting (in my opinion very properly reacting) against a school of thought which is associated with the great name of Dr. Albert Schweitzer. According to that school, Christ's teaching about his own return and the end of the world—what theologians call his "apocalyptic"—was the very essence of his message. All his other doctrines radiated from it; his moral teaching everywhere presupposed a speedy end of the world. If pressed to an extreme, this view, as I think Chesterton said, amounts to seeing in Christ little more than an earlier William Miller, who created a local "scare." I am not saying that Dr. Schweitzer pressed it to that conclusion: but it has seemed to some that his thought invites us in that direction. Hence, from fear of that extreme, arises a tendency to soft-pedal what Schweitzer's school has overemphasized.

For my own part I hate and distrust reactions not only in religion but in everything. Luther surely spoke very good sense when he compared humanity to a drunkard who, after falling off his horse on the right, falls off it next time on the left. I am convinced that those who

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find in Christ's apocalyptic predictions a mistaken. But a thing is discredited—because of exaggeration. It remains a difference is that if it we must now take special that is the side on most likely to fall off.

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find in Christ's apocalyptic the whole of his message are mistaken. But a thing does not vanish—it is not even discredited—because someone has spoken of it with exaggeration. It remains exactly where it was. The only difference is that if it has recently been exaggerated, we must now take special care not to overlook it; for that is the side on which the drunk man is now most likely to fall off.

The very name "apocalyptic" assigns our Lord's predictions of the Second Coming to a class. There are other specimens of it: the *Apocalypse of Baruch*, the *Book of Enoch*, or the *Ascension of Isaiah*. Christians are far from regarding such texts as Holy Scripture, and to most modern tastes the *genre* appears tedious and unedifying. Hence there arises a feeling that our Lord's predictions, being "much the same sort of thing," are discredited. The charge against them might be put either in a harsher or a gentler form. The harsher form would run, in the mouth of an atheist, something like this: "You see that, after all, your vaunted Jesus was really the same sort of crank or charlatan as all the other writers of apocalyptic." The gentler form, used more probably by a modernist, would be like this: "Every great man is partly of his own age and partly for all time. What matters in his work is always that which transcends his age, not that which he shared with a thousand forgotten contemporaries. We value Shakespeare for the glory of his language and his knowledge of the human heart, which were his own; not for his belief in witches or the divine right of kings, or his failure to

take a daily bath. So with Jesus. His belief in a speedy and catastrophic end to history belongs to him not as a great teacher but as a first-century Palestinian peasant. It was one of his inevitable limitations, best forgotten. We must concentrate on what distinguished him from other first-century Palestinian peasants, on his moral and social teaching."

As an argument against the reality of the Second Coming this seems to me to beg the question at issue. When we propose to ignore in a great man's teaching those doctrines which it has in common with the thought of his age, we seem to be assuming that the thought of his age was erroneous. When we select for serious consideration those doctrines which "transcend" the thought of his own age and are "for all time," we are assuming that the thought of *our* age is correct: for of course by thoughts which transcend the great man's age we really mean thoughts that agree with ours. Thus I value Shakespeare's picture of the transformation in old Lear more than I value his views about the divine right of kings, because I agree with Shakespeare that a man can be purified by suffering like Lear, but do not believe that kings (or any other rulers) have divine right in the sense required. When the great man's views do not seem to us erroneous we do not value them the less for having been shared with his contemporaries. Shakespeare's disdain for treachery and Christ's blessing on the poor were not alien to the outlook of their respective periods; but no one wishes to discredit them on that account. No one would reject Christ's apocalyptic

on the ground that apocalyptic thought of first-century Palestine unless mistaken. But to have begged the question; for the expectation of a catastrophe of the present universe

If we have an open problem is altered. If such occur, and if (as is the case) their religion to expect they should produce a view, our Lord's production of apocalyptic documents from his supposed bond but would be the Divinity in contemporary Judaism in which it pleased him, presumably, have been chosen that element existed, and been developed for that accept the doctrine of to be very cautious in such in the culture of first-century or distorting influence suppose that the scene occurred at random?—that some better?

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on the ground that apocalyptic was common in first-century Palestine unless he had already decided that the thought of first-century Palestine was in that respect mistaken. But to have so decided is surely to have begged the question; for the question is whether the expectation of a catastrophic and Divinely ordered end of the present universe is true or false.

If we have an open mind on that point, the whole problem is altered. If such an end is really going to occur, and if (as is the case) the Jews had been trained by their religion to expect it, then it is very natural that they should produce apocalyptic literature. On that view, our Lord's production of something like the other apocalyptic documents would not necessarily result from his supposed bondage to the errors of his period, but would be the Divine exploitation of a sound element in contemporary Judaism: nay, the time and place in which it pleased him to be incarnate would, presumably, have been chosen because, there and then, that element existed, and had, by his eternal providence, been developed for that very purpose. For if we once accept the doctrine of the Incarnation, we must surely be very cautious in suggesting that any circumstance in the culture of first-century Palestine was a hampering or distorting influence upon his teaching. Do we suppose that the scene of God's earthly life was selected at random?—that some other scene would have served better?

But there is worse to come. "Say what you like," we shall be told, "the apocalyptic beliefs of the first Chris-

tians have been proved to be false. It is clear from the New Testament that they all expected the Second Coming in their own lifetime. And, worse still, they had a reason, and one which you will find very embarrassing. Their Master had told them so. He shared, and indeed created, their delusion. He said in so many words, 'this generation shall not pass till all these things be done.' And he was wrong. He clearly knew no more about the end of the world than anyone else."

It is certainly the most embarrassing verse in the Bible. Yet how teasing, also, that within fourteen words of it should come the statement "But of that day and that hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels which are in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father." The one exhibition of error and the one confession of ignorance grow side by side. That they stood thus in the mouth of Jesus himself, and were not merely placed thus by the reporter, we surely need not doubt. Unless the reporter were perfectly honest he would never have recorded the confession of ignorance at all; he could have had no motive for doing so except a desire to tell the whole truth. And unless later copyists were equally honest they would never have preserved the (apparently) mistaken prediction about "this generation" after the passage of time had shown the (apparent) mistake. This passage (Mark 13:30-32) and the cry "Why hast thou forsaken me?" (Mark 15:34) together make up the strongest proof that the New Testament is historically reliable. The evangelists have the first great characteris-

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The facts, then, are self (in some sense) showed that he really v tion, to believe that he stand how he could be tain that, if he said he he could really be. For less baffling than a God. The answer of theolog omniscient as God, a doubt, is true, though deed can the unconsci agined, nor the twilight less his merely organic the physical sciences, n our belief much that o

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tic of honest witnesses: they mention facts which are, at first sight, damaging to their main contention.

The facts, then, are these: that Jesus professed himself (in some sense) ignorant, and within a moment showed that he really was so. To believe in the Incarnation, to believe that he is God, makes it hard to understand how he could be ignorant; but also makes it certain that, if he said he could be ignorant, then ignorant he could really be. For a God who can be ignorant is less baffling than a God who falsely professes ignorance. The answer of theologians is that the God-Man was omniscient as God, and ignorant as Man. This, no doubt, is true, though it cannot be imagined. Nor indeed can the unconsciousness of Christ in sleep be imagined, nor the twilight of reason in his infancy; still less his merely organic life in his mother's womb. But the physical sciences, no less than theology, propose for our belief much that cannot be imagined.

A generation which has accepted the curvature of space need not boggle at the impossibility of imagining the consciousness of incarnate God. In that consciousness the temporal and the timeless were united. I think we can acquiesce in mystery at that point, provided we do not aggravate it by our tendency to picture the timeless life of God as, simply, another sort of time. We are committing that blunder whenever we ask how Christ could be *at the same moment* ignorant and omniscient, or how he could be the God who neither slumbers nor sleeps *while* he slept. The italicized

words conceal an attempt to establish a temporal relation between his timeless life as God and the days, months, and years of his life as Man. And of course there is no such relation. The Incarnation is not an episode in the life of God: the Lamb is slain—and therefore presumably born, grown to maturity, and risen—from all eternity. The taking up into God's nature of humanity, with all its ignorances and limitations, is not itself a temporal event, though the humanity which is so taken up was, like our own, a thing living and dying in time. And if limitation, and therefore ignorance, was thus taken up, we ought to expect that the ignorance should at some time be actually displayed. It would be difficult, and, to me, repellent, to suppose that Jesus never asked a genuine question, that is, a question to which he did not know the answer. That would make of his humanity something so unlike ours as scarcely to deserve the name. I find it easier to believe that when he said "Who touched me?" (Luke 7:45) he really wanted to know.

The difficulties which I have so far discussed are, to a certain extent, debating points. They tend rather to strengthen a disbelief already based on other grounds than to create disbelief by their own force. We are now coming to something much more important and often less fully conscious. The doctrine of the Second Coming is deeply uncongenial to the whole evolutionary or developmental character of modern thought. We have been taught to think of the world as something that grows slowly towards perfection, something that "pro-

gresses" or "evolves." Cf. such hope. It does not seem more tolerable to our hope. It foretells a sudden decay. It foretells a sudden without; an extinguishing brick flung at the game of the play—"Halt!"

To this deep-seated conviction in my opinion, the modern Evolution (as popularly supported by no evidence)

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 cay. It foretells a sudden, violent end imposed from
 without; an extinguisher popped onto the candle, a
 brick flung at the gramophone, a curtain rung down on
 the play—"Halt!"

To this deep-seated objection I can only reply that,
 in my opinion, the modern conception of Progress or
 Evolution (as popularly imagined) is simply a myth,
 supported by no evidence whatever.

I say "evolution, as popularly imagined." I am not
 in the least concerned to refute Darwinism as a theorem
 in biology. There may be flaws in that theorem, but I
 have here nothing to do with them. There may be signs
 that biologists are already contemplating a withdrawal
 from the whole Darwinian position, but I claim to be no
 judge of such signs. It can even be argued that what Dar-
 win really accounted for was not the origin, but the
 elimination, of species, but I will not pursue that argu-
 ment. For purposes of this article I am assuming that
 Darwinian biology is correct. What I want to point out
 is the illegitimate transition from the Darwinian theo-
 rem in biology to the modern myth of evolutionism or
 developmentalism or progress in general.

The first thing to notice is that the myth arose earlier
 than the theorem, in advance of all evidence. Two great
 works of art embody the idea of a universe in which, by
 some inherent necessity, the "higher" always supersedes
 the "lower." One is Keats's *Hyperion* and the other is

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Wagner's *Nibelung's Ring*. And they are both earlier than the *Origin of Species*. You could not have a clearer expression of the developmental or progressive idea than Oceanus' words

'tis the eternal law

That first in beauty should be first in might.

And you could not have a more ardent submission to it than those words in which Wagner describes his tetralogy.

*The progress of the whole poem, therefore [he writes to Röckel in 1854], shows the necessity of recognising, and submitting to, the change, the diversity, the multiplicity, and the eternal novelty, of the Real. Wotan rises to the tragic heights of willing his own downfall. This is all that we have to learn from the history of Man—to will the Necessary, and ourselves to bring it to pass. The creative work which this highest and self-renouncing will finally accomplishes is the fearless and ever-loving man, Siegfried.**

* "Der Fortgang des ganzen Gedichtes zeigt demnach die Notwendigkeit, den Wechsel, die Mannigfaltigkeit, die Vielheit, die ewige Neuheit der Wirklichkeit und des Lebens anzuerkennen und ihr zu weichen. Wotan schwingt sich bis zu der tragischen Höhe, seinen Untergang zu wollen. Dies ist alles, was wir aus der Geschichte der Menschheit zu lernen haben: das Notwendige zu wollen und selbst zu vollbringen. Das Schöpfungswerk dieses höchsten, selbst vernichtenden Willens ist der endlich gewonnene furchtlose, stets liebende Mensch; Siegfried."

Fuller research into the origins of this potent myth would lead us to the German idealists and thence (as I have heard suggested) through Boehme back to Alchemy. Is the whole dialectical view of history possibly a gigantic projection of the old dream that we can make gold?

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The idea that the myth (thought) is a result of Darwinism seem to be unhistorical. One of Darwinism was that it gave scientific reassurances that evolution had been forthcoming necessary to invent it. This partly political. It projects feelings engendered by the

In the second place, we gives no support to the working upon chance variations to produce improvement. from confining our attention have (by some possibly a changed for the better. This the sense that protohipp than his modern descendants proved in the sense that many of the changes produced improvements by any conscious save their lives sometimes by retreating. So, in themselves sometimes jettisoning, their power progress in biological history.

And, thirdly, even if —it is, indeed, manifested any law of progress in history. No one looking a

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The idea that the myth (so potent in all modern thought) is a result of Darwin's biology would thus seem to be unhistorical. On the contrary, the attraction of Darwinism was that it gave to a pre-existing myth the scientific reassurances it required. If no evidence for evolution had been forthcoming, it would have been necessary to invent it. The real sources of the myth are partly political. It projects onto the cosmic screen feelings engendered by the Revolutionary period.

In the second place, we must notice that Darwinism gives no support to the belief that natural selection, working upon chance variations, has a general tendency to produce improvement. The illusion that it has comes from confining our attention to a few species which have (by some possibly arbitrary standard of our own) changed for the better. Thus the horse has improved in the sense that *protohippos* would be less useful to us than his modern descendant. The anthropoid has improved in the sense that he now is Ourselves. But a great many of the changes produced by evolution are not improvements by any conceivable standard. In battle men save their lives sometimes by advancing and sometimes by retreating. So, in the battle for survival, species save themselves sometimes by increasing, sometimes by jettisoning, their powers. There is no general law of progress in biological history.

And, thirdly, even if there were, it would not follow—it is, indeed, manifestly not the case—that there is any law of progress in ethical, cultural, and social history. No one looking at world history without some pre-

conception in favor of progress could find in it a steady up gradient. There is often progress within a given field over a limited period. A school of pottery or painting, a moral effort in a particular direction, a practical art like sanitation or shipbuilding, may continuously improve over a number of years. If this process could spread to all departments of life and continue indefinitely, there would be "Progress" of the sort our fathers believed in. But it never seems to do so. Either it is interrupted (by barbarian irruption or the even less resistible infiltration of modern industrialism) or else, more mysteriously, it decays. The idea which here shuts out the Second Coming from our minds, the idea of the world slowly ripening to perfection, is a myth, not a generalization from experience. And it is a myth which distracts us from our real duties and our real interest. It is our attempt to guess the plot of a drama in which we are the characters. But how can the characters in a play guess the plot? We are not the playwright, we are not the producer, we are not even the audience. We are on the stage. To play well the scenes in which we are "on" concerns us much more than to guess about the scenes that follow it.

In *King Lear* (III:vii) there is a man who is such a minor character that Shakespeare has not given him even a name: he is merely "First Servant." All the characters around him—Regan, Cornwall, and Edmund—have fine long-term plans. They think they know how the story is going to end, and they are quite wrong. The servant has no such delusions. He has no notion how

the play is going to go scene. He sees an abo Gloucester) taking place is out and pointed at then Regan stabs him whole part: eight lines and not a play, that is acted.

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could find in it a steady progress within a given field of pottery or painting, a perfection, a practical art like they continuously improve this process could spread to continue indefinitely, there our fathers believed in. Either it is interrupted (by even less resistible infiltration) or else, more mysteriously, which here shuts out the ends, the idea of the world is a myth, not a generalization and it is a myth which disorients our real interest. It is the plot of a drama in which we can see the characters in a play and the playwright, we are not even the audience. We are on the scenes in which we are "on" and to guess about the scenes

there is a man who is such a Shakespeare has not given him a "First Servant." All the characters—Cornwall, and Edmund—they think they know how and they are quite wrong. The audience. He has no notion how

the play is going to go. But he understands the present scene. He sees an abomination (the blinding of old Gloucester) taking place. He will not stand it. His sword is out and pointed at his master's breast in a moment: then Regan stabs him dead from behind. That is his whole part: eight lines all told. But if it were real life and not a play, that is the part it would be best to have acted.

The doctrine of the Second Coming teaches us that we do not and cannot know when the world drama will end. The curtain may be rung down at any moment: say, before you have finished reading this paragraph. This seems to some people intolerably frustrating. So many things would be interrupted. Perhaps you were going to get married next month, perhaps you were going to get a raise next week: you may be on the verge of a great scientific discovery; you may be maturing great social and political reforms. Surely no good and wise God would be so very unreasonable as to cut all this short? Not *now*, of all moments!

But we think thus because we keep on assuming that we know the play. We do not know the play. We do not even know whether we are in Act I or Act V. We do not know who are the major and who the minor characters. The Author knows. The audience, if there is an audience (if angels and archangels and all the company of heaven fill the pit and the stalls) may have an inkling. But we, never seeing the play from outside, never meeting any characters except the tiny minority who are "on" in the same scenes as ourselves, wholly igno-

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rant of the future and very imperfectly informed about the past, cannot tell at what moment the end ought to come. That it will come when it ought, we may be sure; but we waste our time in guessing when that will be. That it has a meaning we may be sure, but we cannot see it. When it is over, we may be told. We are led to expect that the Author will have something to say to each of us on the part that each of us has played. The playing it well is what matters infinitely.

The doctrine of the Second Coming, then, is not to be rejected because it conflicts with our favorite modern mythology. It is, for that very reason, to be the more valued and made more frequently the subject of meditation. It is the medicine our condition especially needs.

And with that, I turn to the practical. There is a real difficulty in giving this doctrine the place which it ought to have in our Christian life without, at the same time, running a certain risk. The fear of that risk probably deters many teachers who accept the doctrine from saying very much about it.

We must admit at once that this doctrine has, in the past, led Christians into very great follies. Apparently many people find it difficult to believe in this great event without trying to guess its date, or even without accepting as a certainty the date that any quack or hysteric offers them. To write a history of all these exploded predictions would need a book, and a sad, sordid, tragi-comical book it would be. One such prediction was circulating when St. Paul wrote his second letter to the Thessalonians. Someone had told them that "the Day"

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be. One such prediction was
wrote his second letter to the
told them that "the Day"

was "at hand." This was apparently having the result
which such predictions usually have: people were idling
and playing the busybody. One of the most famous pre-
dictions was that of poor William Miller in 1843. Miller
(whom I take to have been an honest fanatic) dated the
Second Coming to the year, the day, and the very min-
ute. A timely comet fostered the delusion. Thousands
waited for the Lord at midnight on March 21st, and
went home to a late breakfast on the 22nd followed by
the jeers of a drunkard.

Clearly, no one wishes to say anything that will
reawaken such mass hysteria. We must never speak to
simple, excitable people about "the Day" without em-
phasizing again and again the utter impossibility of pre-
diction. We must try to show them that that impossibil-
ity is an essential part of the doctrine. If you do not be-
lieve our Lord's words, why do you believe in his return
at all? And if you do believe them must you not put
away from you, utterly and forever, any hope of dating
that return? His teaching on the subject quite clearly
consisted of three propositions. (1) That he will cer-
tainly return. (2) That we cannot possibly find out
when. (3) And that therefore we must always be ready
for him.

Note the *therefore*. Precisely because we cannot pre-
dict the moment, we must be ready at all moments. Our
Lord repeated this practical conclusion again and again;
as if the promise of the Return had been made for the
sake of this conclusion alone. Watch, watch, is the bur-
den of his advice. I shall come like a thief. You will not,

I most solemnly assure you you will not, see me approaching. If the householder had known at what time the burglar would arrive, he would have been ready for him. If the servant had known when his absent employer would come home, he would not have been found drunk in the kitchen. But they didn't. Nor will you. Therefore you must be ready at all times. The point is surely simple enough. The schoolboy does not know which part of his Virgil lesson he will be made to translate: that is why he must be prepared to translate *any* passage. The sentry does not know at what time an enemy will attack, or an officer inspect, his post: that is why he must keep awake *all* the time. The Return is wholly unpredictable. There will be wars and rumours of wars and all kinds of catastrophes, as there always are. Things will be, in that sense, normal, the hour before the heavens roll up like a scroll. You cannot guess it. If you could, one chief purpose for which it was foretold would be frustrated. And God's purposes are not so easily frustrated as that. One's ears should be closed against any future William Miller in advance. The folly of listening to him at all is almost equal to the folly of believing him. He *couldn't* know what he pretends, or thinks, he knows.

Of this folly George MacDonald has written well. "Do those," he asks, "who say, Lo here or lo there are the signs of his coming, think to be too keen for him and spy his approach? When he tells them to watch lest he find them neglecting their work, they stare this way

and that, and watch like a thief! Obedience

The doctrine of the as we are concerned, is at every moment of eve- tion "What if this pres- is equally relevant.

Sometimes this ques- minds with the purpos- that is its right use. I an- those who think all reli- ing and demand that- spiritual life. Perfect l- But so do several other- sion, presumption, and- that we should all adva- which we shall fear no l- until we have reached- any inferior agent to c- to any attempt at perp- ond Coming is, in my- namely, that it will c- an emotion: and it is q- impossible—to maintain- perpetual excitement o- ing is impossible for th- any sort is essentially tr- and when they come a- they cannot be our reg-

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 when he tells them to watch lest
 their work, they stare this way

and that, and watch lest he should succeed in coming
 like a thief! Obedience is the one key of life."

The doctrine of the Second Coming has failed, so far
 as we are concerned, if it does not make us realize that
 at every moment of every year in our lives Donne's ques-
 tion "What if this present were the world's last night?"
 is equally relevant.

Sometimes this question has been pressed upon our
 minds with the purpose of exciting fear. I do not think
 that is its right use. I am, indeed, far from agreeing with
 those who think all religious fear barbarous and degrad-
 ing and demand that it should be banished from the
 spiritual life. Perfect love, we know, casteth out fear.
 But so do several other things—ignorance, alcohol, pas-
 sion, presumption, and stupidity. It is very desirable
 that we should all advance to that perfection of love in
 which we shall fear no longer; but it is very undesirable,
 until we have reached that stage, that we should allow
 any inferior agent to cast out our fear. The objection
 to any attempt at perpetual trepidation about the Sec-
 ond Coming is, in my view, quite a different one:
 namely, that it will certainly not succeed. Fear is
 an emotion: and it is quite impossible—even physically
 impossible—to maintain any emotion for very long. A
 perpetual excitement of hope about the Second Com-
 ing is impossible for the same reason. Crisis-feeling of
 any sort is essentially transitory. Feelings come and go,
 and when they come a good use can be made of them:
 they cannot be our regular spiritual diet.

we should always fear
we should always re-
ment. An analogy may
not be always feeling
approaching death: but
take it into account.
on schemes which pre-
he would be crimi-
not to have made
death is to each man,
the human race. We all
should "sit loose" to his
remember how short, pre-
a thing it is; should
which will end when
scians find it harder to
of humanity in this
temporary, provisional.
the personal triumph
is transitory: the point
or a civilisation is also
triumphs, in so far as
achievements and tri-
the end. Most scientists
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decay from within, we
from without—at any

THE WORLD'S LAST NIGHT

moment. ("What if this present were the world's last night?")

Taken by themselves, these considerations might seem to invite a relaxation of our efforts for the good of posterity: but if we remember that what may be upon us at any moment is not merely an End but a Judgment, they should have no such result. They may, and should, correct the tendency of some moderns to talk as though duties to posterity were the only duties we had. I can imagine no man who will look with more horror on the End than a conscientious revolutionary who has, in a sense sincerely, been justifying cruelties and injustices inflicted on millions of his contemporaries by the benefits which he hopes to confer on future generations: generations who, as one terrible moment now reveals to him, were never going to exist. Then he will see the massacres, the faked trials, the deportations, to be all ineffaceably real, an essential part, his part, in the drama that has just ended: while the future Utopia had never been anything but a fantasy.

Frantic administration of panaceas to the world is certainly discouraged by the reflection that "this present" might be "the world's last night"; sober work for the future, within the limits of ordinary morality and prudence, is not. For what comes is Judgment: happy are those whom it finds labouring in their vocations, whether they were merely going out to feed the pigs or laying good plans to deliver humanity a hundred years hence from some great evil. The curtain has indeed now

fallen. Those pigs will never in fact be fed, the great campaign against White Slavery or Governmental Tyranny will never in fact proceed to victory. No matter; you were at your post when the Inspection came.

Our ancestors had a habit of using the word "Judgment" in this context as if it meant simply "punishment": hence the popular expression, "It's a judgment on him." I believe we can sometimes render the thing more vivid to ourselves by taking judgment in a stricter sense: not as the sentence or award, but as the Verdict. Some day (and "What if this present were the world's last night?") an absolutely correct verdict—if you like, a perfect critique—will be passed on what each of us is.

We have all encountered judgments or verdicts on ourselves in this life. Every now and then we discover what our fellow creatures really think of us. I don't of course mean what they tell us to our faces: that we usually have to discount. I am thinking of what we sometimes overhear by accident or of the opinions about us which our neighbours or employees or subordinates unknowingly reveal in their actions: and of the terrible, or lovely, judgments artlessly betrayed by children or even animals. Such discoveries can be the bitterest or sweetest experiences we have. But of course both the bitter and the sweet are limited by our doubt as to the wisdom of those who judge. We always hope that those who so clearly think us cowards or bullies are ignorant and malicious; we always fear that those who trust us or admire us are misled by partiality. I suppose the experience of the Final Judgment (which may

break in upon us at a
tle experiences, but m

For it will be infal
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wrong. We shall not c
beyond doubt in every
being, that as the Ju
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our ancestors, our par
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break in upon us at any moment) will be like these lit-
 tle experiences, but magnified to the Nth.

For it will be infallible judgment. If it is favorable
 we shall have no fear, if unfavorable, no hope, that it is
 wrong. We shall not only believe, we shall know, know
 beyond doubt in every fibre of our appalled or delighted
 being, that as the Judge has said, so we are: neither
 more nor less nor other. We shall perhaps even realise
 that in some dim fashion we could have known it all
 along. We shall know and all creation will know too:
 our ancestors, our parents, our wives or husbands, our
 children. The unanswerable and (by then) self-evident
 truth about each will be known to all.

I do not find that pictures of physical catastrophe—
 that sign in the clouds, those heavens rolled up like a
 scroll—help one so much as the naked idea of Judg-
 ment. We cannot always be excited. We can, perhaps,
 train ourselves to ask more and more often how the
 thing which we are saying or doing (or failing to do) at
 each moment will look when the irresistible light
 streams in upon it; that light which is so different from
 the light of this world—and yet, even now, we know
 just enough of it to take it into account. Women some-
 times have the problem of trying to judge by artificial
 light how a dress will look by daylight. That is very
 like the problem of all of us: to dress our souls not for
 the electric lights of the present world but for the day-
 light of the next. The good dress is the one that will face
 that light. For that light will last longer.