

of people have come to the conclusion that the Lord would return at a particular time. All manner of excesses have occurred, as a result. The result has been to bring the doctrine of the Lord's return into contempt in many quarters. But such date-setting is always unscriptural. It is recorded in Matt.24.36 that Jesus said, "But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only." Two principles are frequently reiterated in the New Testament regarding the return of Christ. One is that it is certain to occur. The other is that no man can no when it will occur.

Bad as it is to set a time for the Lord's return, it is equally wrong to set an interval. It is compared to a thief in the night. The Lord often commanded his disciples to watch and be ready, seeing that they could not know when He would return. He wishes us to be constantly looking for Him, and longing for His return. We have no right to say, "He will not come today," or "He will not come this year," or "He will not come this century". Murray McCheyne, the noted Scotch preacher once asked some of his friends, "Do you think the Lord will return today?" One after another they replied, "No, I think not". Then solemnly he quoted to them the words of Jesus, given in Matt.24.44, "Therefore be ye also ready, for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh."

What will be the manner of the Lord's return? We have already touched on some of its important characteristics. It is summed up in the words of our text, "This same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen Him go into heaven."

He went away personally. It was not a merely spiritual departure. As the disciples saw Him rising from their midst, they knew that it was the very person of their Lord whom they beheld. In a certain sense we may speak of any great spiritual blessing as a coming of Christ. He comes to us truly in the great moments of the operation of the Spirit. But the event to which the angels directed the hope of the disciples was something far different. It was a personal return.

He went away visibly. They saw Him go. Someday men will see Him return. Jesus told men that they would see the Son of man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.

He went away bodily. He will return in a body. True it is not a body like those that we now have, subject to infirmity and weakness. It is a resurrection body, like those that we will then