







So no, I am not saying that there is no great “Day of the Lord” to look forward to. My concern is that we have tended to think of it only as a future event in terms of time; only as something remote “up there” in terms of place; only as something concerning other people in terms of judgement. We make the mistake of which Jesus himself warned, of saying “the kingdom will be then and it will be there” and it all feels so remote that it seems to have little to do with us now.

But there is not a day or an hour when Jesus Christ does not confront us with judgement and salvation, with the truth of resurrection and with the claims of the kingdom of God. The consummation of life happens inside us, not outside us. It happens when we find the courage to stand face to face with Jesus Christ and see in Him what our lives are really all about. And when we have finished hurling at him all our anger and bitterness, our doubts and fears, our shame and regrets, then look and see both the truth and the love in his eyes, then I think we shall know all that we need to know about what is called the “Second Coming.”

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After I had grown up, married and had children, I heard that Peg and her husband had moved away, to live with their daughter. Peg had been diagnosed with terminal cancer and had only three months to live. My mother and I went down to see her. She was as lively and witty as ever, still sprinkling plenty of spice into the conversation. Her sitting room would still have made Auntie hold up her hands in horror. Not just the sideboard but every available surface was cluttered up. Only this time it was cluttered with innumerable cards and I counted at least twenty vases, pots and arrangements of flowers sent by so many of the people who had experienced Peg’s love, fun and encouragement over the years. I also spotted an embroidered motto which made me smile. It said, “*an immaculate house is a sign of an empty life.*”

Christ had come into that life, bringing an unquenchable spirit of love, generosity, faith and encouragement.

Christ was coming into that life, keeping faith, hope and love alive even as Peg looked pain and death in the face.

Soon Christ would come into that life and take Peg on into the life of eternity.

It was all part of an ongoing, continuous relationship between Christ and one woman, a relationship which taught her what she was, which created a small corner of the kingdom of God in the place where she lived, which would hold the chain of love firm as she passed through death and keep her bound to those who had loved her and to God himself.

The Lord says “I am coming soon”

Even so come, Lord Jesus.

Amen.