

TOUCHING
THE COMING
OF THE LORD

C. F. HOGG
AND
W. E. VINE, M.A.

TOUCHING THE COMING OF THE LORD

BY
C. F. HOGG
AND
W. E. VINE M.A.

Authors of "The Epistles of Paul the Apostle to the Thessalonians
with Notes Exegetical and Expository," etc.

OLIPHANTS LTD.
EDINBURGH AND LONDON

Printed in Great Britain by Turnbull & Spears, Edinburgh
Bound by Anderson & Ferrier, St Mary Street, Edinburgh

CONTENTS

DIAGRAM	<i>Front.</i>
CHAP.	PAGE
I. THE EXPECTANCY OF CHRIST	9
II. THE RESURRECTION AND THE RAPTURE: THE TEACHING OF THE LORD	26
III. THE RESURRECTION AND THE RAPTURE: THE TEACHING OF THE APOSTLES (1)	36
IV. THE RESURRECTION AND THE RAPTURE: THE TEACHING OF THE APOSTLES (2)	44
V. THE PAROUSIA OF THE LORD	56
VI. THE JUDGEMENT-SEAT OF CHRIST	74
VII. THE EPIPHANY OF THE PAROUSIA	91
VIII. THE FINAL GENTILE WORLD-RULER AND HIS DOMINION	111
IX. THE EFFECT OF THE HOPE	126
X. A SYNOPSIS OF THE BIBLE DOCTRINE OF THE SECOND ADVENT	143
APPENDIX	159
INDEX	172

The Writers are jointly responsible for the contents of this volume, and have each revised the whole. Chapters I., II., III., IV., VI., X., the Introduction, and the Appendix were written by Mr Hogg; Chapters V., VII., VIII., and IX. by Mr Vine.

INTRODUCTION

Little is necessary by way of introduction to the pages that follow. The writers proceed on the assumption, which seems to them well founded, and as fully confirmed by the record of fulfilled prophecy, that the 'apocalyptic,' or 'eschatological,' or, in more popular, if less exact, language, the 'prophetic,' element in Scripture is as authentic as the rest of the revelation of the mind of God. It is not unreasonable to suppose that if God has spoken concerning the past and the present He should speak concerning the future also.

It has been contended, in opposition to the main proposition of this book, that God moves slowly to His appointed ends, and that His Kingdom comes not with observation. This is true. Nevertheless God is not to be denied the right to vary His methods at different stages of His work. One day is with the Lord as a thousand years, indeed ; but also a thousand years is as one day. He speaks in the still small voice—and also in the thunder. The grass grows noiselessly ; the pestilence-laden air is scattered by the fury of the tempest. God is long-suffering now, as He was when men were equally heedless in the days of Noah. And in the days of Noah the Flood came. Is it so certain that God will never stretch out His arm again, to act directly in the affairs of men ?

If it is conceivable that God should send His Son into

8 Touching the Coming of the Lord

the world once, it is not incredible that He should do so again. If it was consistent with the character of God to display His moral glory in the walk and conversation of His Son in lowly guise upon earth, it cannot be unworthy of Him to display the complement of that glory in the Majesty of heaven.

The dogmatic spirit is peculiarly inappropriate to the exposition of the "word of prophecy." We may not adopt the same tone when we speak of the future as when we speak of the past. Prophecy is something more than history written in advance. It is a means the Lord has chosen whereby we may be brought into closer fellowship with Him in His purposes. The writers hope they have written nothing inconsistent with this end of the Lord. They will be profoundly grateful if it please Him to use their testimony, and this attempt to open the Scriptures, to the growth of their readers in the true grace of God. The purpose of prophecy is as practical as that of any other part of the Bible. It is hoped that this is made plain throughout the book, and not merely in Chapter IX.

The writers would in all sincerity remind their readers of the exhortation of the Apostle to a church as yet in its infancy, "Prove all things; hold fast that which is good," words which they would venture to paraphrase, 'Test all teachings; hold fast to that which accords with what is written,' 1 Thess. v. 21.

References are to the Revised Version throughout.

January, 1919.

TOUCHING THE COMING OF THE LORD

CHAPTER I

THE EXPECTANCY OF CHRIST

“God loves to be longed for, He longs to be sought,
For He sought us Himself with such longing and love :
He died for desire of us, marvellous thought !
And He yearns for us now to be with Him above.”

WHEN men permit themselves to contemplate the future, when they project their thoughts beyond the grave, the natural tendency of the mind is to become overcast by fear. Fear draws its strength from the unknown, and is accentuated by the consciousness of failure and the sense of accountability. Fear demoralizes men, robs them of courage and of hope, and drives them to new depths of evil. Fear, anticipating the adverse verdict of the Day of Judgement, causes suffering even here and now ; “fear hath punishment.” There is but one way of dealing with fear, this natural tenant of the human mind ; fear must be cast out. But how ? Love alone is equal to the task. “There is no fear in love ; but perfect love casteth out fear.” “Perfect love,” that is the love manifested in the death of the Lord Jesus

10 Touching the Coming of the Lord

Christ. It is only in the knowledge of the purpose of His death that the believer is able to think without fear of the Day of Judgement, for "as He is, even so are we in this world," 1 John iv. 17, 18.

The tenses must be closely followed here. The Apostle does not say as He is so we shall be, nor that as He was so we are, but quite plainly, and by the addition of the unmistakable phrase "in this world," as He is now at the right hand of the Majesty on High, so are we here and at this present time. What, then, is His place or condition there to which our present state here corresponds? Surely this, that He, after He had borne our sins in His body on the tree, experiencing there that separation from God which is the consequence of sin, was raised from among the dead and exalted to the Throne of God. He is thus on the other side of the Judgement, so to speak; having suffered in the flesh for sin He has now passed out of any relation with sin, *i.e.* He is no longer a sin-bearer, 1 Peter iv. 1.

And as He is, so are all they that have put their trust in Him. The Christian is not a man who contemplates the Day of Judgement with mingled feelings, hoping that it will see him exculpated on the ground of the death of Christ, and yet fearing lest it should not. Rather he is one who shall not come into the Judgement of that Day at all ('shall never stand in the dock,' John v. 24), since he knows himself to be already justified by Christ and

The Expectancy of Christ

11

accepted in Christ, seated with and in Him in the Heavenlies, Eph. ii. 6. This the perfect love of God has accomplished for him, and the assurance of this has set him free from fear.

THE PROMISE TO THE SON

John's statement is a particular instance of a general principle; the principle itself is capable of wide application. Thus if it is asked why the Scriptures insist so much on the waiting attitude of the believer, that he is ever to be on his watch for the Coming of the Lord, the answer assuredly is that that is the attitude of the Lord Himself toward the future, and that as He is in this respect, so also are we. Or, to express the same thing in another way, God has called us "into the fellowship of His Son Jesus Christ our Lord," 1 Cor. i. 9. But fellowship at the least means this, that those in fellowship with one another share each other's hopes, they have a common outlook, their hearts are set on the same ends. If it is true, as John declares, that "our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ," then this fellowship must extend to the purpose of the Father for the Son and to the expectation of the Son Himself, 1 John i. 3. It is not conceivable that the hope of the believer could be of any potency, that it could have any actuality, that it could even exist, were it not primarily the hope of the Lord Himself.

Now this plain deduction from the known

12 Touching the Coming of the Lord

facts is fully confirmed by the testimony of Scripture. The Father's purpose for the Son is declared in such words as those of Ps. cx. 1, 2:

“The LORD saith unto my Lord,
Sit Thou at My right hand,
Until I make Thine enemies thy footstool.
The LORD shall send forth the rod of Thy
strength out of Zion :
Rule Thou in the midst of thine enemies.”

In the Second Psalm the Father addresses the Son :

“Ask of Me and I will give Thee the nations
for Thine inheritance,
And the uttermost parts of the earth for Thy
possession.”

In complete correspondence with these words the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews says concerning Christ, that “He, when He had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God; from henceforth expecting till His enemies be made the footstool of His feet,” Heb. x. 12, 13. (H-J)

To have the mind set upon that consummation, to refuse the world's plans for permanent government in favour of God's plan for the universal and eternal Kingdom of Christ, is to be to that extent in fellowship “with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ.” To ignore the declared purpose of God is to put oneself outside that fellowship, in so far as this purpose is concerned, and, as an inevitable consequence,

to fail to appreciate the ways of God with men alike in the past, the present, and the future.

THE CONSTITUENTS OF HOPE

The attitude of Christ toward the future is here described as one of expectancy, and the objective before His mind is His triumph over everything that opposes the will of God by the establishment of the Kingdom of God upon the earth. And he who among men is in fellowship with Christ will have his heart set upon that consummation also.

Toward the end of his letter, written to the believers at Thessalonica to correct some misconceptions concerning his teaching about the Coming of the Lord, the Apostle prayed for them, "The Lord direct your hearts into the love of God, and into the patience of Christ," 2 Thess. iii. 5. That is, that lifted above the level of merely natural love, the love of affinity of aim and taste, they should learn to love each other, and all men, after the pattern and measure of the love of God. Similarly, that they might learn to be patient in their hope, even as Christ is patient until the fulness of the time for His return comes in. That it is the patience of the Risen Lord in His present session in the Heavens of which the Apostle is thinking seems clear. For one reason, because the language suggests a present condition of mind rather than a past experience, and for another because the title "Christ" is appropriate to Him in His exaltation to the Throne of God, whereas the name "Jesus"

14 Touching the Coming of the Lord

brings to mind the years preceding the Cross, as in Heb. xii. 2, "Looking unto Jesus . . . Who . . . endured." "This Jesus" has, in His Resurrection, been made "Christ," Acts ii. 36.

THE WORD OF MY PATIENCE

The Apostle John speaks of the share that he and those to whom he wrote had "in the tribulation and kingdom and patience which are in Jesus," Rev. i. 9. This arresting sentence suggests how deeply "the disciple whom Jesus loved" had been impressed by the patience of his Master in the days when his own slowness to believe, and that of his companions, and their consequent slowness to understand, made constant and heavy demand upon it. But the Lord's patience was not a virtue that had served its end and passed with the occasions that life among fallen men provided. It is in exercise still as He beholds the afflictions of His people in the world, and the reign of iniquity that can be brought to an end only when His Kingdom is established in the earth.

His sympathy with His own, whose sorrows touch Him with a poignancy beyond our experience, and His compassion for the masses of men, "distressed and scattered as sheep not having a shepherd" (Matt. ix. 36), are still what they ever were, burdens upon His heart. And if He charges us to "let patience have its perfect work" that is because patience is working perfectly in Him. If we are to await the hour of our deliverance that is because He, too,

is awaiting "the fulness of the time" that will bring Him from Heaven again to be our Saviour and the Deliverer of the whole Creation, Phil. iii. 20; Rom. viii. 21.

The Lord is quick to mark the response of the soul to His message. "Because thou didst keep the word of My patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of trial, that hour which is to come upon the whole inhabited earth, to try them that dwell upon the earth," Rev. iii. 10. "My patience," says the Lord, for His is the source of ours, and ours can only be because it is His first, and we share it by the Ministry of the Spirit. "For of His fulness we all received, and grace for grace."¹ The grace of our patience is evoked by, and answers to, the grace of His.

"On the earth the broken arcs;
In the Heaven, a perfect round."

The two words translated "wait" in 1 Thess. i. 10 and Heb. ix. 28 are carefully chosen to meet the spiritual condition of the readers in each case. In the first passage the word used suggests the thought of abiding quietly, for the Thessalonians needed sobering and to be reminded that so they had been taught from the outset.² The ebbing faith, the waning hope of the Hebrews, on the other hand, are stimulated by the word which suggests the tip-toe, the outstretched neck, of intent expectancy.³ The ideas are combined at

¹ *anti* = 'answering to.' John i. 16.

² *anamenō*.

³ *apekdechomai*.

16 Touching the Coming of the Lord

Rom. viii. 25, "if we hope . . . then do we with patience (expectantly) wait."¹

THE SAFEGUARDS OF HOPE

Patient expectancy is thus the characteristic element in the Christian hope. The suggestion of uncertainty, inseparable from the word in its ordinary use of human affairs, is eliminated from it in those New Testament passages which speak of the Coming of the Lord. In this hope there is no faintest trace of the possibility of an unforeseen contingency, or of an insuperable obstacle, or of a changed plan, such as disturb the calculations of the most far-sighted among men. We may say, indeed, that the Lord Himself shares this hope, or rather that His purpose is our hope; and as the first is guaranteed by His power to bring the Universe into subjection to Himself, so the second "putteth not to shame" those who cherish it in fellowship with Him, Phil. iii. 20; Rom. v. 5.

Hope is liable to abuse; with eagerness there is a tendency to relaxation of discipline and to neglect of duty, as at Thessalonica, for this condition is reflected in both the Epistles to the Church there, and particularly in the Second.

¹ So far as the utterances of the Lord Jesus are recorded He did not Himself use the word "hope" save in Luke vi. 34, "If ye lend to them of whom ye hope to receive," and John v. 45, "Moses, on whom ye have set your hope." Neither of these passages is concerned with the Christian hope. Nor do any of the New Testament writers speak of the Lord's "hope," what he expects to happen, but of His purpose, what He "shall" or "will" do.

Or patience may degenerate into lethargy and indifference, as seems to have been the case with those to whom the Apostle Peter addressed his Second Epistle. The Christian hope is the happy mean ; it is an expectant patience, a patient expectancy. The Christian lifts up his head to look for his approaching salvation. He looks toward Heaven 'as with outstretched neck' for his Lord's return. But not less does he "trade" diligently with that Lord's "pound" until He be pleased to return, Luke xix. 13, xxi. 28. This is the paradox of the Christian life ; working he waits, and waiting he works.

"In the night in which He was betrayed" the Lord Jesus spoke, for the first time so far as the records show, of His purpose to return in person for "His own that are in the world." Of their resurrection in response to His voice they had already heard from Him, and of His coming in the glories of Heaven to put His enemies to confusion they had heard Him speak publicly again and again, John vi. 39 ; Matt. xvi. 27, xxiv. 30. But now, in the holy privacy of the Upper Room, and on the eve of His departure from them, with the cold shadow of the Cross already fallen into His heart, He addresses Himself to the comfort of men who must soon know the desolating sorrow of a bereavement the possibility of which had not heretofore entered their minds. But the separation from those who had "continued with Him in His trials," and whose sympathy in them was to Him unpriced, meant something to His own heart also.

18 Touching the Coming of the Lord

THE SECRET OF THE LORD

For His sympathy with men is the complement of His desire for their sympathy with Him. God created man with social instincts ; he was not made for solitude ; companionship is the law of his life. Therefore in this as in all things "it behoved Him . . . to be made like unto His brethren," and for this reason, that, first of all, they were made like unto Him, Heb. ii. 17 ; Gen. i. 26, 27. Hence it is that the desire of the redeemed to be with the Redeemer is the reflection, and the fruit, of His desire for their presence with Him.

Now this personal feeling seems audible in the words He spoke for their comfort, as though He found in them a comfort of His own. "I go to prepare a place for you," He said, "and if I go and prepare a place for you, I come again, and will receive you unto Myself ; that where I am, there ye may be also," John xiv. 2, 3. Never before had He used the first personal pronoun when He spoke of His return—in the wider circle of His public ministry and to His opponents He usually spoke of the coming of the Son of Man. In this speech there is an arresting directness, the sense of intimacy and immediate personal concern. It is "the secret of the Lord," and it is for "them that fear Him." It was His secret, now it is theirs also, for He shares it with them, because He loves them "unto the uttermost." How shall the world that knows neither Him nor them know their secret? 1 John iii. 1.

And, again, how shall their joy in that secret exceed His own? If it is to make their hearts glad, that can only be because it has first gladdened His.

The language of the Apostle Paul suggests the same desire of the Lord for the presence with Him of His redeemed. "Christ . . . loved the Church and gave Himself up for it . . . that He might present the Church to Himself a glorious Church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish before Him." It is to this end, and because of His own interest in its completion and perfection, that He is said to "nourish and cherish it." At the appointed time He is to have the joy of receiving the Church to His Father's House, of causing it to stand with Himself, partaker of His holiness and meet companion in, and instrument of, His universal reign, Eph. v. 25-29. (F)

The comfort and glory of the Church in that day is not the primary thought in the passage, however, but rather what that Day will bring to Him in the accomplishment of a purpose which involved such costly sacrifice, and in the attainment of which His love sustained Him to the end of His toil.

THE LORD'S MEMORY

In the last of the series of five impressions of the glory and the sufferings of Christ—in this order—which occupy Isaiah lii. 13–liii. 12, the Prophet declares of the Messiah that "He

20 Touching the Coming of the Lord

shall see of the travail of His soul, and shall be satisfied," ver. 11. The perfection of the Manhood of the Lord Jesus consists in the perfection of all the elements essential to manhood, and among these memory has its place as well as sympathy. Memory is the power of the mind to reproduce the past in its original form and colour, to recall into the present the experiences of the past without loss of reality. With men memory fails; impressions can never be renewed to their full value; the heights of an old joy can never be attained again; into the depths of an old sorrow we can never again be plunged. Thus the defects of memory mean loss indeed, but not loss without compensation. Were our griefs to be continued, or could they be renewed in their first acuteness, the heart of man would fail, life become intolerable. Time by weakening memory assuages grief under the merciful Hand of God.

But we may not conceive it to be so with the Lord. To Him the past can have lost nothing. No pang endured is forgotten. The price paid has not lost its value because it is so long since it was paid.

“. . . Mine affliction and My outcast state,
the wormwood and the gall,

My soul hath them still in remembrance . . .”

Lam. iii. 19, 20.

And on that day when He shall say “Behold, I and the children which God hath given Me,” there will be no regret. Looking back over

the past, realizing to the full all our redemption cost, He yet declares it to have been worth while !

COMPENSATION

When certain Hebrew Christians showed signs of relaxing confidence under the attacks of their multiplying adversaries, attacks now fierce, now subtle, they were reminded of the hidden power that had sustained the heroes of their race under the sorest afflictions and that had impelled them to fine achievements. They had endured as seeing the Unseen God ; they had put their trust in Him that in His own time He would recompense them in the City for which He had taught them to look, and of which He is both Architect and Builder. And yet, brilliant examples of the power of faith though these were, even their greatest had failed, and failed in that very thing of which they, in the general tenor of their lives, and at so many critical junctures in their lives, were shining examples. Always men fail at their strong points ; there is something at work that forbids perfection to the children of Adam. These witnesses to the faithfulness of God are to be remembered, indeed, but beyond all things else must the Christian run his race "looking unto Jesus, the Author and Perfecter of faith." ¹ They were leaders of the faithful ;

¹ There is neither article nor pronoun in the original. The reference is not to "the faith once for all delivered to the saints," nor yet to any operation within the believer whereby faith is begotten and strengthened, but, as the context demands, to the life of realized dependence and uninterrupted faith of the Lord in the days of His Flesh.

22 Touching the Coming of the Lord

He is Leader-in-Chief. They were illustrations of the way and power of faith; He is its Consummator. He trusted God from His birth; He lived in the fear of God; He died with the words of faith upon His lips, Ps. xxii. 9; Isa. xi. 3; Luke xxiii. 46. And throughout His sustaining thought is of "the joy that was set before Him"; because of that "He endured the Cross, despising shame," Heb. xii. 1, 2.

Thus the prophetic vision is reproduced historically; but the point of view is necessarily different. Here the price has still to be paid; the rough and thorny way is as yet untrodden; the agony of the Cross is still in the future; the Cup awaits Him. And the joy that is to be the issue sustains Him "to the uttermost." Whereas in Isaiah's vision the journey is already accomplished; the goal has been reached; the shame and the agony are exhausted; the Cup has been drained. The retrospect confirms the prospect: the joy realized does not fall short of the joy anticipated. The prize in possession is no less than it seemed in prospect. The compensation for the sorrow of the lonely death is the gladness of the fellowship in resurrection.

This joy, moreover, is not merely the joy of the Son; no less is it the joy of the Father also, and of the Holy Spirit. The joy of the shepherd over the found sheep, of the woman over the recovered coin, is boldly declared to be the reflection of the joy in Heaven over a sinner restored to God. It is noteworthy that

this joy in heaven is not said to be the joy of the angels, but "joy in the presence of the angels." The words seem to be chosen to suggest the joy of God. For just as the angels are in His presence so is He in the presence of the angels. And this joy over the repentant soul even here and now, becomes an "exceeding joy" in that day when the Son presents the hosts of the redeemed to His Father, saying, "Behold, I and the children which God hath given me," Luke xv. 7, 10, 22-24; Heb. ii. 13.

AT THE GATE OF NAIN

An incident in the life of the Lord Jesus, recorded in Luke vii., provides a picture in which may be discerned the joys of that day. As He approached the gate of Nain there met Him a funeral procession, a widow's only son carried out to burial. Moved with compassion for the sorrowing woman He bade her dry her tears. But more than words is needed to stay the flood of grief. The astounded crowd heard Him address the figure upon the bier: "Young man, I say unto thee, Arise." The writ of the Prince of Life runs in the realm of the dead! The lad sat up and began to speak. But the Lord does not only snatch the prey from the mighty. He binds up broken hearts and wipes tears away from all faces. So "He delivered him to his mother," and made effective His command "Weep not." Her son is not only brought back from the

24 Touching the Coming of the Lord

gates of the tomb, he is restored to her as a gift from the Lord.

So, that eventide, was sorrow turned into joy. They who witnessed the scene rejoiced that God had visited His people. The lad was glad to see the light of the sun again and to be with his widowed mother. The mother was glad—how much more glad!—to receive her son alive from the dead. And surely gladdest of all was the Lord Himself thus to taste beforehand the victory of the Cross.

There are degrees of gladness, heart differs from heart in power to enjoy. It is experience of sorrow that gives capacity for joy. The spectators were not involved in the tragedy; however its unexpected issue may have touched them, it was not to them a vital thing. The lad, whatever sorrows he had known, was young, and grief does not strike its roots deeply in the heart of youth. Small, therefore, was his capacity for joy in comparison with those whose span had been longer upon the earth, but such as it was the Lord met and satisfied it. But the mother—the years had brought to her more of bitter than of sweet. In sorrow and anguish she had travailed for her son (John xvi. 21) and now she had closed his eyes in death. Husband, family, all were gone; what an experience of sorrow hers had been; what capacity for joy it had given to her heart! This, too, the Lord satisfied to the full. And what of the Lord Himself? “A Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief,” what experiences of sorrow, actual

and in anticipation, were His! Outside the gate of Nain that day we may be sure that the gladdest heart was His own.

So shall it be in that other day within the Gates of Heaven. The little graves shall be opened and they that sleep therein shall be made glad to the measure of their capacity for joy. And those who lived longer and sorrowed more will be made glad also, each after his measure. But the "exceeding joy" is the joy of God. It is the joy of the Father Who gave His Son to death that that day might be brought about. It is the joy of the Son Who "Himself took our infirmities and bare our diseases," "Who His own self bare our sins in His Body upon the tree" that He might have with Him for ever those for whom He died, and to Whom it is said,

"Thy God hath anointed Thee
With the oil of gladness above Thy fellows."
Heb. i. 9.

It is the joy of the Holy Spirit Who led Him to the Cross and through Whom He "offered Himself without blemish unto God" (Heb. ix. 14) and Whose present ministry enables the Christian to "rejoice in hope of the Glory of God."

CHAPTER II

THE RESURRECTION AND THE RAPTURE

THE TEACHING OF THE LORD

WHEN the Lord Jesus appeared among the Jews as a public teacher they had long been divided into two main religious parties, Sadducees and Pharisees. The former though smaller in numbers were the more wealthy, and socially and politically the more powerful, the latter were the more popular party. The doctrinal difference between them is thus defined by Luke—"The Sadducees say that there is no resurrection, neither angel nor spirit: but the Pharisees confess both," Acts xxiii. 8. To the Sadducees the resurrection was an irrational fancy; to the Pharisees it was a hope. The Sadducees did not reject the Old Testament Scriptures, but they did not discover there the hope of resurrection as the Pharisees did.

Whether or no the dead would be raised was thus an open question among the Jews. It is true there is little in the Old Testament concerning resurrection or a future life, still the doctrine is present. Hence the Lord in His reply to a Sadducean interlocutor declared that the error of his school arose out of ignorance

The Resurrection and the Rapture 27

of the Scriptures and of the power of God, thus justifying the Pharisees in their hope, Luke xx. 27-40.

REASONING FROM THE SCRIPTURES

On this occasion the Lord deduced from the words of Moses in Ex. iii. 15, "the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob," that inasmuch as God was still their God though they had died, they were in fact living persons still; for if to die means to cease to exist, then He would be the God of the non-existent, plainly an absurd conclusion. Therefore the dead, *i.e.* those whose bodies have seen corruption, continue to live, for their spirits still hold fellowship with God. And to this the inevitable corollary is that they will one day be raised.

The other recorded references of the Lord to the resurrection, and particularly to the resurrection of those who believe on Him, are the subject of this chapter. His utterances will be taken in the order in which they were spoken, so far as that can be ascertained. We shall endeavour to learn His mind as He Himself unfolded it to those who, while they believed that the dead would ultimately be raised, had no certain knowledge of the extent of the resurrection, whether all men, Jews and Gentiles, were to partake in it, or Jews only; or how, or when, that resurrection would take place. We are to forget, for the moment, all that was subsequently revealed on the subject, and, as

28 Touching the Coming of the Lord

far as may be possible, to put ourselves in the place of those to whom the Lord originally spoke.

Subsequent communications of the Holy Spirit, made through the Apostles, to supplement the words of the Lord and to complete the revelation, will form the subject of other chapters.

THE INNER SANCTUARY—HIS BODY

The first passage with which we are here concerned is John ii. 19-22, where He referred, under a figure, to His own resurrection. "Destroy this temple," He said, "and after three days I will raise it up." It was to His own body He alluded, though at the time no one of His hearers perceived His meaning. Hence the words provided His enemies with one of the accusations upon which they ultimately secured His death, and John records that the disciples themselves understood their significance only after His Resurrection from among the dead, Matt. xxvi. 61.

After John the Baptist had been thrown into prison, and the Lord Jesus had begun to attract general attention, the disciples of the former came to enquire about the purposes and claims of the latter. The Lord drew their attention to the works in which He was engaged, in which power was at the service of beneficence, and in His recapitulation of these works He included the raising of the dead. The two Evangelists who recorded the words do not set the incident in the same relation to the events

The Resurrection and the Rapture 29

of the Lord's ministry. Luke inserts the visit of these disciples in his narrative between the raising of the widow's son at Nain and the raising of Jairus' daughter. Matthew, who does not include the incident at Nain, places it after the raising of the girl. See Luke vii. 11-17, 22; viii. 49-56 and Matt. ix. 23-26; xi. 5. It seems probable, that, here at least, Matthew's is the chronological order. Certainly the words "the dead are raised" seem to suggest that more than one person had, at that time, been restored to life.

All this was intended to familiarize the minds of the disciples, and of His hearers generally, with the idea of resurrection, and to show them the possibility of the return of dead persons to life. It is the way of God to lead the believing mind into the light by easy stages, and to furnish it with aids to an understanding faith. These were first steps towards that larger thought which He was about to begin to unfold to them.

The next passage that calls for notice is the paragraph on hospitality, Luke xiv. 12-14, with its concluding words, "thou shalt be recompensed in the resurrection of the just."¹ The reference to resurrection here is incidental only; the Lord is not expounding the doctrine, nor is He adding anything by way of new revelation. He alludes

¹ It is not possible in every case to settle the order of occurrence of the Gospel incidents, or to fix with precision the time at which certain words were spoken. It is impossible to say that Luke xiv. 14 is actually the first reference to resurrection in the teaching of the Lord. Whether it is placed before or after the discourse of John v. is, however, not material in this connection.

30 Touching the Coming of the Lord

to it as something His hearers would understand without further explanation. See Acts xxiv. 15. Two things are clear from this statement ; that there is to be a resurrection of a class of people described as "the just," and that they are thereafter to be rewarded for kindness shown in this life to the needy.

The rest of the Lord's teaching on this subject is found in the Gospel of John, which simplifies matters from the chronological point of view. We have now only to take the words He spoke in their order as there recorded, and of these the earliest is found in chapter v., verses 28 and 29.¹

THE SON, CREATOR AND QUICKENER

The Lord had healed a long-standing case of physical weakness ; to the scandal of the Jews He had done this on the Sabbath Day. To their expostulations He replied in words that involved a claim to equality with God. This deepened their hatred, and strengthened their determination to put Him to death. Not only did He not repudiate the construction they had put upon His words, He confirmed it, and enlarged it into an assertion of a unique relation with God, Whom He called not "our" but "My Father." And that this might be made unmistakable, the Father, He declared, had committed to Him the dispensation of all judgement, so that to refuse to the Son the honour due to

¹ See Appendix, Note A.

The Resurrection and the Rapture 31

the Father, whether as Saviour or as Judge, is to dishonour God.

Moreover, as the Father is the source of life, so also is the Son; the honour due to God the Creator is His also. Hence it is that all who believe on Him themselves become partakers of life, here and now. And not only so, those who will to hear His voice now are quickened, the rest remain untouched, they continue in their natural state of "alienation from the life of God," Eph. iv. 16. But "the hour cometh in which all that are in the tombs shall hear His voice and shall come forth; they that have done good unto the resurrection of life; they that have practised (so margin) ill, unto the resurrection of judgment." So absolute is the jurisdiction of the Son over the destinies of all men, in life and in death, in time and in eternity, so immediate is His control, so imperative His word.

This declaration of the Lord enlarges the scope of the resurrection, and confirms the Pharisees in their reading of the Scriptures (Acts xxiv. 15); for whereas Luke xiv. 14 speaks only of "the resurrection of the just," this present passage speaks of the resurrection of all men. The class there described as to their character, "the just," are here described as to their conduct, they "have done good." There the dead are said to be raised to reward, for their works are in question. Here they are said to be raised to life, for the purpose of the Lord is to declare that His claim to Deity will ultimately be vindicated in this act of quickening.

32 Touching the Coming of the Lord

The next utterance of the Lord which deals with this subject is found in John vi., where those who are to be raised are further described. That the same persons are intended is to be presumed, each separate description presenting a characteristic common to all who are to share in "the resurrection of life." It may be convenient to tabulate these descriptions here. They are:—

The just	Luke xiv. 14
Those who have done good	John v. 29
Those who are given by the Father to the Son	John vi. 39
Those who behold the Son and believe on Him	John vi. 40
Those who are drawn by the Father to the Son	John vi. 44
Those who eat the Flesh and drink the Blood of the Son of Man	John vi. 54

"These are they that are accounted worthy to attain to that age, and the resurrection from (literally, out of) the dead . . . and are sons of God, being sons of the resurrection," Luke xx. 35, 36.

The time of the resurrection is now declared. It is to take place "at the Last Day," a phrase which occurs but once again in the recorded teaching of the Lord.¹

DEATH AND RESURRECTION AT BETHANY

Lazarus had been dead four days at Bethany, and the Lord had made no sign. He had not come to him in response to the message that His friend was sick, nor had any message from Him reached the sisters to relieve their anxiety; or if one had come, it could have been only: "This sickness is not unto death, but for

¹ John xii. 48. See Appendix, Note B.

The Resurrection and the Rapture 33

the glory of God, that the Son of God may be glorified thereby," John xi. 4. And these words could only mean to them that Lazarus would not die of the sickness that had brought him low. Yet he had succumbed to it. Thus was their faith most sorely tried.

The sisters had hoped for help; now they longed for comfort. "If He had been here, Lazarus had not died," was the regretful refrain as they reviewed their sorrow while the silence of the Lord remained unbroken. At least this was the thought uppermost in the mind of each when they saw the Lord. To Martha, who met Him first, He replied: "Thy brother shall rise again." Martha, busy woman though she was, and somewhat burdened with the care of the home and its guests (Luke x. 40), is nevertheless in touch with the Teacher; she has fresh in her mind the last thing He had said about resurrection. She could, moreover, identify her brother as one of those whom the Lord described when He spoke of His purpose to raise certain from the dead. Accordingly she replies in the true disciple spirit: "I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection at the last day." But the Lord had not said anything about the last day when He spoke of the raising of Lazarus. There was an immediate boon for the home at Bethany. Nevertheless the new and nearer promise did not abrogate the older and more remote. It remains true that Lazarus will be raised again at the last day. This is a significant illustration of the Lord's ways.

34 Touching the Coming of the Lord

Ultimate and final blessings are often promised first; subsequent promises may have previous fulfilment but they do not cancel those given earlier. Neither do earlier assurances of ultimate blessing prevent the Lord from revealing His purposes to do yet other things while these still wait.

THE FAITH OF MARTHA

To return to Martha; it was to this busy woman of domestic affairs He chose to carry the revelation of His purpose a long step in advance. He said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life: he that believeth on Me, though he die yet shall he live: and whosoever liveth and believeth on Me shall never die. Believest thou this?" The words are apparently inconsistent; the second clause seems to be an absolute statement admitting of no exception, whereas the first clause provides for an exception. Martha did not understand them, and she was too honest to pretend she did. But not only was hers an intelligent apprehension of the teaching of the Lord; to spiritual knowledge she added spiritual understanding. "The word of the Lord tried" her, as it tried Joseph when he lay forgotten in the prison (Ps. cv. 19), and as it tries every faithful soul that submits itself to be exercised under it. Faith triumphs. Martha appeals from the word, the meaning of which she did not perceive, to the Lord Who spoke it and Whom she had learned to trust. "Yea, Lord," she answered, "I have believed

The Resurrection and the Rapture 35

that Thou art the Christ, the Son of God." No remonstrance falls from His lips. Why should it? He speaks as we are able to bear His word, and this saying had to lie unexplained for many years, twenty at least, until the time came for the discovery of its hidden meaning.

It is necessary now to notice one feature common to all the passages so far quoted in this chapter. In no one of them is the presence of the Lord indispensable to the accomplishment of His purpose. It is not necessary that the Lord should return to this earth in order to raise the dead. All that He has undertaken to do He could do from Heaven. The power of the voice of the Son of God is not diminished by distance. He Who at Cana could heal the son of the nobleman at Capernaum, twenty miles of hill and vale notwithstanding, could if He chose to do so, empty the graves of earth without leaving His Father's Throne, John iv. 46-54.

Soon after the raising of Lazarus came the Lord's last meal with His disciples. During the conversation that followed He said to them, "I come again, and will receive you unto Myself," and in these words intimated for the first time His purpose to come in person for His own. But these words do not themselves suggest whether His promise to receive His people is to be redeemed before that glorious appearing of which He had spoken in public (Matt. xxiv. 30, *e.g.*), or simultaneously with it, or subsequently to it. All this He left for a later day.

CHAPTER III

THE RESURRECTION AND THE RAPTURE

THE TEACHING OF THE APOSTLES (i)

THE Lord's own teaching concerning resurrection, briefly sketched in the preceding chapter, may be summarized thus. Those who refuse to acknowledge His claims to paramount authority over the lives and destinies of all men, and particularly over their own, who neglect His teaching concerning the way of life and the way of living, who pursue mean and worthless ends,¹ who refuse their rights to God and to men, these are to be raised to the judgement of the Great White Throne,² John xii. 48 ; v. 29 ; Rev. xx. 11-15.

Those who, being the gift of the Father, and having been drawn by the Father to the Son, live because they commit themselves to Him and depend upon Him, who seek to render what is due to God and to men, who do the things that are good, these are to be raised to life and reward, John vi. 39, 40, 44, 54 ; Luke xiv. 14 ; John v. 29.

¹ *Phaulos*, "ill" ; the same word is used in John iii. 20.

² Judgement is not equivalent to trial here ; this is the ratification of the condemnation under which men lived while upon earth and from which they refused to escape when God provided a way through the Cross. See John iii. 18.

The Resurrection and the Rapture 37

It is to be observed that in neither case are these descriptions of different classes of men. The characteristics mentioned are complementary one of the other, and mark all who belong to that particular class. For those who are drawn to Christ and believe on Him, learn of Him what the Christian life is, and receive from Him power to live it. Whereas those who refuse Christ refuse with Him His counsel and His strength, and thus, by their own choice, are left to their own resources. The Christian man is so one with Christ that the Son of God has become to him at once a Living Saviour and a Living Hope.

Moreover, the Lord is Himself to come to gather His redeemed to Himself when the hour for the accomplishment of His purpose arrives. All this is to be learned from the Lord's own words, but so far as the records go, He Himself carried the revelation no further, not even after His resurrection, though His presence among the disciples under such conditions must have illuminated the word for them, as, indeed, it does for us.

The words to Martha are not included in this summary. They seem to have been left by the Lord in designed obscurity until the time became ripe to display the counsel of God that lay hidden in them.

ACTS AND THE EPISTLE OF JAMES

After the Ascension of the Lord and the descent of the Holy Spirit, the Apostles and

38 Touching the Coming of the Lord

the disciples carried the Gospel far and wide. A selective record of their activities is provided in the "Acts of the Apostles," but such references to resurrection as are found therein are either Apostolic testimonies to the Resurrection of Christ (iv. 33) addressed to the Jews (xiii. 34) or to the Gentiles (xvii. 31), or are restatements of the beliefs of the Pharisees (xxiii. 6), beliefs in which, as we have seen, the Lord confirmed them. But neither by Luke himself, nor by any one of the speakers whose words he reports, is the doctrine carried forward a step beyond the point at which it had been left by the Lord Jesus.

The Epistle of James calls for notice next, as it may very well be the earliest of the New Testament writings. It need not detain us, however, for it does not contain any specific reference to resurrection at all, and only one to the Coming of the Lord (v. 7, 8) where the reader is exhorted to be patient in view of the imminence of the Parousia of the Lord, which is said to be "at hand." But neither does James supplement what had already been revealed.

THE EPISTLES OF PAUL

Next in order of time are the Epistles of Paul, and of these the earliest is either that to the Galatians or those to the Thessalonians. In the former, however, there are but two references to the Coming of the Lord, or perhaps three (i. 4 ; v. 5, 21), and these are rather allusions to matters of knowledge common to the writer

The Resurrection and the Rapture 39

and to his readers, than statements of doctrine. Hence neither do they contribute anything to the end now in view.

PAUL'S TEACHING AT THESSALONICA

The Epistles to the Thessalonians offer a mine of wealth to the student of prophecy, and, as we shall find, carry the revelation of the manner of the fulfilment of the purpose of the Lord a considerable stage further than any utterance that preceded them. From the opening part of the First Epistle we learn that during his brief stay at Thessalonica the Apostle had taught the converts, "to wait for His (God's) Son from Heaven, Whom He raised from the dead, even Jesus, which delivereth us from the wrath to come," i. 10.

" 'The wrath to come' is to be understood of the calamities wherewith God will visit men upon the earth when the present period of grace is closed" ¹. (H-J) The wording of the A.V., "which delivered," seems to make the reference to be to the deliverance of the believer from condemnation which Christ accomplished at the Cross. The tense is present, however, indeed the word is a title, "our Deliverer"; but the deliverance contemplated is not past but future; and it is a deliverance which can be accomplished only by One Who has been raised from among the dead.

¹ From a note on the passage in *The Epistles to the Thessalonians, With Notes Exegetical and Expository*. By the same Writers. Pickering & Inglis.

40 Touching the Coming of the Lord

How this deliverance is to be effected the Apostle does not seem to have declared, indeed there is no evidence that he himself had up to this time received any revelation on the subject. His stay among these new converts had been but brief, and in the interval between his sudden departure from their city and the writing of this letter, he had heard that some of their number had died. Not only had these losses plunged them into sorrow; they were perplexed by them, uncertain as to the consequences to their brethren of their removal before the fulfilment of the promise of the Lord to come to deliver them from the threatened calamity. And this perplexity would be the greater if, as is possible, the deaths were the result of persecution. Might not that mean that they had been the victims of the very catastrophe—the Day of the Lord—from which they had been promised deliverance?

PAUL'S LETTER TO THESSALONICA

Hence this letter, and particularly that section of it which begins at chapter iv., verse 13. The Apostle first declares that “them also that are fallen asleep through (margin) Jesus will God bring with Him.” That is, when God “again bringeth the Firstborn into the world” (Heb. i. 6), He will also, and by the instrumentality of the Person who died for them, bring with Him those who had fallen asleep. The reference is to the event to which the Lord Himself first referred at Cæsarea Philippi, “the Son of God shall come in the glory of His Father with His

The Resurrection and the Rapture 41

angels," Matt. xvi. 27, and of which He spoke many times thereafter. For up to the time of the writing of the Epistle nothing earlier than this appearing of the Lord had been revealed. (H-J)

But how? They were dead; their bodies given over to corruption. How then can they come with the Lord when He appears in His glory? Verse 15 meets this difficulty. There is a word from the Lord to reassure them. Now this "word" is plainly not a quotation from the Old Testament; nothing like it is to be found there. Neither is it an utterance of the Lord Jesus during His ministry upon earth. Nothing resembling these words is on record in the Gospels. What the Apostle is about to write to them is a freshly given revelation. The Spirit of God through him is fulfilling the promise of the Lord Jesus to His disciples, "when He, the Spirit of truth, is come, . . . He shall declare unto you the things that are to come," John xvi. 13. The things that the Lord Himself refrained from saying, because the time was not ripe, nor were hearts prepared, the Holy Spirit would reveal. And in particular the words of the Lord to Martha (John xi. 25, 26) that had so long waited explanation, are now made plain. When the Lord comes as described in these words, those who have believed upon Him will be divided into two classes, "we that are alive," and, "the dead in Christ." There is no statement elsewhere in Scripture that any are to be removed from the earth prior to this time. And of these two

42 Touching the Coming of the Lord

classes all are accounted for in the words "shall rise" and "shall . . . be caught away." There is no room in such an inclusive statement for another class, living or dead, to be left behind when these are taken¹. (G-F)

The words of the Lord correspond to those of the Apostle, and the meaning of the earlier utterance is made clear by the latter. "He that believeth on Me, though he die (literally, even if he were to die) yet shall he live," stand over against "the dead in Christ shall rise first." "Whosoever liveth and believeth on Me shall never die," is explained by, "We that are alive that are left unto the Presence (margin) of the Lord." The two classes had their typical representatives at Bethany. Lazarus, who had died, and Martha and Mary, who waited for the Lord in life. So it has been always, so must it be unto the end. And inasmuch as the time of the Lord's descent is unknown, because unrevealed, living believers describe themselves as "we that are alive, that are left."² Not that they are thereby guilty of the folly of asserting that the Lord will assuredly return in the lifetime of any particular believer, but because the proper attitude of Christian people is enjoined upon them by the word of the Lord: "What I say unto you I say unto all, Watch," Mark xiii. 37.

THE RAPTURE

The Second Epistle to the Thessalonians does not advance the doctrine we are now

¹ See Appendix, Note C.

² See Appendix, Note D.

The Resurrection and the Rapture 43

considering. But before we leave these Epistles we may notice two things. That which in the Old Testament and in the Gospels is the hope of resurrection, becomes, from the writing of the letter to the Church of the Thessalonians, the hope of resurrection and rapture. This later word, which is defined as "the act of conveying a person from one place to another," is the translation of a Greek word which is rendered "snatch" in John x. 12, 28, 29, and "caught away" in Acts viii. 39. Thus the rapture of the saints, or "of the church," is an entirely Scriptural expression, and describes vividly the instantaneous removal of those who are in Christ, whether living or dead, at the word of the Returning Lord.¹

The other matter that calls for notice is that, so far as the revelation has been carried up to this point, there is nothing to indicate that any change will pass on the bodies whether of the dead in Christ or of living believers.

¹ See Appendix, Note E.

CHAPTER IV

THE RESURRECTION AND THE RAPTURE

THE TEACHING OF THE APOSTLES (ii)

NEXT in chronological order is the First Epistle to the Corinthians, in which the doctrine of the indwelling of the Holy Spirit in the body of the believer is enunciated for the first time in the words: "Know ye not that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit which is in you, which ye have from God?" vi. 19. This indwelling has a very important bearing on the rapture of those in whom He has taken up His abode, as we shall see a little later on.

In chapter xv. the Apostle deals with the resurrection at some length. Now whereas it is quite true that the words "resurrection of the body" do not occur in Scripture, it is also true that in Scripture the word resurrection is used exclusively of the body, never of the soul or spirit.¹

¹ Phil. iii. 11 is not really an exception to this rule. An exceptional form of the word is there used, *exanastasis*, and the intention of the Apostle seems to be to assert his desire to walk "in newness of life," Rom. vi. 4. *Anastasis* has also another range of meaning in the New Testament; the statement of the text refers, of course, only to those passages in which resurrection is in view. See further at p. 87.

The Resurrection and the Rapture 45

Hence when the Apostle speaks of "the resurrection of the dead," verse 42, he has in mind the bodies of the dead, for this is the subject with which he is dealing, and of course only the body dies.¹ The "it" which follows can, therefore, refer only to the body. But there is to be a change, and this is suggested in a general way in the series of contrasts that follow. This change is to be accomplished by the quickening power of "the Last Adam," and its effect will be to transform the body of the believer from conformity with an earthly into conformity with a heavenly type; that is, his new, or resurrection, body will be congruous with, and fitted for, the heavenly environment to which he is destined.

Change there must be, however, for, the Apostle affirms, "flesh and blood," that is, "we that are alive, that are left unto the presence of the Lord," while in that condition, "cannot inherit the Kingdom of God." And as for the dead in Christ, "neither doth corruption inherit incorruption," verse 51. Now this is the first intimation of the necessity for such a change; no earlier word, spoken or written, suggests it. The revelation concerning the rapture and the resurrection had exercised the minds of Christians who felt the difficulty of forming a mental picture corresponding to the Apostle's words. This difficulty found expression in the question of verse 35, "How are the dead raised? With what manner of body do they

¹ See Appendix, Note F.

46 Touching the Coming of the Lord

come?" Nature, indeed, pointed the way to a solution of their perplexity; as far as nature could take them, therefore, they must go with nature. But nature unaided is not enough. When nature fails, God speaks.

"Behold," proceeds the Apostle, "I tell you a mystery," that is, a secret, something that could not be discovered, or otherwise learned, save as God Himself is pleased to reveal it. And this mystery is, not that "we shall not all sleep," for that had already been made known in the letter to the Thessalonians, but that "we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump;¹ for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality.² But when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall come to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory". (G-F)

"Then," but not until then, when the Lord comes, for this victory complete and final, is "through our Lord Jesus Christ," the "Life-giving Spirit," "the Son," Who "quickeneth whom He will," verse 45; John v. 21.

THE CHRISTIAN AND DEATH

In this second letter to the Corinthians the Apostle, labouring under a sense of physical weakness and of the hardships he had endured

¹ See Appendix, Note G.

² See Appendix, Note H.

The Resurrection and the Rapture 47

for the Gospel's sake, contemplates the possibility that his bodily frame might prove unequal to the strain. That the "earthly house of this tabernacle," a temporary dwelling in any case, "should be dissolved" does not dismay one who has the assurance of resurrection; "knowing that he who raised up the Lord Jesus shall raise up us also with Jesus, and shall present us with you," 2 Cor. iv. 14; v. 1.

In contrast with 1 Thess. iv. 15, where he associates himself with those who are to be alive and upon the earth when the Lord descends to meet them in the air, he here associates himself with those who will have already fallen asleep, and who will, therefore, be no longer among the mortal but among the corruptible, before that event takes place. That he is not in either place forecasting what he believes to be in store for himself or for his contemporaries seems sufficiently clear. Nowhere in his writings does the Apostle commit himself to the belief that the Lord would return in his lifetime.¹ He does not foreclose the possibility however; rather he is ready for it, and hails it with joy, and would have all Christians rejoice with him. He who a few sentences earlier had spoken of his confident hope of resurrection, here declares that in this body "we groan, longing to be clothed upon with our habitation which is from heaven . . . that what is mortal may be swallowed up of life," v. 2-4.² That is,

¹ See Appendix, Note D.

² 2 Cor. v. 1 cannot mean that a body is provided for the spirit

48 Touching the Coming of the Lord

as he had already expressed it, that "this mortal" might "put on immortality," 1 Cor. xv. 53.

However deeply he may have been impressed by the possibility of death bringing his service to an end, his ardent desire was that the Lord might come to call him to the meeting in the air. Not that he feared death; should that be the will of God for him, he can look death steadily in the face, for he had learned to say "O death, where is thy victory? O death, where is thy sting?" So now he declares that he is "always of good courage" in view of the possibility of the separation of the spirit from the body; and reiterates it with emphasis; "we" (it is normal Christian privilege and should be normal Christian experience) "we are of good courage, I say, and are willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be at home with the Lord." For death itself, enemy as it most surely is, but ushers the Christian into the presence of his Lord.

THE RESURRECTION AND THE ETERNAL HOUSE

The fifteenth chapter of the First Epistle to the Corinthians, and the earlier part of the between death and resurrection. Nowhere else is such a body mentioned. This "building from God" is itself "the habitation which is from Heaven," for which the Christian longs. Now he does not long for death, verse 4, and consequently not for any temporary body which could only be necessary in case of death. Moreover, the Apostle has a distaste for what he calls the "naked," the "unclothed" state, that is, the interval during which the spirit is absent from the body. But how could he speak of that as an unclothed or naked state for which a body is expressly prepared?

The Resurrection and the Rapture 49

fifth chapter of the Second, are not contradictory but complementary the one of the other. The first establishes the continuity of the spiritual with the natural body, "it is sown . . . it is raised." The second establishes the suitability of the changed body to the new conditions for which it is destined, "a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal, in the heavens." The words change and resurrection imply this continuity, indeed, but that does not mean that the body which is to be is identical, as to the particles of matter of which it is composed, with the body that is now. "That which thou sowest, thou sowest not the body that shall be . . . so also is the resurrection of the dead," 1 Cor. xv. 37, 42.

And yet when wheat is sown so also is that which is reaped wheat; but not that particular grain of wheat which was dropped into the earth. In this characteristic of nature the Apostle finds an analogy with the body in death and resurrection. The illustration must not be pressed too far. From one grain of wheat an abundance is raised. That is the glory of the grain; it died and, because it died, does not abide alone. The glory of the resurrection body is different; sown in corruption, dishonour, and weakness, it is raised in incorruption, glory, and power.

"WHAT MANNER OF BODY?"

It is easy to go beyond what is written here. The Apostle John warns us that it is not yet

50 Touching the Coming of the Lord

made manifest what we shall be (1 Ep. iii. 2), and the language of Paul implies as much. Where Scripture is reticent we may not attempt to be explicit. The identity of the body does not depend at all on the identity of the particles that compose it, for these come and go from moment to moment. So long as the body lives it is in a state of flux, receiving new supplies of material from food and air to replace what has become effete and waste. The body of the man is the body of the child developed; throughout life it is looked upon as the same body, and is called without qualification "my body." Nevertheless there is no particle of matter that has remained in that body during its growth from childhood to manhood.

The scar remains in the body through all the years of a man's life, though the actual particles of matter that sustained the injury have long since passed away from it. So with the resurrection of the dead. "With what manner of body do they come?" Each in his own, given him by God, though no particle therein should have had a place in that which clothed the spirit here. The body is not less the same on that account, any more than the body of the man is a different body from that of the child because of the exchange of matter particles in the process of nutrition, growth and repair.

THE INDWELLING SPIRIT

It has been noticed already that the earliest mention of the indwelling of the body of the

The Resurrection and the Rapture 51

believer by the Holy Spirit is found in the Epistle that deals at length with the resurrection of that body. In 2 Corinthians there are two references to this indwelling, one in chapter ii., verse 22 " . . . God; Who also sealed us, and gave us the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts," the other in chapter v., verse 5, "Now He that wrought us for this very thing (the change from mortality to immortality) is God, Who gave unto us the earnest of the Spirit." This it is, the Apostle proceeds, that gives the believer courage in the face of death, for the indwelling of the Spirit is also God's pledge, or earnest, that they who die and whose bodies see corruption shall be raised from death in bodies incorruptible.

At the close of the argument of the seventh chapter of the Epistle to the Romans, which follows 2 Corinthians in order of time, the Apostle described the present habitation of the spirit of the believer as "the body of this death," words which by themselves might be taken to countenance the pagan doctrine of the inherent evil of matter, verse 24. Against this misconception, however, he shortly provides. In chapter viii., verse 11, he calls it, as in the letter to the Corinthians, the mortal body or body capable of, and liable to, death. And in harmony with the teaching of his earlier letters he declares that this mortal body is to be quickened,¹ it is to be "swallowed up of life." The Quickener is God, "Him that raised up Jesus from

¹ See Appendix, Note J.

52 Touching the Coming of the Lord

the dead," and the ground on which it is to be quickened is that here and now it is already the dwelling-place of the Holy Spirit, "because of His Spirit that dwelleth in you," according to the well supported reading of the margin.¹

In 1 Corinthians chapter vi., verse 19, the mention of the indwelling of the Holy Spirit has an immediately practical end in view. The body in which He has taken up His abode must itself be kept holy. But has the body that is thus honoured no other future than to be discarded as an irreclaimably evil thing? This wrong deduction is promptly repudiated; since it is a temple of the Spirit of God it also has a glorious future, "body of death" though it be.

REDEMPTION, PAST AND FUTURE

The argument is repeated in verse 23. "We which have the first-fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for our adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body." Redemption has a double use in the New Testament. In one series of passages it refers to the Cross, where the price was paid, as in Ephesians chapter i., verse 7; in the other it refers to the Coming of the Lord when He will take possession of that which He purchased. (E-G) "This body of death" has been redeemed from its bondage, and when He comes it will be delivered into the glorious liberty,

¹The Holy Spirit is not said to have raised the Lord Jesus. Neither is He elsewhere said to raise the believer. It is unlikely that this passage is an exception to the rule.

The Resurrection and the Rapture 53

which is the inheritance secured for it by the offering of the Body of Jesus Christ once for all, and which is assured to us by the grace of the Spirit in taking up His abode therein, Heb. x. 10.

In one of his later letters the Apostle again brings the two things into the same relationship. "Having . . . believed, ye were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, which is an earnest of our inheritance, unto the redemption of God's own possession," Eph. i. 14; see also iv. 30. When the man turned to God in Christ, then He was sealed for God (the mark of finality and security) to be His for ever, and the Spirit came to make His abode in the body of the man, to be an earnest of the purpose of God that that body, being the peculiar property of God in virtue of the redemptive act of the Cross, should, at the coming of the Lord, be to the praise of the Glory of God, exhibiting His power to redeem what is mortal and corruptible from the power of death and the grave. Thus the body in which the power of sin, both in life and in death, is now so abundantly manifested, that it is even called "this body of death," becomes "God's own possession." In it the Salvation of God is made evident, both in life and in death, whereof the Holy Spirit Who dwells therein is the power and the pledge.

CONFORMITY TO THE TYPE, CHRIST.

Reverting to Romans viii., in a verse intermediate between those on which we have already dwelt, verses 11 and 23, namely, verse 19, a hint is given of the climax of the revelation concern-

54 Touching the Coming of the Lord

ing the resurrection and rapture of the Christian. "The earnest expectation of the creation waiteth for the revealing of the sons of God." The reference to "the sons of God," where "the Son of God" might have been expected, is somewhat surprising. Later the Apostle explains, "whom He foreknew, He also foreordained to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the Firstborn among many brethren," verse 29. In 1 Corinthians chapter xv., verses 47-49, there is a similar hint, but, as might be anticipated from the analogy of the progressive method of the revelation, a slighter hint. And in what was probably his last communication to any church, so far as these have been preserved, the purpose of God in this regard is categorically stated. "Our citizenship is in heaven; from whence also we wait for a Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ; Who shall fashion anew the body of our humiliation, that it may be conformed to the Body of His glory," Phil. iii. 20, 21. Thus the inevitable question is answered. To be changed—but into what likeness? Into the likeness of our Lord, and this not morally only; the body spiritual which is to replace the body natural, is to bear the image of that in which He showed Himself in the Mount of Transfiguration, and in which He appeared to John in Patmos, and in which He will yet appear when He comes to establish the rule of God upon the earth.

And by whom and by what power is this to be accomplished? The words of the Lord were "I will raise him up at the Last Day"; "all

The Resurrection and the Rapture 55

that are in the tombs shall hear His voice (the voice of the Son of God) and shall come forth"; and "I come again and will receive you unto Myself." It is both "by means of Jesus" and "with Him" that God will bring the dead in Christ, when He comes to reign. Christ Himself it is, then, Who is to "fashion anew" this body of sin and of pain "according to the working whereby He is able to subject all things unto Himself."¹

THE LIMITS OF REVELATION

So far Scripture carries us. Not every question is answered. There remain many things impossible to say or to hear now. Impossible for God to say, for earth has no language wherein to describe these heavenly things. Impossible for us to hear, for as yet we have had no experience to enable us to bridge the gulf, to pierce the veil, that separates the material from the spiritual world. And this the Apostle John asserts when he writes that "it is not yet made manifest what we shall be." But if, in the meantime, satisfaction is denied to the intellect, there remains at least comfort for the heart, for, "we know that, if He shall be manifested, we shall be like Him," 1 John iii. 2. It is enough for the disciple that he be as his teacher, for the servant that he be as his Lord. Than this he cherishes no higher ambition. And this ambition will be realized to the full "when we shall see Him even as He is."

¹ Such power is essentially Divine. No higher power is conceivable. Nor is it conceivable that He Who wields this power should Himself be other than God.

CHAPTER V

THE PAROUSIA OF THE LORD

"The midnight is past, the bright Star of the Morn
Soon shall appear ;
Soon the last briar, soon the last thorn,
Soon the last tear.
Heavenly Lover, come quickly ! O come !
No longer Thy blood bought this desert would roam ;
The soul-stirring shout that shall gather them home
They are waiting to hear."
From "The Story of the Glory"—BOYD.

OUR Lord's discourse to His disciples on the night of His betrayal was calculated not only to comfort them in the sorrows they would experience after His departure, and to strengthen them to endure trial and opposition, but also, while confirming their faith in Himself during His absence from them, to direct their hearts to the prospect of His return. Spiritually present with all His followers throughout the age then about to commence, He would eventually return, but not merely in the spiritual sense. "I go," He said, "to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I come again, and will receive you unto Myself; that where I am, there ye may be also"; and further, "A little while and ye behold Me no more, and again a little while, and ye shall see Me,"

John xiv. 2, 3 ; xvi. 16. Such language could not indicate a spiritual coming. His words were unequivocal ; their directness and simplicity forbid their being explained away by a spiritualizing interpretation. He was going from them in bodily presence ; in bodily presence He would return and receive them to Himself. In His resurrection body "He showed Himself alive after His passion . . . appearing unto them . . . and assembling with them." No phantom form rose from their midst at His Ascension. With that same tangible body "He was taken up," and thereupon His promise was renewed by the assurance given by the heavenly messengers, "This Jesus, which was received up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye beheld Him going into heaven," Acts i. 3, 11. (H-J)

AN EVENT YET FUTURE

Albeit nineteen centuries have elapsed, His promised Advent has not yet taken place. The end of the age throughout which He assured His followers of His spiritual presence with them has not yet come. The descent of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost was not the "Second Advent," nor has the promise of His return been fulfilled either in the spiritual experiences of believers or at their departure to be with Him at their decease. All such ideas are precluded at once by the words of the Apostle Paul, that "the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God : and

58 Touching the Coming of the Lord

the dead in Christ shall rise first: then we that are alive, that are left, shall together with them be caught up in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord," 1 Thess. iv. 16, 17. Clearly no spiritual advent is signified here. Nor has this prediction had its fulfilment on any occasion in past history. For the object of the descent herein stated is nothing less than the instantaneous removal of the completed Church by the Lord in Person. Christians still fall asleep and await resurrection, and thousands await the day of rapture. (E-G)

Equally clear is the statement of the Apostle in his First Epistle to the Corinthians: "We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality," 1 Cor. xv. 51-53. The same event is described as in 1 Thess. iv., the effect of the resurrection being, however, chiefly in view here, while there the action of the Lord is prominent.

THE MEANING OF "PAROUSIA"

The resurrection and rapture of the saints foretold in these passages constitute the initial event of what the New Testament calls "the Parousia of the Lord." Paul uses the word in the passage in 1 Thessalonians just referred to. "For if," he says, "we believe that Jesus died

and rose again, even so them also that are fallen asleep in (marg. through) Jesus will God bring with Him. For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we that are alive, that are left unto the coming (the parousia) of the Lord, shall in no wise precede them that are fallen asleep," 1 Thess. iv. 14, 15. (F-H)

Now the word "parousia" is a transliteration of the Greek word which is frequently rendered "coming," a rendering which, however, is quite inadequate. "Coming" is, indeed, misleading, and responsible for considerable misunderstanding and variety of judgement. There is indeed no single English term which exactly fits the meaning. Hence the value of the addition to our vocabulary of the transliterated word. "Parousia" literally signifies "a being with," "a presence." Not infrequently it is so rendered. It thus denotes a state, not an action. We never read of a parousia *to*, always of a parousia *with*. Paul tells the Philippian converts of his confidence that he will be with them "for their progress and joy in the faith, that their glorying may abound in Christ Jesus in him through his presence, his parousia, with them again." Further, he exhorts them as they have been obedient during his presence, his parousia, so much more in his absence, his apousia, to work out their own salvation with fear and trembling, Phil. i. 26; ii. 12. In a Greek document of almost the same period as that in which the New Testament was written, a person states that attention to her property necessitates her

60 Touching the Coming of the Lord

parousia in a certain city. These examples suffice to show that, while of course the initial act of arrival is essential to a parousia, the word signifies the more or less prolonged period following the arrival.¹

We take a further example from the New Testament to show that several passages where the word is rendered "coming" receive their true explanation only when the extended period just pointed out has its due consideration. Thus when Peter says, "We made known unto you the power and coming (parousia) of the Lord Jesus Christ . . . we were eyewitnesses of His Majesty" (2 Pet. i. 16), he is referring, not to a sudden and momentary manifestation of the

¹ Cramer, *Biblico-Theological Lexicon of N.T. Greek*, p. 238, says, "It is only . . . without giving the word its full force, that we can apply the name of *parousia* to the second advent. It is not easy to explain how the term came to be used in this sense." The difficulty is removed when it is recognized that *parousia* is always in Scripture used in its primary sense ("a being present, presence," Liddell & Scott), and that it is never an alternative name for what ordinarily is called the Second Advent, that is, "the Appearing of the Glory of our great God and Saviour Jesus Christ." In each case of its occurrence with reference to the Lord the margin of the Revised Version has "Gk., presence." This is not an alternative rendering to that given in the text, but the literal meaning of the word. It is to be regretted that "presence" does not appear in the text in each of its twenty-four occurrences.

Cramer quotes some suggestive words from Ewald to the effect that the Parousia of Christ corresponds perfectly with the Shekinah of God in the Old Testament. For him also the doctrine of the Coming of Christ is obscured because he attaches a meaning to *parousia* which does not in fact belong to it. It seems too obvious to say that the usage of the word should regulate the theology, and not the theology prescribe the meaning of the word. Yet the neglect of this simple law of exegesis is responsible for some at least of the confusion into which the Hope of the Gospel has been thrown in the minds of many Christians.

Lord, nor to His future Advent, but to the period of His transfiguration before the disciples. "For," says the Apostle, "He received from God the Father honour and glory, when there came such a voice to Him from the excellent glory, This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; and this voice we ourselves heard come out of heaven, when we were with Him in the holy mount," vv. 17, 18. The power and glory of the Lord's Parousia in the Mount of Transfiguration were no doubt anticipative of His future Parousia with His saints, but the passage refers directly to the past, not to the future. The importance of the word in this passage, however, lies not only in the illustration it gives of the meaning "presence" rather than "coming," but in its indication of a set period of time marked by well defined limits. This has a special bearing upon an aspect of the Lord's Second Coming, which calls for subsequent consideration.

THE TEACHING OF I. THESSALONIANS

In writing to the Thessalonians Paul makes constant use of the term in a way which makes it impossible to view it as applicable merely to the moment of the Lord's descent into the air. Speaking regretfully of his enforced absence from them, and looking forward joyfully to the certainty of reunion, when Satan's hindrances will be things of the past, and the Lord shall have gathered His people to Himself, he says, "For what is our hope, or joy,

62 Touching the Coming of the Lord

or crown of glorying? Are not even ye, before our Lord Jesus at (lit. in) His parousia? For ye are our glory and our joy," 1 Thess. ii. 19, 20. Obviously the Apostle is thinking of the time and circumstances immediately following upon the rapture of the saints rather than the moment of the rapture itself. The fruit of his service on behalf of the converts would then be seen, both in their presence before the Lord and in the praise and reward they would receive from Him at His Judgement Seat. That would provide abundant compensation for all the trials and afflictions experienced in his labours in the Gospel. The converts themselves constituted his hope, which would attain its realization at the time of review; they were also his joy, a present joy, to be consummated at that time; they were his crown of glorying, ample reward to him for the fulfilment of the work committed to him, apart from the crown he would himself receive at the hands of the Prize-Giver. (F-H)

Referring again to the same period, he says, "The Lord make you to increase and abound in love one toward another, and toward all men, even as we also do toward you; to the end He may stablish your hearts unblameable in holiness before our God and Father, at (lit. in) the coming (the parousia) of our Lord Jesus with all His Saints," iii. 13. The word "coming" is clearly unsuitable here. It makes the verse appear to indicate the Advent of the Lord with His Saints. That will take place

at the close of the Parousia ; at its commencement He will come for them, and it is to the circumstances of that intervening period itself that the Apostle directs our thought in this passage.

His desire for the converts was that their Christian character might be so developed and perfected in this life that at the Judgement-seat in the Lord's Parousia they might stand clear of every possible charge against them. The substitution of "Parousia" for "coming" sets the passage in its true light, and is appropriate to the words which follow. We may observe here that the Parousia is to be with "all the saints" ; no saint will be absent, none will have been left behind at the Rapture.

The Parousia period is again in view at the end of this First Epistle, where the Apostle, as a climax to a series of closing exhortations, expresses wishes for the converts similar to that which we have just been considering, and desires 'that the God of peace Himself may sanctify them wholly, and that their whole spirit and soul and body may be preserved entire without blame at (lit. in) the Parousia of our Lord Jesus Christ," v. 23. They were saints, or sanctified ones, by virtue of their calling. To this he desired that their daily life might correspond, so that, practically devoted to God and kept by His power in every part of their being, they might be found free of blame in the presence of the Lord when their works would be reviewed by Him.

64 Touching the Coming of the Lord

THE TEACHING OF THE APOSTLE JOHN

In anticipation of that time, the Apostle John manifests the same jealous care of the spiritual well-being of the subjects of his past labours. "And now, my little children," he says, "abide in Him; that, if He shall be manifested, we may have boldness, and not be ashamed before Him at (or rather in) His parousia," 1 John ii. 28. Again the issues of the present life are in view as they will be seen at the Judgement-seat of Christ. That in the words "if He shall be manifested" the Apostle is referring to the Lord's Coming for His Church is obvious from the succeeding context, where, using the same phrase, he says, "We know that if He shall be manifested, we shall be like Him; for we shall see Him even as He is." The hypothesis is no expression of doubt as to whether the Lord will be manifested; it conveys a warning to the saints to keep in prospect the possibility of the event at any time. The manifestation of the Lord to His saints, and their rapture by Him will be simultaneous. (E-G)

The aspirations expressed in the close of the verse go beyond that initial event of the Parousia to the circumstances of the Judgement-seat of Christ. He desires that at that time both he who has cared for the converts to whom he was writing, and they who have been the objects of his care, may have boldness and not be ashamed before the Lord. That would depend upon their present spiritual condition. Would they

abide in Christ, and "let that abide in them which they had heard from the beginning"? Or would they backslide and give heed to those who were seeking to lead them astray? By this would be determined their gain or loss of reward in the Parousia. Nor would the issue affect them alone; John who himself had shepherded them was interested in the consequences. The fruit of pastoral care seen in the steadfastness of the believers would lead to joy and boldness in that solemn scene; on their part in the reward bestowed upon them, on the Apostle's part in the realization that his labour had not been in vain. On the other hand, faithlessness would lead to shame, through their failure to obtain a reward.

Thus the Apostle is not cautioning them against a possibility that when the Lord comes they will shrink back from Him in shame on account of failure, and be left to remain on earth while others who have been faithful are taken away. The scene is heavenly, and the circumstances are those of the Judgement-seat of Christ. The teaching of John is in entire harmony with that of Paul in the passages considered above.

The Apostle Peter also, in exhorting elders to a faithful discharge of their pastoral responsibilities towards the flock of God, similarly refers to the manifestation of Christ as the terminus of such service, and points them to the immediately succeeding time of reward for it. "Tend," he says, "the flock of God

66 Touching the Coming of the Lord

which is among you, exercising the oversight, not of constraint, but willingly, according unto God; nor yet for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind; neither as lording it over the charge allotted to you, but making yourselves ensamples to the flock. And when the Chief Shepherd shall be manifested, ye shall receive the crown of glory that fadeth not away," 1 Pet. v. 2-4. The manifestation of Christ for the removal of His saints from the earth is thus, in this passage also, shown to be the preliminary to His review of their earthly service when they stand before His Judgement-seat.

OTHER DESCRIPTIONS OF THE SAME PERIOD

The Parousia, then, is not a momentary event, but a period during which Christ will be present with His saints after coming into the air to receive them to Himself, and will test their works as His servants with a view to rewarding them. The period is otherwise described by the following expressions, "the day of Christ," Phil. i. 10; ii. 16, "the day of Jesus Christ," Phil. i. 6, "the day of the Lord Jesus," 1 Cor. v. 5; 2 Cor. i. 14, and "the day of our Lord Jesus Christ," 1 Cor. i. 8. It will be observed that in each of these designations one or both of the titles "Jesus" and "Christ" is used, and an examination of the passages will show that the reference is in each case to the time of the Parousia, and that this group of expressions is to be distinguished from "the day of the Lord," which latter refers to a period

of an entirely different character. We will take the passages in the Epistle to the Philippians first.

In recording his joy in the constant fellowship of the Philippian converts in the furtherance of the Gospel, Paul asserts his confidence that "God who began a good work in them would perfect it until the day of Jesus Christ," Phil. i. 6. That is to say, that through the power of God their steadfastness would continue throughout the time of their earthly service so that all would be estimated at its true value by Christ in the day when they would appear before Him at His Judgement-seat. Again, as he had prayed for the Thessalonian converts in view of the Parousia, that they might walk in love and be found blameless at that time, so now he prays for those at Philippi, 'that their love may abound yet more and more in knowledge and all discernment; so that they may approve the things that are excellent; and be sincere and void of offence, until the day of Christ,' i. 9; 10, a clear identification of that period with the Parousia. Similarly, as he regarded the Thessalonians as his hope and joy and crown of glorying before the Lord in His Parousia, seeing that their faithfulness and steadfastness were the fruit of his labour, so now he exhorts the Philippians 'that they may be blameless and harmless and shine as lights in the world, holding forth the Word of life; that he may have whereof to glory in the day of Christ, that he did not run in vain, nor labour

68 Touching the Coming of the Lord

in vain,' ii. 15, 16. Thus, once more, the thought and language concerning that day are identical with those concerning the Parousia.

So at the outset of his Epistle to the church at Corinth he expresses the assurance that the Lord will confirm them unto the end, that is, the end of their course on earth, so that they may be "unreproveable in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ," and reminds them of the faithfulness of God to undertake this confirmation, since He had called them into the fellowship of His Son, 1 Cor. i. 8, 9. Parallel, again, with the sentiments in the other Epistles above referred to is the expression, in the Second Epistle to the Corinthians, of his joy in the converts in prospect of that day. "We are your glorying," he says, "even as ye also are ours, in the day of our Lord Jesus," 2 Cor. i. 14.

The addition of the first clause of this verse is an appeal against the efforts and influence of the enemies who were seeking to depreciate the Apostle's character and service in the eyes of the Corinthian church, and thus to undermine his work. Had he not brought the Gospel to them? Were not the blessings they had received due to his ministry? Not only would they be his joy in the coming day as the fruit of his toil, but they would then rejoice in seeing him rewarded for his faithful service and testimony on their behalf.

Again, in giving instructions as to the discipline of one who was guilty of moral obliquity the Apostle views the circumstances in the light

of the same period of judgement. Discipline was necessary not only for the present welfare of the church, but for the ultimate benefit of the erring individual. He was "to be delivered unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit might be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus," 1 Cor. v. 5. The word "day" is constantly associated with judgement, inasmuch as the day, in contrast with the night, reveals things in their true character. Thus Paul says concerning his own service, "With me it is a very small thing that I should be judged of you, or of man's judgement (lit. man's day): yea, I judge not mine own self. For I know nothing against myself; yet I am not hereby justified: but he that judgeth me is the Lord. Wherefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come, who will both bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and make manifest the counsels of the hearts; and then shall each man have his praise from God," 1 Cor. iv. 3-5.

Man's day is the time when man passes judgement on things. The day of our Lord Jesus Christ will be the time when He will pass judgement on the service of His saints. "Each man's work shall be made manifest; for, the day shall declare it [*i.e.* the day in which Christ judges the work will manifest its real character] because it is revealed in fire; and the fire itself shall prove each man's work of what sort it is. If any man's work shall abide which he built thereon, he shall receive a reward. If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss;

70 Touching the Coming of the Lord

but he himself shall be saved ; yet so as through fire," iii. 13-15.

THE DAY OF THE LORD—A DISTINCTION

Clearly, all these passages refer to the time and circumstances of the Parousia of Christ with His saints. On the other hand, "the Day of the Lord" is never used in reference to these events ; it relates always to the Lord's judgement on the world and His personal intervention in its affairs, a subject which calls for more detailed consideration in another chapter.

In this connection, however, it is important to observe the correct reading of 2 Thess. ii. 2, where the Revised Version rightly gives "the Day of the Lord" instead of "the Day of Christ" as in the Authorised Version. As the passage is connected with the Parousia we must consider it somewhat closely.

In the first chapter Paul had spoken of the future revelation of the Lord Jesus from heaven, "with the angels of His power in flaming fire, rendering vengeance to them that know not God, and to them that obey not the Gospel of our Lord Jesus." At that time His saints, having been with Him in His Parousia, will accompany Him in manifested glory ; "He shall come to be glorified in His saints, and to be marvelled at in all them that believed," 2 Thess. i. 7-10. "When Christ . . . shall be manifested, then shall ye also with Him be manifested in glory," Col. iii. 4. The Divine vengeance then rendered will usher in the Day of the Lord, and the

Apostle speaks of it in order to prepare for correcting a wrong impression entertained by the Thessalonian converts concerning that Day. They were being told that the Day of the Lord had begun already, and their minds were consequently disturbed in relation to the Rapture and the Parousia. Paul had himself written to them that Christ would come and gather to Himself in resurrection power both their departed who had fallen asleep and the living together with them, and that certain events were destined to take place in the world prior to the beginning of the Day of the Lord. If, then, the latter had already set in, they might well be perplexed and troubled concerning His promised Coming to receive them unto Himself.

Accordingly he must write again to correct their ideas concerning both events, and show the distinction between the Parousia and the Day of the Lord. In reminding them of the conditions which were inevitably to exist in the world ere that Day begins, he would at the same time be regulating their view regarding the Parousia. This he does at the commencement of Chapter II., as follows:

"Now we beseech you, brethren, touching [the Greek preposition, *hyper*, is, literally, on behalf of, *i.e.* with a view to correcting your thoughts about] the coming [the parousia] of our Lord Jesus Christ, and our gathering together unto Him [*i.e.* at the rapture of the saints; as mentioned in 1 Thess. iv: 17]; to the end that ye be not quickly shaken from your

72 Touching the Coming of the Lord

mind [*i.e.* become unsettled in your convictions and the steadfast purposes consequent upon them], nor yet be troubled, either by spirit, or by word, or by epistle as from us [*i.e.* a letter purporting to be from Paul], as that the Day of the Lord is now present [*i.e.* has already commenced]: let no man beguile you in any wise: for it will not be [*i.e.* the Day of the Lord will not set in] except the falling away [the apostasy from God and His truth] come first, and the man of sin be revealed."

Thus an understanding of the conditions which must necessarily precede the Day of the Lord would set their mind at rest concerning the Parousia. The Apostle shows them that the man of sin is to be overthrown by the Lord "at the manifestation of His coming," ver. 8. Literally the phrase is "at the epiphany of His Parousia" or "the shining forth of His Presence." This event coincides with "the revelation of the Lord Jesus" mentioned in i. 7, and marks the close of the Parousia. (H-J)

THE PAROUSIA REVIEWED

Briefly summing up, the Parousia is a period which will commence with the coming of Christ into the air to raise the dead saints, change the living, and receive all together to Himself. They will render an account of their stewardship at His Judgement-seat, receiving rewards or suffering loss according to the measure of their faithfulness. The time of the duration of the Parousia is not definitely intimated in Scripture.

Heavenly in its character it stands in contrast to circumstances in the world, which, after the removal of the church, will come under the judgements of God. At the conclusion of the Parousia the Lord will come with His angels and with His saints in manifested glory for the overthrow of His foes, an event which is described as "the manifestation of His Parousia."¹

¹ The beginning of the Parousia of Christ is prominent in 1 Cor. xv. 23, 1 Thess. iv. 15 ; v. 23, 2 Thess. ii. 1, Jas. v. 7, 8, and 2 Pet. iii. 4 ; its course in 1 Thess. ii. 19 ; iii. 13, Matt. xxiv. 3, 37, 39 and 1 John ii. 28 ; its conclusion in Matt. xxiv. 27, and 2 Thess. ii. 8. From the Writers' *Notes on the Thessalonians*, p. 88.

CHAPTER VI

THE JUDGEMENT-SEAT OF CHRIST

THE period F-H, described in the New Testament as the Parousia, and the day of Christ, are of peculiar interest to the Christian, for in it his course of life is to be reviewed in order that he may be rewarded for all that he has done and suffered during the time of his responsibility in the world. Now this judgement is to be distinguished sharply from the judgement of the nations described in Matt. xxv. 31-46, for that is to take place after the appearing of the Lord in glory (H-J), and its venue is the earth, whereas the judgement of which we now speak takes place "in the air" and between the Rapture and the Second Advent. At the former some are pronounced accursed and dismissed to eternal punishment, whereas at the latter no such condemnation is possible, as the conditions under which it is to be held plainly show. On the other hand, it is to be distinguished with equal clearness from the judgement of the Great White Throne, which takes place after the final catastrophe has overtaken Satan and his hosts at the close of the Millennium, Rev. xx. 11-15. The terms in which these three judgements are described preclude any possibility of confusing

them. It is essential, however, that the different writers must be allowed to know what they meant to say, and to have said what they meant. It is too readily assumed that meaning one thing they said another, or that, however differently they describe it, yet they all, and always, refer to the same general judgement. The Scriptures certainly cannot be made to mean that the world is rushing on to a final conflagration, to be followed by a universal assize. The words in which the Holy Spirit has spoken are not responsible for the widespread confusion of mind on the subject. Rather is that the result of careless reading, or of failure to credit the writers of Scripture with ordinary intelligence and honesty.

There are several passages in which the Judgement-seat of Christ is described; the principle of these now fall to be considered.

The word, translated, judgement-seat is *bēma*, whereas the word used in each of the other cases (Matt. xxv. 31; Rev. xx. 11) is *thronos*, the English word throne. This latter word is reserved in the New Testament for the symbol of authority in the heavenlies, whether good or evil, including that of God Himself. The only exception to this rule is the Throne of David (Luke i. 32), which is referred to, significantly enough, only in a prophecy concerning the rule over Israel of "great David's greater Son." Even the throne of Imperial Cæsar is called a *bēma*, as is that before which the Lord Jesus was condemned to death by Pilate (Acts xviii. 12;

76 Touching the Coming of the Lord

John xix. 13). It will be seen, therefore, that the word lacks nothing in dignity as a symbol of competent authority. Its associations are of the most impressive character. Solemn, indeed, must be the issues involved for all who stand before a tribunal so entitled.

The time of the Judgement-seat of Christ is to be learned from the language of the Lord, recorded in Luke xiv. 14, "thou shalt be recompensed in the resurrection of the just." But this point need not be elaborated here in view of what has been written in an earlier chapter.¹

This Judgement-seat is twice named, once as "of God," and once as "of Christ," Rom. xiv. 10; 2 Cor. v. 10. These are not two but one, however, for "neither doth the Father judge any man, but He hath given all judgement unto the Son; that all may honour the Son even as they honour the Father. . . . And He gave Him authority to execute judgement because He is (the) Son of Man," John v. 22, 23, 27. That there is but one Judge is also plain from 1 Cor. iv. 5, "judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come, Who will both bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and make manifest the counsels of the hearts; and then shall each man have his praise from God." The reference to His coming makes it evident that by Lord the Apostle here means the Lord Jesus, while the praise is said to come from God. The words of the Apostle are thus in harmony with those of the Lord Himself.

¹ See pp. 66-70; see also p. 154.

CHRISTIANS ALONE TO STAND THEREAT

As to the persons who are to come before this Judgement-seat many Scriptures testify. The passage in the First Epistle to the Corinthians (iii. 10—iv. 5) contemplates the Christians at Corinth: "ye are Christ's," says the Apostle, "ye are a temple of God." They had been built upon, and were themselves builders upon, the foundation, the Lord Jesus Christ. The passage in Romans (xiv. 1-12) is equally explicit. A man might be weak in faith, indeed, but that is a description which can be true only of one who is in Christ. God has received him; he is the servant of God. These are brethren sinning against brethren, but still they "are the Lord's." The other leading Scripture (2 Cor. v. 1-10), also contemplates Christians, and like the others, Christians alone. "The Church of God . . . with all the saints" is addressed (i. 1). Sometimes the Apostle speaks to them directly, "you," "your," as in iv, 14, 15, for example; sometimes he associates them with himself, as in each of the verses from 1 to 9 of chapter v. The conclusion is hardly to be resisted that in verse 10 also, "we" refers to Christians, and to Christians alone. There is no hint that the writer enlarges the scope of his address as he passes from one statement to another. The "we" who walk by faith, not by sight, who make it their ambition to be well-pleasing to God, who have received God's Spirit, who hope for the coming of the Lord, and who are yet of

78 Touching the Coming of the Lord

good courage in the face of death, are the "we" who "must all be made manifest before the Judgement-seat of Christ."

This follows also from the fact that this judgement takes place during the Parousia, and there is nothing said concerning others than Christians in connection with that. None save those who belong to Christ, living or dead, share in the Rapture that will usher us into the presence of the Lord when He descends into the air.

One other thing, already mentioned in a former chapter, must here be remembered. When Christians are taken away to be with the Lord Jesus they will be changed, "the body of our humiliation" will be "conformed to the body of His glory," Phil. iii. 20. It is clear, then, that the judgement with which we are now dealing is not concerned with the innocence or guilt of those who appear thereat. The matter of sin and salvation was, for them, settled long ago.¹ At the Judgement-seat of Christ no question is raised of their right to share in the salvation which brings them into the Parousia. They are there because they had become the children of God through faith in Christ Jesus; because they had been redeemed through His Blood, and had received the forgiveness of their sins. The purpose of this judgement is in another direction altogether. What that purpose is we may learn from a brief consideration of the Scriptures already mentioned.

¹ See p. 10.

SALVATION AND JUDGEMENT

The broad principle underlying all God's dealings with men is, that salvation is always by grace, that judgement is always according to works. To this rule there is no exception. No one ever was saved, no one ever will be saved, because he deserves salvation. No one ever will be condemned save because the character of his ways demanded that he should be punished. No one will ever be rewarded save as in his ways and acts the reward has been earned. These are the right ways of God; their justice is beyond dispute.¹

The Apostle had heard tidings from Corinth that called for firm yet affectionate dealing with those whom he rightly regarded as his children in the Gospel. He had laid the foundation of the church there and that foundation was Christ. Now they were building upon that foundation. What manner of building would it be? He does not seem to be addressing any particular class in the church. All are builders, each in his measure is adding something to the structure; it might be "gold, silver, costly stones," but then it might be "wood, hay, stubble." One or the other they must be building into it. No person can be a member of a church without modifying its character, in a good way or in a bad; without adding to its fabric either noble and worthy things or things mean and worthless. Let each person

¹ *Misthos*, usually rendered reward, is rendered "wages" in John iii. 36, and "hire" in 1 Tim. v. 18. That is, it refers to something earned, not merely bestowed.

80 Touching the Coming of the Lord

(not the men only, for no noun is expressed) "take heed how he buildeth." Why? Because "each man's (person's) work shall be made manifest : for the day shall declare it." That is, the day of Christ, as we have already seen. For worthy work there is a reward, for He has said, "Behold, I come quickly ; and My reward is with Me, to render to each man (person) according as his work is," Rev. xxii. 12. If, on the other hand, the building has been of a mean, unworthy character, then that person shall "suffer loss," though "he himself shall be saved (shall be caught away at the Rapture) yet so as through fire." The possibility is thus presented to the Christian that at that judgement he may be without the word of praise and the crown which it is the joy of God to give to every faithful soul.

THE CHRISTIAN AND THE CHURCH

It is in immediate connection with the life of the church that the Apostle is speaking. The church in view here, however, is not "the Church which is His (Christ's Body)," but the gathering in any place of those who name the Name of Christ, and in whose midst He is. The whole passage is intended to raise our conception of the responsibility of membership in such a church, and to teach us that each is expected by the Lord of the church to contribute his share to its corporate life, in view of the day when each must give account to Him. The thoughts of God concerning such churches are readily learned from the language he uses concerning this at

Corinth: "Know ye not that ye are a sanctuary (margin) of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in (among) you?" What follows, then, if God dwells not in a house made with hands, but in the midst of His redeemed people? This, that what a man does to the church, that will God do to Him. "If any man destroyeth the sanctuary of God, him shall God destroy." And, conversely, if any man builds up, cheers, encourages, strengthens, by word or by example, the sanctuary of God, him will God assuredly reward, 1 Cor. iii. 10-17.

In the Second Epistle the Apostle approaches the subject along a different line. Here the church is not directly before his mind, but the Christian in the whole round of his life. Of course the result is the same, for men do not live their lives in watertight compartments, and what a man is in his daily walk and conversation affects the church of which he is a member. He will be the same man, not a different one, on Sundays as on each of the other days of the week. The Apostle is thinking of the certainty, and indeed of the near approach, of the end of opportunity for service. But whether it be by way of death, or by way of the immediate clothing upon with the new and heavenly body, this at least was assured, they would, one and all, "be made manifest before the Judgement-seat of Christ," 2 Cor. v. 10. The word "make manifest" suggests an open display. It is the summation of those other words in 1 Cor. iv. 5, "the Lord . . . will both bring to light the hidden things

82 Touching the Coming of the Lord

of darkness, and make manifest the counsels of the hearts."

The purpose of the words is plain. It is that we should neither do or allow now that of which we know we would be ashamed then. The thought of the Judgement-seat of Christ is a deterrent from word and act inconsistent with the Name of the Lord, and a stimulus to the ambition to manifest every grace He manifested in His ways when He dwelt among men. It is true that our consciousness of sinfulness ("conscience of sins," Heb. x. 2), makes us shrink from the revelations of that day. But we need to correct our thoughts by at least two considerations. Then, with sin eliminated, we shall hate sin as sin, and as we ought to hate it now. We shall rejoice in the completeness of the Lord's victory over sin in us. Love of what is true will become so real that we shall have no desire to appear other than we are, as men have endeavoured to appear ever since the day in which Adam and Eve attempted to hide themselves in the thicket from the eye of God.

We should not dread anything that to the Lord seems wise and right; otherwise the question might well be asked, Where is your faith? Moreover, do not our delinquencies and failures, in a word, our sins, bring the Name of the Lord into disrepute, causing it to be blasphemed? At that day His Name will be cleared. What belongs to Him in us, the fruit of His Spirit, will remain to His praise

and glory and honour, 1 Pet. i. 7. The rest will pass ; that will be to our loss, indeed, but would we have it otherwise? The loss will not be of the worthless material built into life, the 'burning' of that will be deliverance, and in so far gain, not loss. The loss will be of the glory to God and of the reward to us that might have been ours had we lived in accordance with His Word.

"Knowing, therefore, the fear of the Lord," the Apostle proceeds. Not 'terror,' as in the Authorized Version, as though he had the judgement of God upon the ungodly before his mind, warning them to flee from wrath to come. Rather he is thinking of the character of the Lord, His holiness and righteousness ; of what is due to Him and what He requires of, and inspires in, us. He is thinking also of his responsibility to answer for his own life and service, and urging upon the Christians at Corinth, and upon us in our day also, to hold our walk and conversation, and to fulfill our appointed service, as those who must give account thereof to such a Lord.

SOWING AND REAPING

It is "the Lord, the righteous Judge" (2 Tim. iv. 8), before Whom we are to be made manifest. And the principle on which He judges is declared, "whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap" (Gal. vi. 7). Hence the repetition of the word 'destroy' in 1 Cor. iii. 17, to which attention has already

84 Touching the Coming of the Lord

been drawn. Hence, too, the words of 2 Cor. v. 10, "that each one may receive the things done by means of (margin) the body, according to what he hath done (literally, practised), whether it be good or bad." The present body is the implement by which the will of the man is carried out; in the resurrection body the reward of his conduct will be received; if good, in some happy recognition as the wisdom of the Lord shall prescribe; if ill, in the loss of that which it would have rejoiced the Lord to give.

The words of Colossians iii. 23-25 are in harmony with this principle also. "Whatsoever ye do, work from the soul, as unto the Lord, and not unto men; knowing that from the Lord ye shall receive the recompense of the inheritance: ye serve the Lord Christ. For he that doeth wrong shall receive again the wrong that he hath done (margin): and there is no respect of persons." The significance of the words is heightened by their context; they occur in the midst of a series of exhortations addressed to wives, husbands, children, servants and masters. Thus, and not otherwise, is life to be lived by all those, of whatever station in life, who hold the Name and the Word of the Lord in reverence.

"Shall receive again the wrong done." It may be difficult for us to conceive how God will fulfill this word to those who are already in bodies of glory, partakers of the joy of the redeemed in salvation consummated in spirit,

The Judgement-seat of Christ 85

soul and body. Yet may we be assured that the operation of this law is not to be suspended even in their case. He that "knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptation, and to keep the unrighteous under punishment unto the day of judgement" (2 Pet. ii. 9), knows also how to direct and to use the working of His law of sowing and reaping in the case of His children also. The attempt to alleviate the text of some of its weight by suggesting that the law operates only in this life, fails, for there is nothing in the text or context to lead the reader to think other than that while the sowing is here, the reaping is hereafter. It is clear that if it were not for this supposed difficulty of referring the words to the Christian in the condition in which, as we know from other Scriptures, he will appear at the Judgement-seat of Christ, the question whether that time and place were intended would not be raised.

The parallel passage in Ephesians (vi. 8) is varied in a direction that carries comfort, and gives courage to the Christian to be "zealous of good works." It runs thus, "knowing that whatsoever good thing each one doeth, the same shall he receive again from the Lord."

CONCERNING CROWNS

The reward is assured, equally so the loss ; nevertheless it is also written concerning the crownless at that day that they themselves shall

86 Touching the Coming of the Lord

be saved, yet so as through the fire, 1 Cor. iii. 15. For the crowns of which the Scripture speaks are rewards that must be earned; they are not the common heritage of the saints, falling to them by the operation of grace and without regard to works. A crown is not the equivalent of salvation; it is an inducement offered to those who have trusted the Lord to manifest their faith in obedience. It is the reward of the race and the fight for them that strive, and that strive lawfully, that they may attain. In his words to the Corinthian believers the Apostle is not concerned about his salvation, whether or no he will be taken away with all those "that are Christ's" at His Parousia. For him that is a matter settled when he was delivered out of the power of darkness into the Kingdom of the Son of His (God's) love, for from that moment he was reckoned among the redeemed, among those who had obtained the forgiveness of their sins "through the Blood of His (Christ's) Cross," Col. i. 13. What did concern him was lest having urged others to run with purpose he himself should, through relaxed vigilance and effort, fail to win the Amaranthine Crown.¹

¹ "Crowns, in the New Testament, are promised to the Christian as rewards for patient endurance or for faithful service. Cp. :—

"An incorruptible crown," a general description applicable to all rewards promised to those who stand approved before the Judgement-seat of Christ, 1 Cor. ix. 25.

"The crown of righteousness," describing the character of the reward corresponding to the character of the Giver, 2 Tim. iv. 8.

"The crown of life," describing the permanent nature of the reward, in contrast to the transient experience of trial in which

The Judgement-seat of Christ 87

Years afterwards, when the end of his service seemed very near indeed, the Apostle wrote to the Philippians that he had but one ambition, that he might "gain Christ," that he might "know Him, and the power of His Resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings," that so he might become "conformed unto His Death." "If by any means," he continues, "I may attain unto the resurrection from the dead" iii. 8-13. The word (*exanastasis*) is not elsewhere used in the New Testament. Is he now uncertain whether he will have any part in the resurrection and rapture of those that belong to Christ, the assurance of which it had pleased God to give to him many years before (1 Thess. iv. 17) and to so many others through his voice and pen? Once more he is not concerned here about his salvation, for of that he had long been assured, and in it he had long rejoiced; whereas of this which now occupies him he declares that he is not yet in possession. Obviously not, if he is thinking of the resurrection of which he wrote in 1 Corinthians xv. Why should he pause to assert twice what was so evident? Moreover, a few sentences further on he declares himself to be among those who are waiting for the Lord from heaven, v. 20.

it is won, and corresponding to the nature of the Living God Who gives it, James i. 12; Rev. ii. 10.

"The crown of unfading glory, describing the reward of those who give themselves without ostentation, and without hope of gain, to the care of the flock in the absence of the Chief Shepherd, 1 Pet. v. 4."

—From *Notes on the Thessalonians*, pp. 86, 87.

88 Touching the Coming of the Lord

Is it possible that he has in mind an earlier resurrection than that of which he had previously written? To this solution there are at least two objections. He does not elsewhere refer to any such event.¹ Moreover, the desire for resurrection would include the desire for death, and the Apostle never elsewhere expressed himself in this sense. Of death, as we have seen in an earlier chapter, he has no fear; but he does not desire it. He looks, even longs for, the Coming of the Lord. And if, earlier in this letter to the Philippians (i. 23) he speaks of the prospect of death as a happy one, that is only in comparison with his toils and sufferings here, and in the assurance that to depart is to be with Christ, 'to have died is gain.'²

The "out-resurrection from among the dead," toward which the Apostle aspires so warmly here, is that which he describes in Romans vi. 4 as the "walk in newness of life." He had urged others to reckon themselves "to be dead unto sin, but alive unto God in Christ Jesus" (v. 11), and these words to the Philippians reveal the same ambition in his own soul. Having preached to others he did not wish himself to fail of the prize that awaits those who live as baptized

¹ See page 41.

² Phil. i. 21. "The tense denotes not the act of dying but the consequence of dying, the state after death," *Lightfoot*. And so what the Apostle contemplates after the spirit leaves the body is not quiescence, sleep, oblivion, but a nearer sense of the presence of Christ and a more intimate communion with Him than is possible now. See Appendix, Note F.

persons should. The difference in the form of expression is accounted for by the different purpose and method of the two Epistles. In Romans, a more or less formal treatise, written to a church with which he had had no direct personal relationship, he is expounding and enforcing a doctrine. In Philippians, a letter breathing in every sentence the warmth of personal interest and feeling, because it is written to people whom he knew and loved as his children in the faith, he reveals the ambition of his own heart. In the one he is the teacher, propounding with authority the doctrines of the Gospel. In the other he is the living example of the things he teaches. The "prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus" (Phil. iii. 14) is the "incorruptible crown," "the crown of righteousness," of 1 Cor. ix. 25 and 2 Tim. iv. 8.¹ It is probable that these rewards should be conceived of as suggested in the Parable of the Talents, "His Lord said unto him, Well done, good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will set thee over many things," Matt. xxv. 21. For heaven is not a place of happy inactivity, of 'ease with dignity,' as though eternal youth could be happy, or even

¹ *Anō*, here rendered "above" appears again in Col. iii. 1, 2. This seems to fix the meaning of the word here. The Apostle who urges the Colossians to "seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated on the right hand of God," and to set their minds "on the things that are above, not on things that are upon the earth," declares that this also is his own aim. "The prize of the high calling" and "the things that are above" seem to be alternative expressions of the same idea.

90 Touching the Coming of the Lord

content, in idleness! Nor yet will that state be one in which energy is expended selfishly or aimlessly. For it is written that "His servants shall do Him service" there, Rev. xxii. 3.

CHAPTER VII

THE EPIPHANY OF THE PAROUSIA

“The vision is nearing,
The Judge and the Throne !
The voice of the Angel
Proclaims ‘It is done.’
On the whirl of the tempest
Its Ruler shall come
And the blaze of His glory
Flash out from its gloom.”

WE are to be occupied in this chapter with what Scripture states concerning the closing scenes of the present dispensation. The testimony of the sacred page at once discourages any hope that the deliverance of mankind in general from its miseries and sorrows is to be achieved by human effort, or by some evolutionary process of amelioration, or even by the preaching of the Gospel. Not that the Word of God holds out no hope of the future deliverance of the human race. The belief that the golden age, sung by poets and depicted by idealists, will one day dawn, is confirmed in all parts of the Book. For the introduction of this Millennial era God has His own plans. Concerning these the writers of Scripture are in complete agreement. The agencies of civilization find no place in the Divine scheme for the redemption of the world.

92 Touching the Coming of the Lord

The wisest and most powerful enterprises on the part of man cannot banish the cause of the evil which stands in the way of deliverance.

Let it be clearly understood that we are not disparaging humanitarian efforts for the alleviation of suffering and misery. It would ill become those who profess to be followers of Christ to do so. He Himself ever had a heart of compassion for the afflicted and woe begone, and expects those who acknowledge Him as Master and Lord to share His sympathies and to be ready to every good work. Did He not send His disciples out, not only to preach the Gospel, but to heal the sick? We seek to show in another chapter that the expectation of the Lord's return, so far from being incompatible with such practical Christianity, is calculated to stimulate Christians to engage in it. Failure to do so, on the part of any who profess to look for His appearing, is only to their shame. We each have our part to do in seeking to diminish the sum of human wretchedness. Let not a word be uttered to under-estimate or discourage schemes of improvement, philanthropic, social, economic, political! Yet we must not fail to point out that the root of social and national evils lies too deep for these agencies to eradicate.

Sin does not come merely by ignorance; therefore it cannot be removed by knowledge. Sin does not come merely by environment; therefore it cannot be expelled by improved circumstances. Sin does not come merely by poverty; therefore it cannot be annihilated by

economic changes. The redemption of the race from the cause of the evils which divide it, and work mischief and misery in it, must come about by the direct intervention of the Son of God, Who has already laid the basis of this redemption in His atoning Sacrifice at Calvary. He Himself will introduce Millennial blessing into the world, not by coming into a realm made ready for Him by human instrumentality, but by the sudden overthrow of the mighty forces of evil, human and superhuman, which will continue their opposition unabated till the end of this dispensation.

THE END OF THE AGE

The Word of God gives a dark picture of the condition of the world at the close of the present age. The Apostle Paul says, "In the last days grievous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of self, lovers of money, boastful, haughty, railers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, without natural affection, implacable, slanderers, without self-control, fierce, no lovers of good, traitors, headstrong, puffed up, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God; holding a form of godliness, but having denied the power thereof," 2 Tim. iii. 1-5. There is certainly nothing to indicate in present-day conditions that the Apostle's predictions will be stultified, nor yet his further forecast, that "evil men and impostors shall wax worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived," v. 13.

Again, the Lord paralleled the state of humanity at the close of this era with that

94 Touching the Coming of the Lord

prevailing in the days of Noah immediately prior to the Flood, and, further, with that of the cities of the plain in the time of Lot. He says, "And as it came to pass in the days of Noah, even so shall it be in the days of the Son of Man. They ate, they drank, they married, they were given in marriage, until the day that Noah entered into the ark, and the flood came, and destroyed them all. Likewise even as it came to pass in the days of Lot; they ate, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they builded; but in the day that Lot went out from Sodom it rained fire and brimstone from heaven, and destroyed them all; after the same manner shall it be in the day that the Son of Man is revealed," Luke xvii. 26-30. Not that these pursuits were in either case evil in themselves. The sin lay in excluding God from their thoughts, the while they engaged in lawful occupations. This condition the Lord signalizes as characteristic of mankind at the end of the present era. The moral result of 'refusing to have God in knowledge' is recorded in the Old Testament history of the times of Noah and Lot, and in the first chapter of Paul's Epistle to the Romans.

A LEAGUE OF NATIONS

Again, men hope for universal peace and safety by the eventual abolition of militarism as the weapon of lust for conquest and supremacy, and by the establishment of international and democratic unity. Christ, Who has proved accurate in His prediction that during this

dispensation 'nation would rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom, and that there would be great earthquakes, and in divers places famines and pestilences,' also stated at the same time that, instead of the prevalence of rest and security at the end of the age, "there shall be signs in the sun and moon and stars; and upon the earth distress of nations in perplexity for the roaring of the sea and billows; men fainting for fear, and for expectation of the things which are coming on the world: for the powers of the heavens shall be shaken," Luke xxi. 10, 11, 25, 26. In proof that the time of the end is here in view He immediately after said, "And then shall they see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory," an event which will introduce the next age. It must be clear therefore that human statescraft cannot achieve universal success.

Such a League of Nations, for instance, as is proposed to-day as a panacea for national wrongs, not only has been foretold in Scripture as the last resource of international politics, but its failure has likewise been predicted. The various Gentile empires which were to hold dominions of a more or less world-wide character were made known to the prophet Daniel. These were symbolized as beasts. The fourth and last beast, *i.e.* the final form of Gentile rule, was seen to have ten horns. The interpretation of the vision is as follows: "The fourth beast shall be diverse from all the kingdoms . . . and as for the ten horns, out of this kingdom shall

96 Touching the Coming of the Lord

ten kings arise," Dan. vii. 23, 24. In the preceding part of the chapter the beast is personified (v. 17) and the symbol stands both for the imperial head and for his dominion. A corresponding vision was given to the Apostle John. He also saw a beast with ten horns, and the symbolism is again explained, but in greater detail: "The ten horns that thou sawest are ten kings, which have received no kingdom as yet; but they receive authority as kings, with the beast, for one hour (*i.e.* for a brief time). These have one mind, and they give their power and authority unto the beast," Rev. xvii. 12, 13. Obviously these ten kingdoms are contemporaneous. The potentates ruling over them agree to a certain policy in handing over their authority to a superior ruler. No such league has existed in human history as yet.

It is manifest, too, from this Scripture that the existence of the League will provide the opportunity for a man sufficiently strong to dominate the situation. Of this man, and of the way in which he and his confederacy and power will come to their end by the revelation of the Son of God in judgement upon them, more presently. Their overthrow is sufficiently clear from the words which follow: "These (*i.e.* the beast and his confederate kings) shall make war against the Lamb, and the Lamb shall overcome them; and they also shall overcome that are with Him, called and chosen and faithful," ver. 14.

This personal intervention of Christ in the affairs of the world marks the close of His

The Epiphany of the Parousia 97

Parousia with His saints in the air, which formed the subject of a preceding chapter. It thereby also constitutes, as we shall see, the introductory event of the Day of the Lord, Paul describes it as "the manifestation (lit., the epiphany, *i.e.* the shining forth) of His Parousia" (2 Thess. ii. 8); and the Lord Himself spoke of it as follows: "For as the lightning cometh forth from the east, and is seen even unto the west; so shall be the Parousia of the Son of Man," Matt. xxiv. 27. The Parousia of the Son of Man is the Parousia viewed from the earthly standpoint. His Parousia with His saints in the heavenlies will be made known to men only when it is revealed. From its purely heavenly standpoint, as synchronizing with "the Day of Christ," or the period of His Judgement-seat for the review of the service of His saints, the Parousia then terminates. He then will come forth with them in manifested glory, and the Day of the Lord will begin.

THINGS THAT DIFFER

Certain events, such as the Great Tribulation, signs and judgements from heaven, and great distress in the earth, are destined to precede the Day of the Lord, and thus are to be distinguished from it. This is clear from a comparison of the prophecy of Joel, quoted by the Apostle Peter, with the words of the Lord concerning the time of the Great Tribulation. Joel's prophecy is, "And I will show wonders in the heavens and in the earth, blood, and fire, and

98 Touching the Coming of the Lord

pillars of smoke. The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the great and terrible day of the Lord come," Joel ii. 30, 31. Peter speaks of it as "the day of the Lord . . . that great and notable day," Acts ii. 20.

The Lord Himself, speaking of the Tribulation, says, "Immediately after the tribulation of those days, the sun shall be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken : and then shall appear the sign of the Son of Man in heaven : and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory," Matt. xxiv. 29, 30.

The Great Tribulation is "the time of Jacob's trouble," *i.e.* the fierce persecution of the Jews by the Antichrist. (G-J) The Day of the Lord is the time of the personal exercise of Christ's authority in the world, and will be ushered in by His appearing in glory. (J-B) The Day of the Lord is never spoken of in Scripture as referring to the Great Tribulation. The latter is also to be distinguished from the Divine judgements to be manifested immediately before the Day of the Lord, the signs in the heavens and earth mentioned in the passage just quoted from Joel.

We have, then, a fixed order foretold. First, the Great Tribulation ; second, signs in the sun, moon, and stars (Luke adds "distress of nations, men fainting for fear and for expectation of the things which are coming on

the world, and the shaking of the powers of the heavens,"—Luke xxi. 25, 26); and, third, the revelation of the Son of Man. Joel and Peter show that the signs in the heavens immediately precede the Day of the Lord; Christ showed that they immediately succeed the Great Tribulation, and immediately precede His manifestation as the Son of Man. Accordingly His revelation in power and great glory, will be coincidental with the inception of the Day of the Lord. (H-J)

That the Jewish people are to be the sufferers in the Great Tribulation is clear from the following Scriptures. Jeremiah prophesied that no period of tribulation will equal that of "Jacob's trouble," *i.e.* of the Jewish nation, Jer. xxx. 7. To Daniel it was foretold concerning his people, the Jews, that there would be a time of trouble "such as never was since there was a nation even to that time," Dan. xii. 1. The Lord said of the Great Tribulation that it will be "such as hath not been from the beginning of the world until now, no nor ever shall be," Matt. xxiv. 21. Wherever there are Jews at that time they will suffer in this worldwide pogrom. For, while prior to this they are to be nationally reinstated in Palestine, they will not all be resident there; considerable numbers will still be living in other countries. Accordingly, those who have been put to death in the Tribulation and are seen in the apocalyptic vision standing "before the Throne and before the Lamb," are said to have come

100 Touching the Coming of the Lord

“out of every nation, and of all tribes and peoples and tongues,” Rev. vii. 9 and 14.

“The sign of the Son of Man,” is probably to be understood subjectively. There are to be preceding signs in the heavens, immediately after the Great Tribulation, but the sign of the Son of Man is not to be classed with those. He will be His own sign. That is to say, the words may be understood as equivalent to ‘the sign which is the Son of Man,’ and not as indicating a sign heralding His appearance. This is confirmed, perhaps, by the order of events given in Rev. vi., which correspond to that in Matt. xxiv. First there are preliminary judgements, war and famine and pestilence, vv. 1-8, then the signs in heaven, vv. 12, 13, and finally the appearance of the Lord in Person, at the ‘shining out of His Parousia.’ That is the sign of the Son of Man. The effect of this is that “the kings of the earth, and the princes, and the chief captains, and the rich, and the strong, and every bondman, and free-man, hide themselves in the caves, and in the rocks of the mountains: and they say to the mountains and to the rocks, Fall on us and hide us from the face of Him that sitteth on the Throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb: for the great day of their wrath is come; and who is able to stand?” vv. 15-17.

THE MAN OF SIN

The Scriptures not only speak in a general way, as in the passages already quoted, of the

The Epiphany of the Parousia 101

conditions which will characterize the world at the close of the age ; specific details are also given. Some of these now call for consideration, as leading up to the Day of the Lord.

We have seen, in the chapter on the Parousia, that in the Second Epistle to the Thessalonians Paul was correcting the notion that the Day of the Lord had already set in. In contradistinction to his teaching concerning the coming of the Lord for His saints, as ever the next thing to be expected, he now showed that certain events must precede the Day of the Lord. "That Day will not be," he says, "except the falling away (lit., the apostasy) come first, and the Man of Sin be revealed, the Son of Perdition, he that opposeth and exalteth himself against all that is called God, or that is worshipped ; so that he sitteth in the temple of God, setting himself forth as God," 2 Thess ii. 3-5. Two clearly defined events are here foretold as destined to precede the Day of the Lord (1) the apostasy, the turning away from, and repudiation of, Divine truth formerly adhered to, and (2) the revelation of the Man of Sin, called in v. 8 "the Lawless One."

Again, this latter revelation is to be preceded by another event. Lawlessness, the Apostle says, was already at work in the first century, as a mystery, *i.e.* as something not recognized in its true character by the world at large, but made known by revelation. A certain principle was, however, at work, hindering the manifestation of the Lawless One until the time appointed

102 Touching the Coming of the Lord

for him. This principle is described as "that which restraineth," v. 6. It found concrete expression in a person representatively described as "one that restraineth," v. 7. This restraint against lawlessness will be exercised until the restrainer is "taken out of the way."¹ When this takes place the man himself, the embodiment of lawlessness, will be revealed.

But what as to the power and policy of this world-ruler? These are detailed in other Scriptures. In 2 Thessalonians Paul, who is pointing on to the Day of the Lord, passes over the interval of the government of the Man of Sin, save for a brief mention of his Satanic power and deceitful influence, and speaks at once of his doom, declaring that "the Lord Jesus shall slay him with the breath of His mouth, and bring him to nought by the manifestation of His Parousia," v. 8. The word rendered "manifestation" is literally "epiphany," *i.e.* a shining forth. This epiphany marks the close of the Parousia, the saints having been with the Lord hidden from the world since the Rapture. (F-H)

The world itself will by this time have reached its climax of iniquity, men having only hardened their hearts against God by reason of the judgements premonitory of impending doom. "The rest of mankind, which were not killed with these plagues, repented

¹ A more literal, and not improbable, rendering is, 'when it, *i.e.* lawlessness, becomes out of the midst,' *i.e.* becomes fully and manifestly developed. See *Notes on Thessalonians*, p. 261.

not of the works of their hands . . . and they repented not of their murders, nor of their sorceries, nor of their fornication, nor of their thefts," Rev. ix. 20, 21. "They blasphemed the Name of the God which hath the power over these plagues; and they repented not to give Him glory . . . and they blasphemed the God of heaven because of their pains and their sores; and they repented not of their works," xvi. 9, 11. What a picture of the antagonism of the natural heart against God! What a witness to the helplessness of man to eradicate evil, to remove the curse from the earth! The testimony of Scripture is plain enough as to the darkness and evil which are to prevail at the close of this dispensation of "man's day." Nor can it be otherwise, since we are shown that mankind at large will still refuse to view sin according to the Divine estimate, and to accept God's proffered pardon and grace through the Sacrifice of His Son.

At length, human rebellion having reached its consummation under the Man of Sin, the Son of Man appears in Person to execute wrath upon him and upon all who own allegiance to him. He is "revealed from heaven with the angels of His power in flaming fire, rendering vengeance to them that know not God, and to them that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus," 2 Thess. i. 7, 8. One of the most ancient prophecies recorded in the Word of God foretold this solemn event, the past tense being used with prophetic significance, as is

104 Touching the Coming of the Lord

frequent in Scripture: "Enoch, the seventh from Adam, prophesied, saying, Behold, the Lord came with His holy myriads, to execute judgement upon all, and to convict all the ungodly of all their works of ungodliness which they have ungodly wrought, and of all the hard things which ungodly sinners have spoken against Him," Jude 14, 15. Man's day will be over, the Day of the Lord will begin. (J-B)

CLOSING EVENTS

We may now briefly enumerate some of the events in the world which will lead up to this Divine intervention.¹ The Word of God foretells that the Man of Sin will obtain world dominion as the result of a confederacy of nations, the rulers of which will, with one consent, commit their power and authority to him (Rev. xvii. 11-13 with xiii. 8); that, having first supported, and then overthrown the combined religious systems of the world with the aid of these potentates (Rev. xvii. 7, 16), he will "exalt himself against all that is called God or that is worshipped," and thus claiming deity, will demand, and receive, universal worship (2 Thess. ii. 4 with Rev. xiii. 8); that he will be supported in this by another potentate described firstly as "another beast," and secondly as "the false prophet" (Rev. xiii. 11-15 with xix. 20); and that they will establish a world-wide com-

¹ For a more detailed account, see "The Roman Empire in the Light of Prophecy," by W. E. Vine, M.A. (Pickering & Inglis, Glasgow).

The Epiphany of the Parousia 105

mercial system, prohibiting buying and selling save on the part of those who use the special mark officially appointed, xiii. 16, 17. With the Jews, who will have been re-established nationally in Palestine, he will at first enter into a covenant, but will subsequently break it, turning upon the nation with a view to its annihilation, Dan. ix. 27. Thus will begin "the time of Jacob's trouble." "But he shall be saved out of it," Jer. xxx. 7. Temporarily successful in his other enterprises, the Man of Sin will fail in this Anti-Semitic campaign—fail through the intervention of the Lord Jesus, by Whom he will be destroyed. (H-J)

The prophetic Scriptures to which reference has been made serve, perhaps, to throw light upon some of the world-movements which are taking place at the present time. Certainly the trend of current events is not in a direction contrary to what the Scriptures have predicted.

HAR-MAGEDON

We must dwell more fully upon the manner in which the Jews will be delivered, since their deliverance coincides with the manifestation of the Parousia and with the commencement of the Day of the Lord. (H-J)

The attempt to destroy the Jewish nation will form the climax of the aggression of the Antichrist against God, and will constitute a war waged against the Son of God, the Messiah of the Jews. The armies of the Gentile Powers, placed at the disposal of their great Leader,

106 Touching the Coming of the Lord

will be gathered together "against the Lord, and against His Anointed." Having by mutual consent given their power and authority unto "the beast," these kings of the earth, with their supreme War-lord, "will war against the Lamb," Rev. xvii. 13, 14. "I saw," says the inspired seer, "the beast, and the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war against His army," Rev. xix. 19. It had been permitted to the arch-oppressor to prevail against the Jews in the Great Tribulation of which he was the instrument ; he will not prevail against the Son of God ; his success is only "until the Ancient of days came," Dan. vii. 21, 22.

The issues at stake will differentiate this war from all that have preceded ; they have been waged for dynastic or territorial or commercial supremacy, this contest will be fought to decide whether world-dominion is to rest in the hands of Satan or of Christ. This is the battle of Har-Magedon, "the war of the great day of God, the Almighty," which will introduce the Day of the Lord. Satan it is whose utmost power will energize his human instruments to force a decision : "And I saw coming out of the mouth of the Dragon, and out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet (a trinity of evil), three unclean spirits, as it were frogs : for they are the spirits of demons, working signs ; which go forth unto the kings of the whole world, to gather them together unto the war of the great day of God,

The Epiphany of the Parousia 107

the Almighty . . . and they gathered them together into the place which is called in the Hebrew, Har-Magedon," Rev. xvi. 13-16.

THE FORCES OF THE VICTOR

This, then, on the one hand, is the description of the massed forces of evil, of humanity in alienation from God, combined in impious rebellion against the Most High, and Satanically deceived by the "power and signs and lying wonders" of the Man of Sin; deceived "because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved," duped into believing the lie, because "they believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness," 2 Thess. ii. 9-12.

Now as to the forces of righteousness, the armies of the King of Kings, Who comes to establish peace by the overthrow of militarism, Who

"Comes to break oppression
To set the captive free ;
To take away transgression,
And rule in equity."

Terrible in its grandeur is the Apostle's vivid description of the Lord and His hosts: "And I saw the heaven opened: and behold, a white horse, and He that sat thereon, called Faithful and True; and in righteousness He doth judge and make war. And His eyes are a flame of fire, and upon His head are many diadems: and He hath a name written, which no one knoweth, but He Himself. And He is arrayed in a gar-

108 Touching the Coming of the Lord

ment sprinkled with blood: and His name is called The Word of God. And the armies which are in heaven followed Him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and pure. And out of His mouth proceedeth a sharp sword, that with it He should smite the nations: and He shall rule them with a rod of iron; and He treadeth the winepress of the fierceness of the wrath of Almighty God. And He hath on His garment and on His thigh a name written, KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS. And I saw an angel standing in the sun; and he cried with a loud voice, saying to all the birds that fly in mid heaven, Come and be gathered together unto the great supper of God; that ye may eat the flesh of kings, and the flesh of captains and the flesh of mighty men, and the flesh of horses and of them that sit thereon, and the flesh of all men, both free and bond, and small and great. . . . And the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet, that wrought the signs in his sight, wherewith he deceived them that had received the mark of the beast, and them that worshipped his image: they twain were cast alive into the lake of fire that burneth with brimstone: and the rest were killed with the sword of Him that sat upon the horse, even the sword which came forth out of His mouth: and all the birds were filled with their flesh."

Thus it is that the Man of Sin is to be brought to nought by the manifestation of the Parousia of the Lord Jesus. Thus will the Son of Man, coming on the clouds of heaven with power and

great glory, usher in the Day of the Lord, a Day terrible in its inception, blessed in its continuance, when to the outpouring of righteous wrath shall succeed a righteous peace, under the sovereignty of the King of Kings. We may compare the prophecy of Joel: "The Lord uttereth His voice before His army (a striking association with Paul's words, 'the breath of His mouth,' 2 Thess. ii. 8, and with John's vision of the sword proceeding from the mouth of the Lord); for His camp is very great; for He is strong that executeth His word; for the Day of the Lord is very terrible; and who can abide it?" Joel ii. 10, 11.

Comparing the two passages above mentioned, viz., Rev. xix. 19-21 and 2 Thess. ii. 8, which each refer in different ways to the overthrow of the Man of Sin and his forces, the Thessalonians passage gives the effect, and the Revelation passage the process; the process is short and sharp, as the effect is decisive. Further light is thrown on the two by the prophecy of Zechariah: "Then shall the Lord go forth, and fight against those nations, as when He fought in the day of battle. And His feet shall stand in that day upon the mount of olives. . . . And the Lord my God shall come and all the holy angels with thee." Zech. xiv. 3-5.

The Day of the Lord, which will reveal the Church in the Heavenlies, glorious with the glory of Christ, will at the same time bring deliverance to His earthly people the Jews. The scene is predicted in the last chapter of Joel as follows:

110 Touching the Coming of the Lord

“Proclaim ye this among the nations ; prepare war ; stir up the mighty men ; let all the men of war draw near, let them come up. Beat your plowshares into swords, and your pruninghooks into spears ; let the weak say, I am strong. Haste ye, and come, all ye nations round about, and gather yourselves together ; thither cause thy mighty ones come down, O Lord. Let the nations bestir themselves, and come up to the valley of Jehoshaphat ; for there will I sit to judge all the nations round about. Put ye in the sickle for the harvest is ripe ; come, tread ye ; for the winepress is full, the fats overflow ; for their wickedness is great. Multitudes, multitudes in the valley of decision ! for the day of the Lord is near in the valley of decision. The sun and the moon are darkened, and the stars withdraw their shining. And the Lord shall roar from Zion, and utter His voice from Jerusalem ; and the heavens and the earth shall shake ; but the Lord will be a refuge unto His people, and a stronghold to the children of Israel. So shall ye know that I am the Lord your God dwelling in Zion my holy mountain ; then shall Jerusalem be holy, and there shall no strangers pass through her any more.”

The Manifestation of the Parousia and the introduction of the Day of the Lord thus constitute the closing stage of The Lord's Second Coming. (H-J)

CHAPTER VIII

THE FINAL GENTILE WORLD-RULER AND HIS DOMINION

THE influence of "the Prince that shall come" (Dan. ix. 26) upon the destiny of the human race is of such a determining character that more is demanded than the brief reference to his power and his policy included in the last chapter. His is to be the final attempt to monopolize world-power, and his dominion is to be different in character from all that preceded it. Happily the Word of God provides us with a sufficiently clear revelation concerning the closing drama of Gentile power to enable us both to form a broad view of the trend and destiny of national affairs, and to understand the manner in which His Kingdom of righteousness will be universally established in the earth. (H-J)

In order to ascertain the character of the final Gentile world-dominion and its Imperial head, we must first refer to those Scriptures which indicate the course of Gentile government over the land of Palestine. It is necessary to remember that the prophetic Scriptures relating to national governments bear directly and always on the land of the Jews. Palestine is the centre of Divine dealings with nations, the pivot upon

112 Touching the Coming of the Lord

which those dealings turn. "When the Most High gave to the nations their inheritance, when He separated the children of men, He set the bounds of the peoples according to the number of the children of Israel," Deut. xxxii. 8. With that statement all Scripture history regarding Gentile power is entirely consistent. The land was foreordained of God as the eventual seat of Messiah's Kingdom.

THE VISION OF THE IMAGE

The second chapter of Daniel describes a vision of a great image seen by Nebuchadnezzar, the Chaldean monarch, the first Gentile potentate to hold dominion over the whole of Palestine after that country had been given to Israel to possess. His subjugation of the land began the long period afterwards called by the Lord "the times of the Gentiles" (Luke xxi. 24), that is, the period during which Gentile nations govern the country. Almost immediately after Nebuchadnezzar had annexed the land and carried the people into captivity, a Divine revelation was given of the programme of Gentile government over them and of the character of the various forms of that government. The vision just referred to was the means of this revelation in the first instance.

The image was divided into four parts, which were interpreted as symbolical of four kingdoms. Nebuchadnezzar's was immediately identified as the first. "Thou, O King," said the prophet, "art king of kings, unto whom the God of heaven hath given the kingdom . . . thou art the head

The Final Gentile World-Ruler 113

of gold" (vv. 37, 38). The second and third, corresponding respectively to the breast and arms, of silver, and the belly and thighs, of brass, are subsequently shown to be the Medo-Persian and the Grecian, or Macedonian, kingdoms. Thus the prophet's prediction to Nebuchadnezzar, "after thee shall arise another kingdom," v. 39, finds fulfilment in the historic record, "In that night Belshazzar the Chaldean king was slain, and Darius the Mede received the kingdom," ch. v. 30, 31. The interpretation of a later vision, seen by Daniel, of a conflict between a ram and an he-goat, identifies the third kingdom with that of Greece: "The ram which thou sawest that had the two horns, they are the kings of Media and Persia. And the rough he-goat [which was seen to destroy the ram, v. 8] is the King of Greece," viii. 20, 21; cp. x. 20.

THE FOURTH KINGDOM

The fourth kingdom was symbolized by the legs of iron and the feet partly of iron and partly of clay, or, rather, earthenware, ii. 33. That kingdom would be strong as iron, but inasmuch as the feet and toes of the image were part of iron and part of earthenware, the kingdom would exist in a divided condition. Further, while it would always contain the strength of iron, yet the admixture of the earthenware would eventually render the kingdom partly strong and partly brittle, vv. 40-42 (not "broken," but liable to break). This characteristic is especially mentioned of the period corresponding to the

114 Touching the Coming of the Lord

toes, v. 42. Thus the form of government of the fourth kingdom would pass through certain stages.

This fourth kingdom is not specifically mentioned in the book of Daniel, but its identification is not difficult. The history of the overthrow of the Grecian Empire by the Romans is well known. The Roman power is, moreover, indicated in the ninth chapter of Daniel where, following the prophecy that the Messiah would be cut off, is the prediction that "the people of the prince that shall come" would destroy the city and the sanctuary," v. 26. This the Romans carried out in A.D. 70.

THE VISION OF THE FOUR BEASTS

A further revelation of the course of Gentile government over the Jews, given to Daniel himself, is recorded in the seventh chapter. Four powers were represented in that vision as wild beasts, symbols appropriate for a revelation to a Jew, in contrast to those of the Gentile monarch's vision, and indicative of the treatment Daniel's people would receive from Gentile rulers.

The similarity of the description of the fourth beast to that of the fourth part of the image makes clear that the same power is in view in each case. 'The fourth beast would be a fourth kingdom, differing from all others; it would devour the earth, tread it down and break it in pieces,' vii. 23—an accurate representation of the Roman power.

It is to be noticed that in each interpretation

The Final Gentile World-Ruler 115

the fourth kingdom is predicted as the last Gentile power, and that it receives its overthrow at the hand of God, Who will thereupon establish an everlasting Kingdom. "In the days of those kings [*i.e.* of the potentates represented by the toes of the image] shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed, nor shall the sovereignty thereof be left to another people; but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever," ii. 44. So of the final head of the Empire, represented by the fourth beast, it is said, "The judgement shall sit, and they shall take away his dominion, to consume and to destroy it unto the end, and the kingdom and the dominion, and the greatness of the kingdoms under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the Most High: His kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey Him," vii. 26, 27. Clearly, then, no world-wide imperial power is to rule between the Roman kingdom, in its final stage, and the Kingdom of Christ. (H-J)

IS THE LAST THE ROMAN?

The enquiry may be raised as to how the Roman power can be the last of the Gentile empires which rule over the Jews as a nation, considering that the Roman Empire was overthrown in the fifth and succeeding centuries of the present era. Moreover, what of the Turkish dominion?

116 Touching the Coming of the Lord

The book of the Revelation gives us light as to the first question. Here we are carried much farther in detail, just as the eighth chapter of Daniel gives fuller information than the second. This is in accordance with the progressive character of prophecy. We are shown, in the seventeenth chapter of the Apocalypse, that the power symbolized by the beast would, after a temporary lapse, be resuscitated. The Apostle John received a vision of a beast with seven heads and ten horns, and carrying a woman. The identification of this beast with the fourth of Daniel's vision is established by the facts that each had ten horns, and that each becomes the object of Divine judgement at the manifestation of the Son of God for the setting up of His Kingdom. (H-J) The three periods relating to the power of the beast are thus indicated: "The beast that thou sawest was, and is not; and is about to come up out of the abyss"; and again, "he was, and is not, and shall come," Rev. xvii. 8. This does not mean that it existed prior to John's time and was then non-existent. The language is prophetic rather than historic, and simply implies (1) an existence, (2) a discontinuance, (3) a reappearance.

A TWO-FOLD APPLICATION

We must notice that the symbol of a beast represents both the kingdom and its final ruler. This is the case in both the 7th of Daniel and the 17th of Revelation. In the former chapter

The Final Gentile World-Ruler 117

the interpretation is as follows: "These great beasts which are four are four *kings*. . . . The fourth beast shall be a fourth *kingdom*," Dan. vii. 17, 23. In the Revelation the beast is seen with seven heads and ten horns, v. 3. Here the whole animal is termed a beast. In verses 9-11, however, the beast is symbolically identified, not with the whole animal, but with one of the heads. Moreover, the seven heads are described first topographically and then personally. "The seven heads are seven mountains . . . and they are seven kings; . . . and the beast . . . is himself also an eighth, and is of the seven." Clearly the beast again represents two distinct yet closely associated things. In the first eight verses of the chapter the language is indicative of dominion. Then the scope of the symbol is narrowed and the individual ruler comes into view. Thus the entire animal represents, not merely the ruler, but his kingdom, as in Dan. vii. 23.

The fourth, or Roman, Empire, as a matter of history, existed in the closing part of the past dispensation and in the first few centuries of the present one, that is, before and after the point C in the diagram. For many centuries it has not existed as an Empire, that is to say, it is now in the "is not" stage.

THE TURKS

The Turks, who overthrew the eastern part of the Empire in the fifteenth century, occupied Palestine until 1917, but never ruled over the

118 Touching the Coming of the Lord

Jews as a nation, *i.e.* as the nationally recognized possessor of Palestine. Their relationship with the Jewish people differs fundamentally from that of the Chaldeans, Medo-Persians, Greeks, and Romans. The Jews had been scattered from their land before the Turks took possession. Turkish domination is therefore not noticed in the Scriptures we have considered.

THE FINAL FORM

Intimation is given in Scripture as to the form in which the fourth kingdom will be resuscitated, possibly during the period represented by G-J on the diagram. Of the ten horns on the fourth beast in Daniel's vision it was said, "As for the ten horns, out of this kingdom shall ten kings arise," Dan. vii. 24. And of the ten horns of the beast of Revelation, "The ten horns . . . are ten kings, which have received no kingdom as yet," Rev. xvii. 12. That they will be contemporaneous and confederate is obvious, from the statement that they have one mind and agree to hand their kingdom over to a federal head, vv. 13, 17. Moreover, the countries over which they rule are spoken of not as kingdoms, but as a kingdom, indicating community of interest as well as territorial unity.

Clearly, therefore, a league of nations is in view, and this is apparently to be the new form of the old empire. Its re-formed condition will render it "diverse from all the kingdoms," *i.e.* from the three preceding empires, Dan. vii. 23.

TERRITORIAL CONSIDERATIONS

As to the territories of this reconstructed fourth empire, we have no definite intimation in Scripture, though there are indications that they will embrace at least the area occupied by all the four powers, the Chaldean, Medo-Persian, Grecian, and Roman. When in the vision the stone smote the image on its feet the whole image was broken in pieces, Dan. ii. 34, 35. (H-J) When the fourth beast was destroyed the dominion of the rest of the beasts was taken away, vii. 12. Probably there will be an expansion of territory beyond the ancient limits. Certainly the whole world will acknowledge the authority of the final head of the empire, Rev. xiii. 7.

Several territorial changes which have taken place during recent centuries—*i.e.* in the “is not” period—and especially of late, have shown a remarkable return towards the configuration of the ancient Roman dominions. All the territory of North Africa which was within the ancient Empire, but which was subdued later by Turkey, has gradually come under the government of countries which belonged to the Roman kingdom. Spain governs Morocco; France governs Algeria and Tunis; Italy, Tripoli; and Britain, Egypt. Again, Alsace and Lorraine and other territory west of the Rhine, formerly in the Roman province of Gallia, are now reverting to France. The Trentino, which formerly belonged to Italy, has

120 Touching the Coming of the Lord

been regained by it. Austrian territory, which in the Roman Empire was confined to the district west and south of the Danube, is again reduced to that limit. Syria, Palestine, and Mesopotamia have been recovered from the Turk and are now under the influence of nations which belonged to the Roman world.¹ Moreover, those countries which have been freed from Turkish control have resumed the Western civil institutions and organizations, which have all along been Roman in character. Other territorial changes in Europe seem probable, which will render the approximation to the ancient delineations the closer.

We are not justified, however, in concluding that the territories of the League of Nations, indicated by the passages relating to the ten horns of the beast, will necessarily be confined to the area which has just been under consideration. Whatever the arrangement may be, the fact of the League will prepare the way for the government of the final and all-controlling despot.

This is foretold in Scripture as follows:—
“Out of this kingdom shall ten kings arise: and another shall arise after them; and he shall be diverse from the former,” Dan. vii. 24. “(The) ten kings . . . receive authority as kings with the beast, for one hour [*i.e.* for a brief period]. These have one mind, and they give their power and authority unto the beast,” Rev. xvii. 12, 13, 17.

¹ See the writer's *Roman Empire in Prophecy*, pp. 59-68, written in 1915 (Pickering & Inglis, Glasgow, 1s. 6d.)

THE IRON AND CLAY

Now the character of the power of the ten kings is indicated by the constitution of the toes of the image seen in vision by Nebuchadnezzar. These were formed of a mixture of iron and earthenware, Dan. ii. 42. As the different metals of the image obviously represent the character of the respective governments, the iron most appropriately symbolizes militarism. The earthenware is brittle—the fourth kingdom, in this form, was predicted to be “partly strong and partly brittle” (see margin). This suggests an unstable form of government. That democracy is in view is extremely improbable. Many a republic has evidenced striking stability. On the other hand, such revolutionary forces as those of Communism, Anarchy, Bolshevism, etc., have always been liable to speedy disintegration. Moreover, revolutions instigated by such forces have almost always given rise to despotism, as in the case of the French Revolution.

Again, militarism is essentially so different in character from the associations referred to that, as the prophecy says, they could not cleave together, any more than iron and earthenware do. That they might mingle for a time is possible, especially if the will of the people lay behind the combination. This is perhaps indicated in the words “they shall mingle themselves by (marg.)—*i.e.* by means of—the seed of men,” v. 43. We can conceive, therefore, of the outbreak of such widespread revolution in the con-

122 Touching the Coming of the Lord

federate kingdom of the ten potentates,¹ coupled with a condition of impoverishment consequent upon war, that they would willingly commit their power into the hands of a man of consummate ability who might be ready for the occasion.²

THE FINAL EMPEROR

Concerning this final Gentile Emperor Scripture has much to say, more than we can refer to in the present volume.³

The Apostle Paul speaks of him as "the Man of Sin, the Son of Perdition," and "the Lawless One," 2 Thess. ii. 3, 8. He is to have a parousia, v. 9 (see pp. 58-61 and 152), a period commencing with his manifestation, and during which his power will be in exercise over the whole world. His parousia, apparently an imitation of the Parousia of Christ, will be "according to the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders, and with all deceit of unrighteousness." In the language of the Apocalypse, "the Dragon gave him his power, and his throne, and great authority," Rev. xiii. 2. Hence the rapidity of his rise to power and of the universal acknowledgment of his rule. "His stupendous power and brilliant abilities, the evidence of his super-human origin, his phenomenal capacity for

¹ The word rendered "king" does not necessarily denote a constitutional monarch ; rather it represents the head of any State, of whatever type.

² See *The Roman Empire in Prophecy*, pp. 69-77.

³ For a brief outline of his career, see pp. 87-93. See also *The Mystery of Iniquity*, by C. F. Hogg (Pickering & Inglis).

organization, and the consolidation of the empire under his absolute control, will cause the whole world to marvel at him.”¹

HIS OVERTHROW

Exalting himself in impious pride and blasphemy against all that is called God, and claiming and receiving universal worship, he and his supporters will make war against the Son of God. “These shall war against the Lamb, and the Lamb shall overcome them,” Rev. xvii. 14. That victory, synchronizing with the Second Advent, the ushering in of the Day of the Lord (H-J), is variously described in the Word of God. The overthrow of the Beast is the falling of the stone upon the feet of the image of Nebuchadnezzar’s vision, the annihilation of all Gentile government. He Who in the days of His flesh refused to accept the kingdoms of the world at the hands of Satan, and to evade the sufferings of Calvary, will then by virtue of those sufferings, and of His victory over His arch-adversary, come to deliver the earth from its oppressors and from unrighteous government in all its forms.

The two contrasting circumstances of the Cross and the Glory are vividly depicted by Isaiah: “Like as many were astonished at Thee (His visage was so marred more than any man, and His form more than the sons of men), so shall He startle (margin, which seems accurate) many nations; kings shall shut their

¹ *The Roman Empire in Prophecy*, p. 83.

124 Touching the Coming of the Lord

mouths at Him ; for that which had not been told them shall they see ; and that which they had not heard shall they understand," Isa. lii. 14, 15. The astonishment of men who gazed upon His sufferings will have its counterpart in the astonishment with which His Second Advent will overturn the existing order of things and introduce the glory of His Kingdom.

THE KINGDOM OF THE KING OF KINGS

Then will be fulfilled the saying that is written, "The kingdom of the world is become the kingdom of our Lord, and of His Christ ; and He shall reign for ever and ever." Then will ascend the song of praise in heaven. "We give Thee thanks, O Lord God, the Almighty, which art and which wast ; because Thou hast taken Thy great power, and didst reign. And the nations were wroth, and Thy wrath came, and the time of the dead to be judged, and the time to give their reward to Thy servants the prophets, and to the saints, and to them that fear Thy Name, the small and the great ; and to destroy them that destroy the earth," Rev. xi. 15-18.

"The stone that smote the image became a great mountain, and filled the whole earth." The interpretation of this is to be found, not in the imagined universality of the success of the Gospel in the present dispensation, but in such prophecies as those of Isaiah when he says that "out of Zion shall go forth the law and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem. And

The Final Gentile World-Ruler 125

He shall judge between the nations and shall reprove many peoples : and they shall beat their swords into ploughshares and their spears into pruning-hooks ; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more. . . . The loftiness of man shall be bowed down, and the haughtiness of men shall be brought low ; and the Lord alone shall be exalted in that day," Isa. ii. 3, 4, 17. Jehovah's Servant, Israel's Messiah, "shall bring forth judgement to the Gentiles. . . . He shall not fail nor be discouraged, till He have set judgement in the earth ; and the isles shall wait for His law," xlii. 1, 4. "The earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea," xi. 9.

"All the kingdoms shall become
His whose imperial brow with crown of thorn
The men of war in mockery did adorn.
Peace shall prevail, and every land shall own
His rightful sway, and low before His throne
Shall bow and worship ; angels there shall kneel.
The soul of the vast universe shall feel
The quickening touch of its life-giving Head,
And shall break forth in song. The heavens shall shed
Into the lap of earth immortal joys,
And every living thing, with thankful voice,
Shall sweetly raise the universal psalm
Of glory unto God and to the Lamb."

BOYD.

CHAPTER IX

THE EFFECT OF THE HOPE

“O keep us, Jesus, Lord, until that day,
Walking with girded loins, apart from all
That savours of this world that Thee refused,
Until Thou come with shout and trump, and we
Behold Thee as Thou art and like Thee be.”

From “The Story of The Glory”—BOYD.

THE Christian's hope of the Lord's return is a certain hope, “an anchor of the soul, both sure and stedfast,” a hope “laid up in the heavens”: “He that cometh shall come, and shall not tarry.” But more than this, it is a practical hope, influencing every part of the life, energizing and purifying it. It forms, indeed, an essential part of that new life imparted by the Spirit of God to the believer. One who is born of the Spirit is by Him directed to the constant expectation of the return of the Christ Who died for him and rose again. With other believers he ‘waits for a Saviour from heaven, the Lord Jesus Christ,’ Phil. iii. 20. It is as much a spiritual instinct for the regenerate being to lay hold on the hope set before him as it is a natural instinct for the infant to cling to something material. No one is living up to his privileges, no one is living in the full light and power of Gospel truth, whose heart is

not enjoying the prospect of the Lord's Second Coming. Nor can a preacher of the Gospel be faithful to his ministry if he omits therefrom that which constitutes the hope of the Gospel.

It will perhaps be helpful if we consider some of the effects of this hope upon the Christian life.

AN INCENTIVE TO DILIGENCE IN SERVICE

Anticipation of the Second Coming of the Lord is not indulgence in a mere spiritual luxury, nor does expectation of His return tend to make Christians unpractical. The expectation may be perverted into unscriptural theorizing and speculation ; but the perversion of what is good neither disproves its essential goodness, nor provides an argument against its proper use. One of the most aggressively evangelical communities of the first century was the church of the Thessalonians. "From you," says the Apostle, "hath sounded forth the Word of the Lord, not only in Macedonia and Achaia, but in every place your faith to God-ward is gone forth," 1 Thess. i. 8. Yet it is of these Christians that he also writes that they had turned to God from idols, not only to serve Him, but "to wait for His Son from heaven," vv. 9, 10. They evidently did not find waiting for the Lord incompatible with service to God. Their expectancy neither damped their ardour nor repressed their zeal in the spread of the Gospel and in other forms of practical Christianity. They were not star-gazers. Paul speaks of their "work of faith and labour of love" ; and these were only stimulated by their

128 Touching the Coming of the Lord

“patience of hope,” v. 3. The Church at Corinth, likewise, both “came behind in no gift,” and at the same time “waited for the revelation of our Lord Jesus Christ,” 1 Cor. i. 7.

Paul himself, who certainly could never be accused of effortless Christianity, testified to the constantly practical effect the prospect had upon his life. In his defence before the governor Felix he boldly declared his hope toward God that there shall be a resurrection, and stated that “therein he exercised himself to have a conscience void of offence toward God and men alway,” Acts xxiv. 16. It has been imputed to him that towards the end of his life his expectation of the Lord’s Second Advent diminished. Yet in his letter to Titus, the last but one of those under his name in the New Testament, and written shortly before his death, he speaks of “looking for the blessed hope and appearing of the glory of our great God and Saviour Jesus Christ,” and regards the hope as part and parcel of a sober, righteous and godly life, Tit. ii. 12, 13.

How could the knowledge that Christ is coming hinder the work of the Church, or paralyse its effort? Those who, like the Thessalonians of old, wait for God’s Son from heaven, find the expectation of the event an incentive to greater devotion to the service of their Master. The nobleman in the Lord’s parable, who entrusted his servants with his money, commanded them, “Trade ye herewith, till I come,” Luke xix. 12, 13. He who spake the parable thus set His

Coming again as the goal towards which the energies of His servants were to be directed.

The churches were certainly not more aggressive in Christian activity during those centuries of the present era in which the hope of the Lord's return was well-nigh lost, than they have been since the hope was resuscitated as it has been now for over a century. Simultaneous with the revival of interest in His Second Advent, and with an increased intelligent apprehension of the testimony of Scripture concerning it, has been the revival of zealous effort for the spread of the Gospel, and for the evangelization of nations lying in heathen darkness.

A STRENGTH FOR ENDURANCE

The Apostle Peter speaks of the Second Advent as "a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time," and then describes the joy-inspiring power of the prospect for the believer in the midst of trial. In this salvation, he says, "ye greatly rejoice, though now for a little while, if need be, ye have been put to grief in manifold trials, that the proof of your faith, being more precious than gold that perisheth though it is proved by fire, might be found unto praise and glory and honour at the revelation of Jesus Christ," 1 Pet. i. 5-8. Two points may be observed here.

Firstly, the trials are for "a little while." The phrase is suggestive of expectancy of the Lord's return. It was frequently on the lips

130 Touching the Coming of the Lord

of Christ Himself: "A little while, and ye behold Me no more; and again a little while, and ye shall see Me," John xvi. 16, 17, 19 (see also vii. 33; xii. 35; xiii. 33; xiv. 19). The words remained with Peter, and find an echo in his Epistle, both in the passage above quoted, and later on when he says, "And the God of all grace, Who called you unto His eternal glory in Christ, after that ye have suffered a little while, shall Himself perfect, stablish, strengthen you," v. 10. Nineteen centuries have rolled away and the Lord has not yet returned. Albeit the prospect is ever near to the Christian. It is still "a little while." The writer to the Hebrews views the time even more briefly: "yet a very little while (literally, yet a little while, how little! how little!), He that cometh shall come, and shall not tarry," Heb. x. 37. Paul's way of putting it in the Second Epistle to the Corinthians, "Our light affliction, which is for the moment," is briefest of all, 2 Cor. v. 17.

Secondly, there is a "needs be." Why exactly it should be so may remain a mystery here. But the faith, which itself is undergoing the testing, can rest in the assurance of a loving Heart and an unerring Wisdom which planned the trial, and in the prospect of the Day of Christ, when the Lord will make fully known the value He sets upon the patient endurance of trial, and show how all has redounded to His "praise, honour and glory."

Suffering for Christ's sake is lusted by the

glory beyond. "We are," says Paul, "joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with Him, that we may be also glorified with Him. For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed to us-ward," Rom. viii. 17, 18. The Apostle is here looking on to the manifestation of the Parousia, when the Lord "shall come to be glorified in His saints," 2 Thess. i. 10. The glory is not merely that which will be revealed to them: "to us-ward" conveys the more comprehensive idea of the revelation of His glory first to, and then in and through, them. Of this he speaks as "the liberty of the glory of the children of God," Rom. viii. 21.

Of the effects of the prospect upon sufferings resulting from Christian testimony Peter has more to say. Those on whose behalf he was writing were the objects of fierce persecution; "a fiery trial," he calls it. They were not, however, to count that kind of thing strange. Three incentives were given them to rejoice therein, past, future and present. As to the past, they were to rejoice because they were partakers of Christ's sufferings: that looked back to Calvary. As to the future, there lay before them "the revelation of His glory"; then they would rejoice "with exceeding joy." As to the present, "if ye are reproached," he says, "for the Name of Christ, blessed are ye; because the Spirit of glory and the Spirit of God resteth upon you,"

132 Touching the Coming of the Lord

1 Pet. iv. 12-14. The power to endure reproach for Christ's sake comes from the Holy Spirit. He is "the Spirit of glory" because He is Himself the pledge of coming glory. The present blessedness of reproach for the Name of Christ is an earnest of the reward to be bestowed hereafter for such suffering. "If we endure, we shall also reign with Him."

This patient endurance in view of resurrection glory was what characterized the faithful of the former age. They saw the promises and greeted them from afar, and, confessing that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth, they sought after a heavenly country. Some "were tortured, not accepting their deliverance; that they might obtain a better resurrection"—not a different kind of actual resurrection from that of other saints, but a resurrection which would bring with it a reward proportionate to their faithfulness in enduring hardship and suffering instead of seeking to escape it by compromise of the truth and dalliance with evil, Heb. xi. 13, 35. They anticipated the inspired estimate given in a later age by one like-minded with themselves, counting light their affliction which was for a moment, reckoning that it was working for them more and more exceedingly an eternal weight of glory, and looking, not at the things which are seen, the temporal things, but at the things which are not seen, the eternal.

Accordingly the writer to the Hebrews, turning from these faithful ones to the Author and Perfecter of faith, and reminding them how

for the joy set before Him He endured the Cross, and, further, how and why He "suffered without the gate," exhorts them to go forth unto Him, bearing His reproach, Heb. xii. 2 and xiii. 12, 13. And the inducement? The Lord Himself. "Unto Him!" He must ever be the great attraction. Nothing signifies apart from Him. But with Him there is a further inducement, namely, the future glories, of which He will be the Centre. With those in view the Apostle speaks of the Heavenly Jerusalem. "For we have not here an abiding city, but we seek after the city which is to come." The glory of that city takes its light from the Cross, and reflects it, in all its spirit-strengthening radiance, upon the sufferings of this little while.

"The Cross is all thy splendour,
The Crucified thy praise ;
His laud and benediction
Thy ransomed people raise.
Upon the Rock of Ages
They raise thy holy tower ;
Thine is the victor's laurel,
And thine the golden dower."

AN ENCOURAGEMENT IN CONFLICT

When Paul exhorts Timothy to "endure hardship as a good soldier of Christ Jesus," warning him against entangling himself in the affairs of this life, he points him to the reward hereafter, adding the metaphor of the crown received by the victor in the games. To be crowned he must contend lawfully. The reference to the Second Coming of Christ is in-

134 Touching the Coming of the Lord

direct, yet real, for it is only when the Lord comes that the crowning day will come. The illustration of abiding by the laws of a game imparts the lessons of faithfulness and obedience to Christ in view of the reward, despite the efforts of spiritual foes to oppose and to defeat, and despite every inducement to desist from the struggle with sin within and with the hosts of spiritual wickedness without. Anticipation of the crown begets strength for the conflict.

And Paul not only exhorts, he presents the example of his own life. "I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith : henceforth there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give to me at that day ; and not only to me, but also to all them that have loved His appearing," 2 Tim. iv. 7, 8.

True, the Apostle realized that he might be near the end of his earthly course : " The time of my departure is come," he says. But that did not lessen for him the power of the hope. Clearly, too, he implies that, looking back through his Christian life, he has joy in being of the number of those who love the Lord's appearing. This love is more than a longing for the great event to take place. Paul evidently implies that it involves fighting the good fight, finishing the course, and keeping the faith. This had all been done in his case with the Lord's Coming and the crown of righteousness in view. The love of His appear-

ing imparted courage in the conflict, steadfastness in the race and faithfulness in adherence to the truth. His own example, then, was calculated to be an encouragement to every believer similarly to set the heart's affection on the Lord's appearing. No more striking evidence could be given of the power of the hope to affect the Christian life. The perfect tense looks back from the Judgement-seat of Christ where the past conduct of each believer will be reviewed. According as each will there be seen to have lived his life and finished his course under the stimulating influence of the Lord's return, so will be his reward.

That the Lord watches constantly, and with a view to their reward, the spiritual conflict in which His servants are engaged is evidenced in a special manner in the letters to the seven churches in Asia, in each of which He addresses the overcomer, reminding him of the time when faithfulness will receive its recompense at His hands. The present opposition is subtle, unremitting, and varied, but the promises are sure: "To him that overcometh will I give. . . ." What seems to be the greatest reward is for the overcomer in the church in Laodicea, the low spiritual condition of which calls forth His most solemn rebuke; the church that was lukewarm, rich in this world, but wretched and miserable and poor and blind and naked spiritually. In this church "He that overcometh," says the Lord, "I will give to him to sit down with Me in My throne, as

136 Touching the Coming of the Lord

I also overcame, and sat down with My Father in His Throne," Rev. iii. 21. This is a special identification with Himself as The Great Overcomer, and the reward is that of highest authority in the future glories of His Kingdom.

But what is it to be an overcomer? The term implies the existence of obstacles to the exercise of faith and difficulties in the path of faithfulness. In each letter the obstacles and difficulties are clearly indicated in the mention of the various evils in the churches, and the trials to which some are subjected. The overcomer is he who in loyalty to His Lord and reliance upon His power surmounts the difficulty, triumphs over the obstacle, and remains steadfast amidst declension.

The prospect of the Lord's speedy return is definitely given to the church in Philadelphia: "I come quickly: hold fast that which thou hast, that no one take thy crown." But what to the overcomer? Here, again, we are directed to the glory of the city that is to be. "He that overcometh, I will make him a pillar in the temple of My God, and He shall go out thence no more: and I will write upon him the Name of My God, and the name of the city of My God, the New Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from My God, and Mine own new Name," iii. 12.

"There is the Throne of David,
And there, from care released,
The song of them that triumph,
The shout of them that feast ;

And they who with their Leader
Have conquered in the fight,
For ever and for ever
Are clad in robes of white."

A COMFORT IN SORROW

This is distinctly laid down by Paul both at the beginning and at the close of the passage relating to the subject in the fourth chapter of 1 Thessalonians. He prefaces his Divinely given assurance of the fact that those who have fallen asleep will have part in the resurrection and rapture at the Lord's return, by stating that his object is to prevent needless sorrow. "We would not have you ignorant, brethren, concerning them that fall asleep; that ye sorrow not, even as the rest, which have no hope." Then, having shown how all are to be together again when the promised event takes place, and how all will be caught up to meet the Lord, he says, "Wherefore comfort one another with these words."

This hope is given us, then, not to preclude sorrow, but to mitigate it.

"Grief for the loss of friends is common to all, and is not inconsistent with acceptance of the will of God, neither does it deny the hope of the Christian. The Lord Jesus Himself wept in sympathy with the mourners at the grave of Lazarus, John xi. 33-35. Paul, too, was apprehensive of the sorrow into which he would have been plunged had the sickness of Epaphroditus resulted in death, Phil. ii. 27.

138 Touching the Coming of the Lord

The converts at Thessalonica grieved not merely for their own loss, they grieved also for the loss sustained, as the survivors supposed, by those of their number who had fallen asleep. It was to save them from grief on this account that the Apostle wrote showing them that their fears were groundless. . . . Since, for the believer, to live is Christ, to die not loss but gain, Phil. i. 21, sorrow on behalf of departed saints is precluded entirely. For our loss we mourn, for their gain we rejoice." ¹

The knowledge that our loved ones who have fallen asleep are "at home with the Lord" should be sufficient to satisfy us completely as to their present felicity. To be at home with Him Who loved us and gave Himself for us, is to be in the enjoyment of happiness which can be exceeded only by that of reunion in the resurrection and rapture with all the redeemed, and participation in the glories that are to follow. For those who mourn the loss of loved ones, the Lord both lustres the dews of sorrow by His love, and wills that the glory of His promised return should shed its comforting light into the darkness of our bereavements, and that the joy of that day should temper the sorrows of separation.

"Haste, thou glorious morning ! welcome shadeless day,
Chasing with thy sunlight all our tears away ;
Haste, O wondrous moment, when 'midst radiant skies
Sleeping saints and living at His word arise."

¹ From *Notes on the Epistles to the Thessalonians*, pp. 129, 130.

A MEANS OF MOULDING CHARACTER

Men become like the objects of their worship. The character of the idolater receives an impress from the nature of his idol. "They that make them are like unto them." "If you think of Buddha and pray to Buddha," says the Eastern proverb, "you will become like Buddha." He whose heart's affection is set on Christ, inevitably becomes conformed to His character. "We all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are [being] transformed into the same image from glory to glory, even as from the Lord the Spirit," 2 Cor. iii. 18 (margin). There is first the unobscured vision, indicating heart occupation with Christ; then the transformation into His likeness. The more we learn of the Lord by means of the mirror of the Scriptures, the more we let the vision of His glory operate within us, the more conformed to His likeness we become.

But such devotion to the Lord is in Scripture associated with the prospect of His return, and this is definitely stated to be a means of conformity to His character. "Beloved, now are we children of God, and it is not yet made manifest what we shall be. We know that, if He shall be manifested, we shall be like Him; for we shall see Him even as He is." There will be no defect in the image when the resurrection shout has accomplished its work. Meanwhile the transformation of character is gradual: "Every one that hath this hope set on Him

140 Touching the Coming of the Lord

purifieth himself, even as He is pure," 1 John iii. 2, 3. The Authorized Version "in him" is ambiguous and lends itself readily to the idea that the hope is within the believer. This of course is true, but it is not in the verse. Christ is the attraction. The hope is not merely that the event will take place, it is a hope set on Him. The immediate outgoing of the heart to Him is coupled with the joyful anticipation of what we shall find ourselves to be when we see Him even as He is, and share in His resurrection glory. "We shall be satisfied, when we awake, with His likeness," Ps. xvii. 8.

The realization of what is to take place in His Parousia is an incentive to purity of heart and life. When we remember that according as we have purified ourselves, abstaining from, or discarding, all that displeases Him, so will be our capacity to serve Him in the ages to come, we have enough to inspire us to eschew every form of evil and to devote our lives and energies to Him in loyal obedience. And the standard of purity is His own unsullied character—"even as He is pure." The more effectively the power of the hope works within us, the more like our Lord we become.

Peter likewise gives testimony to the power of the hope to mould character. "Gird up," he says, "the loins of your mind, be sober and set your hope perfectly on the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ," 1 Pet. i. 13. The tense he employs is the vivid present—"is being brought unto you"

—as if to make the future event immediately real. Then, presenting the same standard of holiness as John does, he continues, “as children of obedience”—suggesting the likeness of child to parent—“not fashioning yourselves according to your former lusts in the time of your ignorance, but like as He Who called you is holy, be ye yourselves also holy in all manner of living; because it is written, Ye shall be holy, for I am holy.” To set one’s hope perfectly on the Lord’s Second Coming thus produces conformity to His holiness in a life of obedience, with the consequent shaping of a character which is the reflection of His own.

In the Second Epistle, too, he points to the Day of the Lord and the passing away therein of the heavens, the dissolution of the elements, the destruction of the earth and its works by fire, and exhorts us, in view of that Day, to live in all holiness and godliness, and to look for and earnestly desire “the Parousia of the Day of God.” With this prospect before us we are to “give diligence that we may be found in peace, without spot, and blameless in His sight,” 2 Pet. iii. 10-14.

In writing to Titus Paul speaks of two appearances, one past, the appearing of grace, which has brought salvation to all men, the other future, the appearing of glory, “the glory of our great God and Saviour Jesus Christ.” Grace instructs us to deny ungodliness and worldly desires, and to live soberly and righteously and godly in this present world, but ever with our eye upon the

142 Touching the Coming of the Lord

glory that is to be revealed at the Lord's Second Advent. That hope is, then, to influence us in all the conditions and relationships of life, producing sobriety in our individual experience, righteousness towards our fellows, and godliness toward God, Titus ii. 11-13.

And when the Lord Himself, in the closing declaration of Holy Writ, predicts His speedy return, He gives solemn admonition as to the effects of His Advent upon character, and points to the recompense which He will administer in person: "He that is unrighteous, let him do unrighteousness still: and he that is filthy, let him be made filthy still: and he that is righteous, let him do righteousness still: and he that is holy, let him be made holy still: Behold, I come quickly; and My reward is with Me, to render to each man according as his work is. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end. Blessed are they that wash their robes, that they may have the right to come to the tree of life, and may enter by the gates into the city," Rev. xxii. 11-14.

CHAPTER X

A SYNOPSIS OF THE BIBLE DOCTRINE OF THE SECOND ADVENT

THE diagram is intended to present to the mind, through the eye, the Way of the Lord Jesus from His Ascension until His feet stand again upon the Mount of Olives, as foretold through Zechariah, see chapter xiv., verse 4.

The base line A-B represents the World, or Time, or the History of the Human Race on the one and in the other. The first event marked thereon, C, is the Ascension of the Lord, which is described in the New Testament in such terms as these: "He was taken up; and a cloud received Him out of their sight"; He "was carried up into Heaven"; He "passed through the Heavens"; He "ascended far above all the Heavens"; He "entered . . . into Heaven itself," where He is seated "far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age, but also in that which is to come"; "With His Father in His Throne"; "On the right Hand of the Throne of the Majesty in the Heavens," Acts i. 9; Luke xxiv. 51; Heb. iv. 14; Eph. iv. 10; Heb. ix. 24; Eph. i. 21; Rev. iii. 21; Heb. viii. 1.

144 Touching the Coming of the Lord

It is significant, however, that when the Apostle has occasion to speak of the Ascension of Christ, without previous reference to His Heavenly origin, he is careful to add that before He ascended He descended; that is, he takes pains to guard against a wrong deduction from his words, as that the Lord had His beginning here. He was, indeed, born in Bethlehem of Judæa, but "His goings forth are from of old, from everlasting"; He "came forth from God," Micah. v. 2; John xvii. 8.

CHRIST IN HEAVEN

The occupation of Christ during His present session in Heaven, D-E, is variously described. "Whither as a forerunner Jesus entered for us"; "to appear before the face of God for us"; "to prepare a place for us," Heb. vi. 20; ix. 24; John xiv. 2. He is "Great Priest over the House of God," "Whose House are we, if we hold fast our boldness and the glorying of our hope firm unto the end"; He "maketh intercession for us"; and "if any man sin," He is our "Advocate with the Father," and, as already noticed in an earlier chapter, He is also "expecting till His enemies be made the footstool of His feet," Heb. x. 21; iii. 6; Rom. viii. 34; 1 John ii. 1; Heb. x. 13.

The end of this session of the Lord on His Father's Throne is described thus by the Apostle Paul: "the Lord Himself shall descend from Heaven, with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God," 1 Thess.

A Synopsis of the Bible Doctrine 145

iv. 16 (E-F). But the duration of the period, D-E, has not been revealed; hence in the diagram the line has been interrupted in the middle, to suggest the limitation of our knowledge in this respect.

Co-terminous with the Lord's session in heaven is this age of Gospel preaching, of "the ministration of the Spirit," 2 Cor. ii. 8. It began with the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, the gift of the Father and the Son, Acts ii. 33. It is the age during which "the Church which is His (Christ's) Body" is being formed, Eph. i. 22, 23. The manner of its ending has been revealed in these words of the Apostle: "the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven . . . and the dead in Christ shall rise first: then we that are alive, that are left, shall together with them be caught up in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air," 1 Thess. iv. 17 (G-F). But concerning the duration of the age of the Church, C-G, nothing has been revealed, hence this line also has been interrupted.

THE FIXING OF DATES FORBIDDEN

Attempts have again and again been made to supply this lack of revelation by calculations based upon Biblical and other data, astronomical phenomena and what not, or by deductions drawn from analogies assumed to be discernible therein. That such attempts are vain is abundantly evident from the failure that has invariably attended them. The only fruit they have had has been to discredit prophecy and to bring

146 Touching the Coming of the Lord

its study into disrepute. These attempts, moreover, are not merely vain; they are wrong, inasmuch as they are forbidden in the Scriptures which themselves provide the material on which such calculations are supposed to be based.

The principle underlying all communications of the Divine will was thus enunciated by Moses, "The secret things belong unto the Lord our God: but the things that are revealed belong unto us and to our children," Deut. xxix. 29. The Lord Jesus said to His disciples, "Of that day and hour knoweth no one, not even the angels of Heaven, neither the Son, but the Father only," Matt. xxiv. 36. The words "day" and "hour" here seem to be equivalent to "time" in its wider, as well as in its narrower, sense. That is, the time was unknown, whether the year or the month, the day or the hour. Nor was it ever afterwards revealed. Indeed the words used by the Lord after His Resurrection and recorded in Acts i. 7, "It is not for you to know times or seasons, which the Father hath set within His own authority," seem to be intended to declare that the withholding from His children of this knowledge is designed and for a purpose, and to be intended to remain in force until the event takes place. The prohibition is plain enough; to attempt that which He has thus forbidden is disobedience, neither less nor more, however speciously it may be disguised or excused.

THE CONDITION OF WATCHFULNESS

The words of 1 Thessalonians, chapter v., verses 1 and 2: "But concerning the times and the seasons, brethren, ye have no need that aught be written unto you. For yourselves know perfectly that the Day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night," may be paraphrased thus, "you well know that nothing more can be known about the date of the Advent than that it will come when least expected." True the Apostle went on to say, "When they (*i.e.* the ungodly) are saying, Peace and safety, then sudden destruction cometh upon them. . . . But ye, brethren, are not in darkness that that day should overtake you as a thief." The difference between the Christian and the ungodly, however, is not that the former knows the time of the Advent, for he does not, but that he is watchful for it at all times. It is with him as with the master of the house in the parable, who, had he known the hour of the night at which the thief was coming, would have been on the alert about that hour. But the Christian being assured that his Lord is coming, and knowing not the time of His coming, is to be on the alert all the while the night lasts. In every age His ever appropriate word to all His people is, "Be ye also ready; for in an hour that ye think not He will come," Luke xii. 37-40.

Two reasons may be suggested for this silence as to the date of the Advent. In the

148 Touching the Coming of the Lord

first place it is left unrevealed in order to induce in the Christian an ever-watchful spirit. Were the day of his Lord's appearing known this incentive to instant readiness would be lost. True it is the Christian ought to need no such aid to loyalty, but that is not the point here. God has been pleased, in His wisdom, to provide the incentive, and what He gives we need. "Take ye heed, watch and pray; for ye know not when the time is. . . . Watch therefore: for ye know not when . . . and what I say unto you I say unto all, Watch," Mark xiii. 33-37. All such language, and there is much of it in the New Testament, presupposes our ignorance of the time of the Lord's return. That known the sanctifying power of the hope would disappear. Moreover, had that time been revealed subsequently to the use of these words and others of a similar tenor, then the force of the oft-repeated exhortation to watch would have been dissipated.

It was not, then, a temporary expedient that this hour should be unknown for a season; neither was it left hidden in such a way that the diligent, or the ingenious, might discover it. From our point of view, it has been left unrevealed that we might be "like unto men that wait for their Lord," Luke xii. 36. And yet there may be a deeper reason still.

THE SOVEREIGNTY OF THE LIVING GOD

We must beware of the entirely unwarranted assumption underlying much of what is said

upon this point, that the acts of God are fixed upon human almanacks, that His purposes are measurable by human calendars. Not the striking of a clock but the maturity of the conditions moves the Hand of God. We must resist the tendency to think of Him as though He were limited to a merely mechanical activity ; as if, like the Medo-Persian monarchs, He were the slave of His own laws. The state of the crops prescribes the time of the harvest. He waited for the iniquity of the Amorites to be filled to the full, Gen. xv. 10. Nineveh repented, so the fortieth day did not see the destruction of the city albeit that was proclaimed by Jonah at His command. For the elect's sake the days of calamity are shortened, whereas the long-suffering of God lengthens the day of salvation. Yet these days are not two but one, Matt. xxiv. 22 ; 2 Pet. iii. 9. The same patience of God that wrings from the saint the cry, "O Lord, how long," puts the new songs of praise for salvation into the mouth of many a sinner.

It is difficult, rather it is impossible, for us to conceive of the full yet harmonious exercise of all the attributes of God. There seems to us some necessary antagonism between omniscience, which must know the end from the beginning, as well as all the steps of the way thither, and the dependence of any action of God upon the course and conduct of men. So also we ask how it is possible for God to be resisted if He is omnipotent? We must remember the inevitable limitations of our power to apprehend what it is

150 Touching the Coming of the Lord

to be God. God is omniscient and omnipotent ; we cannot conceive of Him as anything less. But God is also a living and free person, and it is the prerogative of all living and free persons to adopt themselves to the changing conditions with which they have to deal. Are we to deny that to Him which we claim for ourselves? It is vain for us to reason that God cannot be this if He is that, cannot be the one if He is the other, when the very conditions of our being make it inevitable that we must ascribe that to God which, because of realized inconsistency or antagonism, would be inconceivable in ourselves. Moreover, the Coming of the Lord is a proper subject for prayer. The Lord taught His disciples to say "Thy Kingdom come."¹ To John He said, "Yea, I come quickly"; and to Him John responded, "Amen: come, Lord Jesus." "The Spirit and the Bride say, Come. And he that heareth, let him say, Come," Matt. vi. 10; Rev. xxii. 17, 20. Thus the Spirit prompts the Christian, and even utters Himself, the very petition the Lord Jesus taught His disciples to present to God. And if the Coming of the Lord is a proper subject for prayer, it is not

¹ This word "come" is sometimes taken to mean "grow," "increase," "spread," as though the Kingdom were to be established by the preaching of the Gospel. The Kingdom of God comes when its King comes ; not before and not otherwise. The Stone in Nebuchadnezzar's dream only began to grow after it had destroyed the image, Dan. ii. 35. Rightly understood the prayer is most appropriate to the time now present and to the heart and lip of the Christian. To pray "Thy Kingdom come," is to pray "Amen: come, Lord Jesus." To pray for the coming of the King is to pray for the coming of the Kingdom.

A Synopsis of the Bible Doctrine 151

possible for us to conceive of its hour as already fixed. It is noticeable, too, that when the Lord declared that that hour did not lie within His knowledge, He said, not that though it had been fixed by the Father it had not been revealed by Him, but that the Father had reserved the matter within His own authority. Does not this suggest, at least, that the fixing of the hour is for the Father when, in His wisdom, He sees that the time is ripe?

Our apprehension of the perfection of Deity is feeble as yet. Our knowledge of God is but partial, and being partial may present insoluble problems to our minds. We must be content to await the larger capacity and the increased knowledge that are to be made ours when the Lord comes.

THE MEETING IN THE AIR

To return: at a time unrevealed and hence undiscoverable, "they that are Christ's" are to be caught away "to meet the Lord in the air"; or as the words run literally "to a meeting with" (F). The word used is *apanteesis*, which occurs elsewhere only in Matt. xxv. 1, 6; Acts xxviii. 15. The brethren who met the Apostle at the Three Taverns returned with him to Rome; in the parable the Virgins returned with the bridegroom to the place whence they set out. After this analogy those who are caught up to this meeting with the Lord in the air, are to return with Him to the earth, for we know that the earth is the appointed terminus towards which He is journeying when that meeting takes place.

152 Touching the Coming of the Lord

There is nothing in the word, neither is there anything in the context, to indicate that the return to the earth must follow immediately upon the meeting in the air. Or, to express the same thing from another point of view, the Lord's descent from heaven to earth is not of necessity continuous. Indeed there are cogent reasons for the conclusion that that descent will be interrupted for a measurable interval at the point of meeting with His redeemed people.

THE PAROUSIA

When the Lord Jesus descends from heaven with the quickening word which is to work in the bodies of all His own, the living and the dead, the change to the new and heavenly condition, they are to be carried together to meet Him at His Parousia (F). It is unfortunate that the English Versions should have adopted, or retained, "coming" as a translation of the Greek word *parousia*; it would have been clear gain had they done with it as with the Greek word *baptisma*, that is had they transliterated instead of translating it. "Coming" does not at all convey the meaning of the original word.¹ The difference is that whereas "coming" is the name of an act and is equivalent to "arrival," "advent," *parousia* is the name of a state and is equivalent to "presence," which is, indeed, its literal meaning, as the margin of the Revised Version indicates. "Coming" is properly represented by a perpendicular line

¹ See Chapter V.

thus | ; *parousia* by a horizontal line thus —. “Coming” is the act of arriving and hence does not denote duration, as *parousia* invariably does. It will be easy to test these statements by reference to the New Testament occurrences of the word. The effect of this confusion is evident in 1 Thess. iii. 12, 13, for example, “the Lord . . . stablish your hearts unblameable in holiness before our God and Father, at the coming (*parousia*) of our Lord Jesus with all His saints.” This seems to refer to the Second Advent, “the appearing of the glory of our great God and Saviour Jesus Christ,” “with ten thousands of His holy ones,” Titus ii. 11; Jude 14. And so the classic commentators understand it, see Alford, Ellicott, Lightfoot, among others. But this conclusion is only possible, as Cremer somewhat artlessly remarks, when *parousia* is made to mean what, in fact, it does not mean.¹ It is essential to an apprehension of the mind of the Spirit, and of the Apostle, that the characteristic meaning of the word be preserved. To come with, and to be present with, are obviously different ideas, and would never be confounded in the pages of any secular writer. Why should it be supposed that they are synonymous in the Scriptures?

THE JUDGEMENT-SEAT OF CHRIST

The word used in this connection, then, demands that we conceive of an interruption in the descent of the Lord Jesus to the earth for an

¹ See Note, p. 60.

154 Touching the Coming of the Lord

appreciable period of time, during which His redeemed people will be with Him at the place of meeting. How long the Parousia will occupy has not been revealed, hence the line F-H, which represents this session of the Lord with His redeemed at their place of meeting, has also been interrupted. Apparently it is during this session that the Judgement-seat of God—or of Christ, both terms are used—takes place, Romans xiv. 10; 2 Cor. v. 10. This seems the inevitable deduction from a number of passages. The resurrection of the just is the time of reward for faithful service, Luke xiv. 14. And this resurrection of the just takes place at the opening of the Parousia, 1 Cor. xv. 23, etc. At (*en*, in) the Parousia of the Lord Jesus the Apostle hoped to meet his converts who would then be his glory. And those converts would themselves be presented there, for the appraisement of life and service, 1 Thess. ii. 19; iii. 13.

The Apostle John also expected to meet at the Parousia those to whom he wrote, and his language suggests that that would be a time of the reviewing of life alike for himself and for them, 1 John ii. 28.¹

THE END OF GENTILE TIMES

Concurrent with the Parousia of the Lord with His redeemed in the air is the period represented by the line G-J on the diagram.

¹ This passage and 1 Thess. ii. 19 intimate plainly enough that the Apostles expected to recognize those with whom they had been in contact in this life, and to be recognized by them.

A Synopsis of the Bible Doctrine 155

It also is of an unrevealed duration, and hence has been interrupted. This period sees the rise and development of the final form of Gentile government as described in Rev. xiii. and other passages. It includes the Great Tribulation, "the time of Jacob's trouble," under the persecuting power of the Antichristian monarch, whether he be called king or president, or whether another title be evolved for him more in keeping with the tendencies of the age.

The "times of the Gentiles" end only when a Jew assumes the sovereign power in Jerusalem. That is to say, when the Lord Jesus Himself appears to overthrow the world-monarch and his Empire. This catastrophe will be the effect of the manifestation of the Parousia; the veil that hides the host in the air is suddenly withdrawn, the Presence of the Lord with His redeemed is manifested, "the kingdom of the world," becomes that of "our Lord and of His Christ, and He shall reign for ever and ever," Rev. xi. 15.¹ This is represented by H-J.

During the period G-J, as in every preceding age, there will be a testimony for God in the world, a gospel preached whereby men may be saved, albeit the "Church which is His (Christ's) Body" having already been completed and caught away to meet Him, the salvation of those who then respond to the Gospel does not carry

¹ See Chapter VII. The overthrow of the Turk in Palestine has not relieved the land from Gentile domination. The British also are Gentiles. Doubtless the change from the iron yoke of the Turk to the milder rule of the British is altogether for the better. But that does not alter the fact as stated.

156 Touching the Coming of the Lord

with it membership in that Body. See Rev. vii ; xi ; xiv. 1-5 ; xv. 1, 2 ; xx. 4. The Gospel then, as now, will have for its centre the once slain, now living, Lamb, and it will be made effective by the Holy Spirit, among both Jews and Gentiles.¹

How this testimony for God may be carried over into the new circumstances when all who belong to Christ have been caught away, is not difficult to conceive. Sufficient to mention the multitudes to whom the Gospel facts at least will be known, and the Bible and Christian literature generally, to suggest the possibilities of the situation. That persons are to be saved, and in large numbers, during the period between the rapture of the Church and the Day of the Lord, G-J, is clear from the passages in the Apocalypse referred to above. Moreover, in Joel's foreview of the time when "the great and notable Day of the Lord" is imminent, he concludes with these words, "And it shall come to pass that whosoever shall call upon the Name of the Lord shall be delivered." It is worthy of note that "whosoever" is the characteristic word which describes the scope of the Gospel of the grace of God in this present age. It will be no less so in that which is to follow. The line of demarcation between the day of

¹ There does not appear to be adequate ground for identifying "the restrainer" of 2 Thess. ii. 7, with the Holy Spirit, or for the statement that He is to leave the earth with the completed Church. It is in these "last days," indeed, that God is to pour forth His Spirit upon all flesh, Joel ii. 28-30. See *Notes on Thessalonians*, pp. 258 ff.

A Synopsis of the Bible Doctrine 157

grace and the day of judgement is clearly drawn. When the Lord Jesus is revealed in fire, "rendering vengeance (just retribution is the meaning of the word) to them that know not God, and to them that obey not the Gospel of our Lord Jesus," then it is that 'the Master of the House has risen up, and shut to the door,' 2 Thess. i. 8; Luke xiii. 25. Until that hour (H-J) grace reigns, and "whosoever shall call upon the Name of the Lord shall be saved."

The conditions during the period G-J, however, will not be more but less favourable for naming the Name of the Lord than in this. The spirit of satisfaction with the progress of humanity and hope for its acceleration will increase. There will be no toleration for the godly, while for those who refuse the truth there will be a strong delusion, and a consequent ready belief in the lie that the Antichristian ruler, the First Beast of Rev. xiii., is the Man of Destiny, his dominion the Universal Empire, the guarantee of settled peace and uninterrupted prosperity. See 2 Thess. ii. 8-12.

AFTER THE ADVENT

With events after the Second Advent (H-J) of the Lord Jesus the diagram is not concerned. The judgement of the nations then existent upon the earth will not long be delayed, for the scene is introduced in a way that fixes its relation in time with the Advent. "When the Son of Man shall come in His glory, and all the angels with Him, then shall He sit on the Throne of

158 Touching the Coming of the Lord

His glory : and before Him shall be gathered all the nations," Matt. xxv. 31 ff. This takes place, apparently, at the opening of the Millennial reign. The characteristic of that reign may be learned from the symbol "a rod of iron" used to describe it, Rev. xii. 5. That is to say the rule of the Prince of Peace and King of Righteousness will be guaranteed by adequate force, for no other rule over unregenerate men is possible in any age.

This is to be man's final probation. As in all previous ages, so also in this. Immune from temptation from without, for during this period Satan is confined in the Abyss, men will submit to force, now happily at the disposal of righteousness ; but when the Arch-enemy is free again to practise his deceits, they will readily respond to his approaches and once more assert themselves against God and the Anointed of God. The event is the final defeat of Satan and his doom.

Thereupon follows the resurrection of "the rest of the dead" and their judgement at the Great White Throne, where the Judge is the rejected Saviour, Rev. xx. 11 ff; John v. 22 and 27. "From (His) Face the earth and the heaven fled away ; and there was found no place for them." They make way for "new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness," 2 Pet. iii. 13.

APPENDIX

NOTE A

John v. 29 and Acts xxiv. 15 are the only places in the New Testament in which there is specific reference to the resurrection of others than those who have trusted in Christ. In John xii. 48, and a few other passages, their resurrection is implied.

That "the Last Day" is a period covering more than a thousand years, is clear from Rev. xx. 4-12. Neither in John v. 29, nor in the passages in which the phrase occurs, is there any indication of this interval. "The Last Day" opens with the resurrection and rapture of believers, G-F, and closes with the resurrection and judgement of those who have not accepted Christ, and includes the Millennium which intervenes, J-B. It is not "the end of the world," vulgarly so called, but the last day, or period, of man's accountability to God in his condition as a fallen being.

The "hour" of John v. 24, "The hour cometh, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God and they that hear shall live," has already extended to nearly two thousand years, C-G. The "hour" of verse 28, "the hour cometh in which all that are in the tombs shall

160 Touching the Coming of the Lord

hear His voice, and shall come forth ; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life ; they that have practised ill, unto the resurrection of judgement," must be understood in the same way, G-B. " Day " and " hour," both used in an extended sense, are interchanged in John xvi. 25, 26.

Intervals between events are not always marked in the predictions of Scripture. Things that are foretold in the same sentence may yet be separated by long periods of time in the fulfilment. In Gen. iii. 15, for example, three distinct things are predicted. Enmity between the woman and the serpent sprang up immediately ; the serpent bruised the heel of the woman's Seed at the Cross, four thousand years later ; after six thousand years the bruising of the serpent's head is still awaited.

Of the prophecy of Isaiah xi., verses 1-3 were fulfilled at the First Advent of Christ ; the rest of the chapter refers to the effects of the Second Advent. " The acceptable year of the Lord " was ushered in when He came the first time, and continues unto this day. " The day of vengeance of our God " arrives when the Lord Jesus is revealed " from heaven with the angels of His power in flaming fire," H-J. No interval is suggested in the words as they are recorded in Isaiah lxi. 2, yet the Lord ceased His reading at the end of the former phrase, and said, " To-day hath this Scripture been fulfilled in your ears." The rest awaits. See Luke iv. 21 ; 2 Thess. i. 7, 8. The words of the Lord in John v. 29 present the same feature.

NOTE B

That John v. 25 does not refer to the resurrection but to the spiritual quickening, which is a present experience of each believer, seems plain enough. First, the addition of the words "and now is" which are absent from ver. 28, is to be noted. Second, the Lord speaks of "all that are in the tombs" to describe those whose bodies have ceased to discharge the functions of life and passed into corruption, reserving the word "dead" for the spiritual condition of all men in virtue of their descent from Adam. See Eph. ii. 1. Third, these words are explanatory of verse 24, where those who believe are said to have passed out of death into life, obviously not an event to happen to the body in the future, but a present experience of the believing soul.

NOTE C

A different deduction is sometimes drawn from certain Scriptures, such as Rev. xiv. 4, which speaks of "firstfruits unto God and unto the Lamb." The firstfruits of the harvest is that portion which is earliest garnered. The word is used in the Old Testament only in a literal sense, in the New Testament only in a figurative. Believers of the apostolic age were "a kind of firstfruits of His (God's) creatures," that is, the beginning of the great and varied harvest of the Cross, James i. 18.

The Thessalonian converts had been chosen

162 Touching the Coming of the Lord

of God "as firstfruits unto salvation," 2 Thess. ii. 13, margin, which is probably the correct reading. Salvation is defined in the following verse as "the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ." Many among them had deserved the Apostle's censure, but exclusion of such is not suggested by the Apostle. Not some of the believers at Thessalonica, but the whole of them, are thus described as "firstfruits unto salvation."

This principle must be borne in mind throughout. Epænetus did not differ from the converts that followed him in Asia Minor, Rom. xvi. 5. The household of Stephanus were not more faithful than those in Achaia who were converted later, 1 Cor. xvi. 15.

In 1 Cor. xv. 20, 23 Christ is said to be "the firstfruits of them that are asleep." That is Christ personal, not Christ mystical, as though any of those who believe on Him were contemplated as included with Him. This is clear from verse 20, for it was Christ alone Who was raised from the dead. Moreover, the word firstfruits is a singular noun, notwithstanding the final s. In the general statement of Rom. xi. 16 "firstfruit" is used, but the Greek word is singular throughout.

The only remaining occurrence of the word is Rev. xiv. 4, where it is applied to a company of 144,000 persons (possibly the number is symbolic), who are seen with the Lamb on Mount Zion. An exposition of the passage would be beyond the limits prescribed for these

chapters. The following suggestions may, however, be offered. The preceding chapter describes the condition of the world under the First Beast, the false prince of Peace, who attempts, by mingled fraud and force, by diabolic and by human power, to establish a universal Empire. Chapter xiv. presents the contrast. Here is the true Universal Monarch, set by God on His Holy Hill. With Him are associated a host who are described as "purchased out of the earth." This is the sole ground of their presence with the Lamb. There is no suggestion that by peculiar faithfulness or watchfulness they had earned the right to be there. It is possible they may be those who refused the mark of the Beast. But there is no warrant for identifying them with an hypothetical company of faithful Christians who are to be caught away before the Great Tribulation, while the mass of then living members of the Body of Christ pass through it. It is from the Epistles of Paul that we learn of "the Church which is His Body," and of the resurrection and rapture of its members at the beginning of the Parousia, G-F. These Epistles know nothing of a rapture earlier than that of 1 Thess. iv. 13-17, which is to include all who belong to Christ, 1 Cor. xv. 23. Nor do they know anything of a firstfruits from the Church, though they do of a firstfruits from the world, as we have seen.

NOTE D

The words "we that are alive, that are left unto the Parousia of the Lord," do not commit the Apostle to the belief that the Lord Jesus would return during his lifetime. Shortly afterwards we find him using the same language concerning resurrection, 2 Cor. iv. 14, "shall raise up us also"; but that did not commit him to the belief that he would die before the Lord had come.

When the Lord Jesus returns, believers will be as they are now, and indeed as they were at Thessalonica, divided into two classes, the living and the dead. But the time of that return has not been revealed, it is among the secret things concerning which God has kept His own counsel. See Deut. xxix. 29; Mark xiii. 32; Acts i. 7. Consequently, in speaking of the return of the Lord Jesus, the Apostle sometimes associates himself with the one class, looking forward to resurrection, as in 2 Cor. iv. 14, sometimes with the other, looking forward to change, as in 1 Thess. iv. 13-17, and 1 Cor. xv. 51. His sympathy with those who were anxious about their dead leads him to associate himself with the mourners at Thessalonica; his sense of failing physical powers leads him to associate himself with those who had died at Corinth.

The Second Epistle to the Corinthians, moreover, in which he associates himself with those lying asleep, was written at no greater interval

than three or four years after that to the Thessalonians, in which he associates himself with the living, at the Parousia.

It contains a passage, v. 1-10, expressing his own attitude toward the alternative possibilities, death and the coming of the Lord, and in it also he uses "we." In vv. 2-4 he expresses his longing for that which cannot take place until the Lord comes, to be clothed with "our habitation which is from heaven," the "building from God," the "house not made with hands." In v. 6 he asserts that he is of good courage in the face of death, and in v. 8 repeats the assertion, adding that he is "willing rather to be absent from the body and to be at home with the Lord," *i.e.* to die. Longing for the Parousia of Christ, which is certain to come, yet not afraid of death, which may possibly come first, is, then, the characteristic attitude of each generation of Christians.

In the Epistle to the Philippians, written perhaps seven years later still, while he describes his own attitude towards death, i. 21-24, in language akin to that used to the Corinthians, and suggests that it is no very remote contingency, ii. 17, he yet uses "we" and "our" in describing the characteristic attitude of Christians to the Coming of the Lord. His advancing years and the threatening nature of his circumstances, while they brought before his mind increasingly the possibility that he might die before the Parousia, did not prevent his

166 Touching the Coming of the Lord

saying, "heaven, from whence also we wait for a Saviour," Phil. iii. 20.

And in the Pastoral Epistles, latest of all, whereas he uses language only explicable on the suggestion that he knew his own death to be imminent, he still speaks of the reward awaiting those who have loved the appearing of Christ, 2 Tim. iv. 6-8, and of the grace of God "instructing us, to the intent that . . . we should live . . . looking for the blessed hope," Tit. ii. 11-13. Indeed, before he closes the Epistle in which he says, "I am already being offered," he urges Timothy to come to him "before winter," a season presumably still some distance away, and to bring with him Mark as well as some articles of which he anticipated he would be in need. As always, so now when there seemed to be no escape from death, the Apostle stood ready either for suffering or for service, or for the rapture of the saints that would deliver him from the one and bring the other to an end.

It seems clear, therefore, that no conclusion can be drawn from the Apostle's language as to his personal expectations. He shared in what should be the attitude of each generation of Christians, the desire for, and the expectation of, the Parousia of the Lord, but there is no reason to suppose that he knew more on the subject than he taught, cp. 1 Cor. xiii. 12. Neither is there any evidence that the statements of the later epistles are intended to correct those written earlier. On the contrary, as we have seen, they

supplement, but in no case do they contradict, previous declarations. Moreover, these words to the Thessalonians claim to be a revelation from the Lord Himself, and, while they might be expanded or explained by later revelation, they could not be set aside, much less could they be attributed to a mistaken apprehension on the part of the Apostle. Throughout his life, as it is reflected in his epistles, he maintains the same attitude toward the great alternatives. There is no inconsistency. His example and his words alike teach us to be prepared to meet death with unflinching courage, but, above all things, to look for the Parousia of the Lord.

Hosea xii. 4 ; Romans xiii. 13 ; Hebrews xii. 25 may be compared for examples of this use of "us" and "we."

It is true of each man at all times, as it was true of David pursued by Saul, "there is but a step between (us) and death." And yet true as the Apostle knew this to be of himself, he knew also that the Lord might come first. Experience has taught men that death is the one thing which can be really reckoned upon as an ever-present possibility. In the Gospel it is revealed that to the Christian the Lord may possibly come first. If wise men thus reckon with death, how much more should the believer count upon the Parousia of the Lord !

NOTE E

Too often, it is to be feared, the word "rapture" is taken to refer to the peculiar joy of the re-

168 Touching the Coming of the Lord

deemed when they meet the Lord. But the idea of ecstasy which arises from the conception of being carried out of oneself with joy, is entirely absent from the New Testament use of the word *harpazo*. Nor is the word "secret" ever attached to it there. In view of unhappy controversies it is well to confine ourselves to Scriptural phraseology as far as possible. As to the fact, this much may be said, that what is to happen "in the twinkling of an eye," cannot be witnessed and therefore must, in so far, be secret. But the removal of even a "little flock" from among men could not long remain a secret, if it was ever a secret at all. See *Notes on Thessalonians*, p. 144.

NOTE F

Neither soul nor spirit is said to sleep at death; the word of 1 Thess. iv. 13 (*koimaomai*) is used only of the body of the believer. This is clear from such a passage as Acts xiii. 36, for example: "David fell on sleep . . . and saw corruption." That part of David which fell on sleep was the part that saw corruption. At death the unclothed spirit (a condition in itself distasteful to the Apostle, as may be seen from a comparison of 2 Cor. v., verse 3 with verse 8) is "at home with the Lord." It is in view of this that he is ready even to die, for, he writes elsewhere, "to die is gain . . . to depart and to be with Christ . . . is very far better," Phil. i. 21-23. To suggest that the otiose state, quiescence, if not unconsciousness, of spirit would commend itself to

the Apostle as preferable to his life of activity in service here betrays a curious misconception of his character.

Moreover, the preposition translated "with" (*pros*) in 2 Cor. v. 5, denotes not merely to be in the same place with another, it means to be in communication with, to be receiving impressions from and imparting impressions to, another. The preposition would be inappropriate were the souls or spirits of the dead in Christ to be conceived of as in a state of unconsciousness.

NOTE G

"The Last Trump." It is hardly possible that the reference is to the last of the Seven Trumpets of the Apocalypse. These are figures, not actual trumpets; like the Seals and the Bowls they are part of the symbology under which the future was unfolded to John. To suppose that Paul refers to the seventh of John's series is to mistake the character of the Revelation, and to assume that what John saw and heard were the actual things that are yet to be seen and heard when the fulfilment comes, and not symbols, or figures, of those things. Moreover, there is no hint in his writings that Paul had any knowledge of the form under which the developments of human history were revealed to John, or, indeed, that he was acquainted with the Apocalypse at all. Moreover, he is not describing a vision; he is imparting information, describing things that are to occur. All the rest of the passage is to be understood literally; so also must

170 Touching the Coming of the Lord

this according to any sound canon of interpretation. The figure is that of an army receiving the signal to march; the "shout" of 1 Thess. iv. 16 is also a military word with a like significance. It is possible the Apostle may have in mind the trumpets by which the Israelites were summoned. The first and second blasts gathered them, the third was the signal to march, Num. x. 2-6.

NOTE H

Like "resurrection," "mortal" is applicable only to the body, and, indeed, only to the bodies of the living. The word immortality of necessity follows it; that is, it also is applicable only to the bodies of living believers as these will be affected by the change which is to take place in them at the Parousia of the Lord. "The immortality of the soul" is a purely pagan conception, arising out of the mistaken notion that evil is inherent in matter, and that, therefore, the body is the seat of sin and the source of all the ills of life. The only other New Testament occurrence of the word (*athanasia*) is 1 Tim. vi. 16. The common use of immortal as equivalent to continuously existing is not found in the Bible at all. Immortality is not used of the unregenerate there, but neither is countenance given to the notion that any man will ever cease to be.

NOTE J

Zōopoieō, "to make alive," in the New Testament invariably means to impart life to

what is dead. God raises the dead, that is, the bodies of the dead, and imparts life to them; so also does the Son, John v. 24; 1 Cor. xv. 22. Rom. viii. 11 is to be understood in the same way; God will impart life to this mortal body; it shall put on immortality. There is no other passage of Scripture in which *zōopoieō* means a reinforcement of vigour, spiritual, mental or physical. There is no reason for the introduction of this idea here, since it is unwarranted either by the usage of the word or by the context.

INDEX TO SUBJECTS

- Advent, the Second, still future, 57, 58
 Antichrist, 100, 122
- Body, the resurrection, 49, 55
 Body, Resurrection of the, 44, 50
 Beasts, the four, of Dan. v. 11, 114
- Church, the Christian and the, 80
 Crowns, 85
- Dates, fixing of, forbidden, 145
 "Day" and "Hour" significance of the words, 146, 159
 Day of Christ and the day of the Lord, the, 66, 70, 97, 101
 Day of Judgement, 9
 Day of Man, 69, 104
 Day, the Last, 32, 159
 Days of Noah and of Lot, 94
 Dead, state of the, 27
 Death, the Christian and, 46, 165
 Democracy, 121
- Empire, the Fourth, 115
 End of the world, the, 159
- First fruits, 161
- God, Living and Sovereign, 148
 Gospel, the, after the Rapture, 156
- Har-Magedon, 105, 123
- Image, the, of Dan. ii., 112
 Immortality of the soul, the, 170
- Judgement, principles of, 83
 172
- Millennial Reign, the, 158
- Nations, the League of, 94, 118
- Overcomer, the, 133
- Palestine in prophecy, 111
 Palestine under the British, 155
 Prayer for the Coming of the Kingdom, 150
- Rapture, the, 43
 Rapture, meaning of the word, 167
 Rapture, a select, negatived, 42
 Recognition hereafter, 154
 Redemption, 52
 Resurrection, a better, 132
 Resurrection of the dead, 44, 171
 Resurrection of the body, 44, 50, 171
 Revelation of future conditions, limits to the, 53
- Sign of the Son of Man, the, 100
 Soul, the, not said to sleep, 168
 Spirit, the indwelling, 50
- Throne, N.T. use of the word, 75
 Throne, the Great White, 36, 158
 Times of the Gentiles, the, 112, 155
 Tribulation, the Great, 97, 155
 Trump, the last, 46, 169
 Turks, the, 117, 155
- Unbelievers, the resurrection of, 159
 Unclothed state, the, 168
- "We," Paul's use of the word, 164
 Wrath of God, the, 39

INDEX TO TEXTS

*(Only such texts are entered here as are the subject of expository
comment or suggestion in the body of the book)*

Gen. iii. 15	159	2 Cor. v. 1-11	47, 81, 83, 84, 165, 169
Deut. xxxii. 8	112	Eph. i. 14	53
Ps. xvii. 8	140	„ v. 25-29	19
Isa. xi. 1-3	159	„ vi. 8	85
„ lii. 14, 15	124	Phil. i. 6, 9, 10	67
„ liii. 11	20	„ i. 21	88
Jer. xxx. 7	99	„ ii. 15, 16	68
Dan. ix. 26	111	„ iii. 8-14	44, 87, 89
„ xii. 1	99	Col. iii. 23-25	84
Joel ii. 30, 31	98	1 Thess. i. 10	15
Matt. vi. 10	150	„ ii. 19, 20	62
„ xxiv. 36	146	„ iii. 12, 13	62, 153
„ xxv. 21	89	„ v. 1, 2	147
Luke vii. 11-17	23	2 Thess. ii. 2	70
„ xiii. 25	157	„ ii. 6-8	101, 156
„ xv. 10	23	„ iii. 5	13
„ xx. 27-40	27	Heb. ii. 17	18, 35
„ xxi. 42	112	„ ix. 28	15
John v. 24-29	10, 31, 159, 161	„ x. 2	82
„ xi. 25, 26	34, 37, 41	„ xi. 13, 35	132
„ xiv. 1, 2	18	„ xii. 1, 2	21
Acts i. 7	146	„ xiii. 12-14	133
Rom. vi. 4, 11	88	1 Pet. i. 7	83
„ viii. 11	51	„ iv. 12-14	132
„ viii. 17, 18	131	„ v. 2-4	66
„ viii. 25	16	2 Pet. i. 16	60
„ i. 8, 9	68	1 John ii. 28	64
1 Cor. iii. 10-17	70, 79	„ iii. 2	50, 55
„ iv. 3, 5	69	„ iii. 3	140
„ v. 5	69	„ iv. 17, 18	10
2 Cor. i. 14	68	Rev. iii. 10	15
„ iv. 14	164	„ xiv. 1-5	162

IMPORTANT NEW BOOKS

THE COMING OF THE LORD IN THE LIGHT OF PROPHECY AND THE WAR. By C. F. HOGG and W. E. VINE, M.A., Joint Authors of "Notes on the Epistles to the Thessalonians." 3s. 6d. net.

A most thoughtful and helpful book on a subject about which many are at the present time seeking light and guidance. The teaching of Scripture is set forth in a way that everyone can understand and follow with profit.

AN ALPHABET OF STORIES. By Rev. W. J. MAY. 3s. 6d. net.

A delightful collection of stories for young people which will really entertain them, while at the same time they are learning profitable lessons.

WHAT OUR CHILDREN SHOULD KNOW, AND HOW WE SHOULD TELL THEM. By Captain I. FLACK, R.A.M.C., L.R.C.P. & S. (Edin.), L.F.P. & S. (Glas.), D.P.H. With Foreword by Sir ROBERT BADEN-POWELL. 4s. 6d. net.

Wise and useful chapters on sex questions, which will help parents and teachers, and which may be placed in the hands of young people themselves.

THE FEARLESS PRIME MINISTER. By WILLIAM HENRY HARDING, Author of "Life of George Muller." 3s. 6d. net.

The story of the Prophet Daniel told in an altogether new way which will make it more than ever a favourite with girls and boys. The striking series of coloured illustrations, from drawings by Mr Wal Paget, were specially made for the volume.

MADE IN THE PANS. By AMY WILSON-CARMICHAEL, Author of "Things as They Are in Southern India." With Foreword by the BISHOP OF DURHAM. 3s. 6d. net.

A charming book of poetry which will touch the hearts of readers. Opening up to them many a new vision of the unseen world and of the Eastern land in which the author has made her home.

EVOLUTION CRITICISED. By T. B. BISHOP. 3s. 6d. net.

A book which will set at rest the minds of many who have been disturbed by modern teaching, and will answer satisfactorily a multitude of the questions which inquiring young people ask.

Oliphants Ltd., 75 Princes Street, Edinburgh
21 Paternoster Square, London, E.C.4

**THE REV. PRINCIPAL WHYTE, D.D.
ON THE CHARACTERS OF
JOHN BUNYAN**

*Post 8vo, Cloth. Price 2s. 6d. net per volume.
Also in Half Morocco, Gilt Top, 5s. net per volume.*

BUNYAN CHARACTERS.

FIRST SERIES. "THE PILGRIM'S PROGRESS."

"There is something in Dr Whyte's special gifts which eminently qualifies him for dealing with Bunyan or Rutherford, Dante or Law. . . . He has drunk deep of the spirit of the nobler Puritan theology, and has intense sympathy with it."—*Primitive Methodist*.

BUNYAN CHARACTERS.

SECOND SERIES. "THE PILGRIM'S PROGRESS."

"This completes the most beautiful and suggestive commentary on 'The Pilgrim's Progress' ever written."—*British Weekly*.

BUNYAN CHARACTERS.

THIRD SERIES. "THE HOLY WAR."

"The book is quick with life and full of noble appreciation. The tenderness and irony, the spiritual fervour and imaginative insight of many pages of this volume are startling."—*Speaker*.

BUNYAN CHARACTERS.

**FOURTH SERIES. BUNYAN HIMSELF AS SEEN
IN HIS "GRACE ABOUNDING."**

"A splendid exposition of Bunyan's inner life, bristling with pith and point, apt allusion and choice quotation from beginning to end."—*The Scottish Review*.

Oliphants Ltd., 75 Princes Street, Edinburgh
21 Paternoster Square, London, E.C.4

**A Selected List from
Messrs OLIPHANTS' more Recent Publications**

**A BRIGHT BOOK FOR GIRLS AND BOYS
BIBLE BATTLES**

By LETTICE BELL
Author of "Go-to-Bed Stories," etc.
Price 3s. 6d. net, postage 5d.

Written in the graphic and charming style that has made the author so popular in family circles wherever the English language is known.

HIDDEN PICTURES

By ADA R. HABERSHON
Author of "The Study of the Types," etc.
Price 3s. 6d. net, postage 5d.

An excellent book for Senior Class Teachers and those having charge of Mothers' Meetings; they will find here a wealth of fresh and most effective material.

**A New Book, full of Real Live Matter for all interested in Sunday School effort
52 STORY TALKS TO BOYS AND GIRLS**

By the REV. HOWARD J. CHIDLEY
Price 2s. 6d. net, postage 4d.

Bristles with interest and suggestion on every page. The stories are cleverly worked out. They grip the child-mind with unforgettable vividness.

THE MAKER OF MEN

By DR G. SHERWOOD EDDY
Author of "The New Era in Asia"
Price 1s. net, postage 3d.

Word picture of the greatest Life of all lives, with that touch of genius which all recognise in Henry Drummond's work among men.

**SECOND IMPRESSION
BACK TO PENTECOST**

By the REV. DR ANDREW MURRAY
Price 2s. net, postage 4d.

In this his last message, Dr Murray shows most powerfully, yet tenderly, how far many Christians fall short of the ideal set before them. There is a wonderful charm in his words as he pleads for a fresh beginning which shall revolutionise the Church.

**THIRD IMPRESSION AND COMPANION VOLUME
THE FULL BLESSING OF PENTECOST**

By the REV. DR ANDREW MURRAY
Price 2s. net, postage 4d.

A book for which the demand increases the more widely it becomes known.

Oliphants Ltd., 75 Princes Street, Edinburgh
21 Paternoster Square, London, E.C.4