

The Coming of the Lord.

#1. The O.T. foundation.

The prophecy of Enoch.

pp. 33 - 40

The reader may remember that in a previous number we touched upon the reason why the testimony of the second coming of the Lord does not figure in our pages so prominently as some may have been led to expect. We trust that what we then said will have allayed any suspicion of unfaithfulness. We do not wish, however, to let such a subject remain in a negative position, but would rather take our stand upon positive truth; therefore we ask the reader to come with us to the Word to search and see what has been written for our learning upon this important subject.

The O.T. basis.

To commence our study with the testimony of the Gospel according to Matthew is to attempt to build without a foundation. The teaching of Matthew and the bulk of the New Testament rests upon the teaching of the Old Testament, not only for the fulfillment of prophecy in the coming of the Lord as redeemer, but also for His coming again as the hope of His people.

It would not be difficult to prove that the very terms of Adam's creation look forward to the second coming of the Lord. For example, the reference to the dominion given to man, in Psa. viii., Psa. lxxii., Dan. ii. & vii., and Heb. ii., &c., seems to look forward to the coming reign of Christ. The description of the garden of Eden looks forward to Rev. xxii., and the promise that the Seed of the woman should bruise the serpent's head awaits the second coming of the Lord for its fulfillment.

These passages, however, are too indirect for our present purpose, so the first point to which we call attention is

The prophecy of Enoch.

The words that constitute Enoch's prophecy are not recorded in Gen. v., but it matters not who it is that has preserved his utterance so long as it is found within the pages of Scripture. We are indebted to Jude for the record. He writes:--

“And Enoch also, the seventh from Adam, prophesied of these, saying, Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of His saints, to execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard speeches which ungodly sinners have spoken against Him” (Jude 14, 15).

Before we can understand the import of this prophecy, we must observe the general trend of the epistle in order to see the appositeness of Enoch's witness. If we glance at the earlier verses of Jude we shall see not only a reference to human sin of a deep dye in the mention of Sodom and Gomorrah, but a reference also to angels who kept not their first estate, and are therefore reserved for judgment.

Looking to the end of the epistle, such outstanding apostates as Cain, Balaam and Korah are brought forward as examples of the mockers who shall come in the last times. It is time, therefore, that we consider the structure of the epistle to see just where Enoch's prophecy comes.

Jude.

- A | 1, 2. Benediction.
- B | 3. Exhortation. Beloved. Earnestly contend for faith.
- C | 4. Ungodly men "of old".
- D | 5. Remembrance. The Lord's act.
- E | 5-16. Judgment.
 - a | 5-8. Three examples, Israel, angels, and Sodom.
 - b | 9, 10. Michael the archangel.
 - Unrecorded elsewhere.
 - References to Satan.
 - a | 11-13. Three examples, Cain, Balaam, and Korah.
 - b | 14-16. The Lord and holy myriads.
 - Unrecorded elsewhere.
 - Allusion to Satan.
- D | 17. Remembrance. The Lord's word.
- C | 18, 19. Ungodly of "last time".
- B | 20-23. Exhortation. Beloved. Build up on faith.
- A | 24, 25. Doxology.

It will be seen that Jude's testimony is directed to one point, viz., the judgment of the Lord upon ungodliness. Yet he ranges the whole ground of Scripture, and, by bringing forward the angels that sinned, and Michael's rebuke of Satan, penetrates into depths beyond our understanding. It is also evident that to lift Jude 14 and 15 out of its context, and generalize thereupon, will not help us to understand truth.

Enoch's prophecy is connected with a sin in which not only men, but Satan and fallen angels are involved. There is no reticence on Jude's part to indicate something of its evil character. The sin of the angels is likened to that of Sodom and Gomorrah, and those who follow in their evil train are likened to brute beasts that corrupt themselves, being called "spots in their feasts of love". Of both angels and men it is written that they have been "reserved" in darkness for judgment (verses 6 and 13).

Ungodliness.

We have long seen that the words "ungodliness" and "godliness", by reason of their antithesis in the epistles, and the expression "the mystery of godliness", must have a far

deeper meaning than “piety” or the lack of this virtue. This depth of meaning is evident in Jude’s epistle where the three words *asebeia*, *asebeo* and *asebes* are found six times.

“Ungodly men, who turned the grace of God into lasciviousness” (verse 4).

“To convict all that are ungodly, of their ungodly deeds, which they have ungodly committed, by ungodly sinners” (verse 15).

“Mockers who walk after their ungodly lusts” (verse 18).

The sin of angels, Sodom and Satan, together with the sin that shall be judged at the coming of the Lord, is denominated ungodliness. Peter confirms this, for in his second epistle he speaks of the angels that sinned in the time of Noah, and of Sodom, Gomorrah, and Balaam, and speaks of the flood coming upon the world of the *ungodly*. Sodom and Gomorrah are examples of those that live *ungodly*; Lot is an example of the deliverance of the *godly*, and of the fire reserved by the Lord for the day of judgment and perdition of *ungodly* men (II Pet. ii., iii.).

We must refer to II Peter again after we have pointed out the necessity of an important revision of Jude 14, 15. A literal rendering of the words of Enoch must read: “Behold, the Lord *came*.” While the true rendering of the aorist of the Greek verb is still somewhat of a moot point, the rightness of the above rendering is confirmed by the general usage and rendering of the A.V. The interested student may test this by noting the occurrences of *elthe* (part of the verb *erchomai*, “to come”), which is usually translated “came”. If Enoch said, “Behold, the Lord *came*”, he must have been referring back to some judgment that was past when he spoke. To what could he refer? The judgment of the flood had not then taken place, neither had judgment fallen upon Babel. The description given of the judgment could not refer to Gen. iii. or iv. To what then could it refer?

The reader will probably have traveled back in mind to Gen. i. 2, to the *katabole kosmou*, “the overthrow of the world”. This connection is more than countenanced by Peter in his second epistle which we have already found to be parallel with that of Jude.

The second coming and the overthrow (Gen. i. 2).

Jude says:--

“Remember ye the words which were spoken before of the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ; how that they told you there should be mockers in the last time, who should not walk after their own ungodly lusts” (verses 17 and 18).

Peter says:--

“I stir up your pure minds by way of remembrance. That ye may be mindful of the words which were spoken before by the apostles of the Lord and Saviour there shall come in the last day mockers, walking after their own lusts, and saying, Where is the promise of His coming? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue right through as they were from the beginning of the creation. For this they willingly are ignorant of, that by the Word of God the heavens are of old, and the earth standing out of the water and in the water: whereby the world that then was, being overflowed with water, perished” (II Pet. iii. 1-6).

The mockers denied that there had been any interference in the form of judgment ever since the creation. They therefore denied the overthrow of the world in Gen. i. 2.

Enoch took up this line of teaching. He, too, uttered the solemn word: “Behold, the Lord *came*”, and his reference to angels and Satan, as well as to man, removes any sense of disproportion. Enoch named his son *Methuselah*, which means, “At his death it (namely, the flood) shall be”, and in the year that Methuselah died the flood came.

Jude now takes up Enoch’s witness, coupled with Peter’s words (II Pet. ii., iii.), and links together (1) the overthrow of the world that then was (Gen. i. 2), (2) the flood (Gen. vi., vii.), and (3) the second coming of the Lord, which shall be accompanied by a deluge of fire. This is indeed a solemn aspect of the coming of the Lord.

Two items of importance now demand our attention:--

1. The statement that this Enoch was “the seventh from Adam”.
2. The reference to “ten thousands of His saints”.

“*The seventh from Adam.*”—Why should it be necessary for Jude to pause in the midst of his utterance to make this remark? The reason is that there is a great need to be on our guard against deception and false prophets, and as there are two named Enoch in the book of Genesis (the one being the true seed of Adam, the other being in the line of Cain), this warning becomes necessary. It may be that the warning should not be passed by without due consideration. Let us go back to the early chapters of Genesis and learn the lesson contained in the note, “Enoch, the seventh from Adam”.

Adam’s true line omits Cain and his seed. This may be tested by consulting the genealogies given in Gen. v., I Chron. i. 1, and Luke iii. 38, where the order is always the same. Cain was of that wicked one, and his seed are prophetic of the seed of the serpent. The two lines are given in Genesis with the following close parallels emphasized:--

Adam’s line (Gen. v.).	Cain’s line (Gen. iv. 17-24).
Seth.	ENOCH.
Enos.	Irad.
Cainan.	Mehujael.
Mahalaleel.	METHUSAEL.
Jared.	LAMECH (70*7 vengeance).
ENOCH.	Jabel.
METHUSELAH.	Jubal.
LAMECH (777 years).	Tubal-cain
Noah.	

It will be seen that there is evidently some kind of anticipation and counterfeit in some of the names given to Cain’s seed. Their likeness, however, is limited to their names only. Enoch, the son of Cain, is connected with the founding of a city in the land of

Cain's wanderings, whereas the true Enoch is taken from the earth and its ungodliness. Methusael and Methuselah both name their sons Lamech! Lamech's sons in the line of Cain are concerned in a further attempt to cover with a veneer the earth that is cursed, whereas the true Lamech names his son Noah, looking away to the rest that God alone can give.

The first words of the Lord's answer to the disciples' question concerning the sign of His coming were:--

"Take heed that no man deceived you, for many shall come in My name, saying, I am the Christ; and shall deceive many" (Matt. xxiv. 4, 5).

Peter gives this warning in II Pet. ii.; so also does Jude whose citation of Enoch's prophecy we are studying. He says:--

"There are certain men crept in unawares, who were before of old ordained to this condemnation, ungodly men woe unto them, they have gone in the way of Cain Enoch prophesied of these"

Scripture has given us warning that the teaching concerning the coming of the Lord will not escape corruption.

"*Ten thousands of His saints.*"—These words are quoted by Moses in the blessing of Israel:--

"The Lord came from Sinai, and rose up from Seir unto them; He shined forth from Mount Paran, and He came with ten thousands of His saints: from His right hand went a fiery law for them" (Deut. xxxiii. 2).

There can be no doubt as to the meaning of the word "saints" here. The law of Sinai we know from various Scriptures was mediated by angels (Acts vii. 53; Gal. iii. 9; Heb. ii. 2).

"The chariots of God are twenty thousand, even thousands of angels: the Lord is among them as in Sinai" (Psa. lxxviii. 17).

"A fiery stream issued and came forth from before Him; thousand thousands ministered unto Him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before Him" (Dan. vii. 10).

"For the Son of man shall come in the glory of His Father with His angels" (Matt. xvi. 27; xxv. 31).

"The Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels" (II Thess. i. 7).

These quotations are sufficient to prove that the "saints" or "holy ones" of Enoch's prophecy are "angels" and not the redeemed. This also is the meaning of Zech. xiv. 5: "And the Lord my God shall come, and all the saints with Thee", and of Joel iii. 11: "Thither cause Thy mighty ones to come down, O Lord"; also of I Thess. iii. 13: "The coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all His saints."

We can imagine that though there has been agreement so far, some of our readers will dissent from this last reference being included in the list.

Coming “for” and “with” His saints.

There is quite a school of prophetic thought that stresses the coming of the Lord “for” and the coming of the Lord “with” His saints. Supposing for the purpose of argument we accept this view, how does it stand examination? The Thessalonians were waiting for God’s Son from heaven (i. 10), and exercising the patience of hope (i. 3). They were told that their loved ones who had died would not meet the Lord earlier or later than those living at the time, but that both living and dead would be caught up together to meet the Lord in the air (iv. 15, 16). Well then, what are we to make of I Thess. iii. 13:--

“To the end He may establish your hearts unblameable in holiness before God, even our Father, at the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ, *with all His saints.*”

If these “saints” are His redeemed people, and if the Thessalonians were to wait for the Lord to come *with* all His redeemed people, then what place do the Thessalonians occupy? They were redeemed, they certainly were not the unwatchful who might have been left behind, for they were to be established “unblameable in holiness”, and if such can be left behind, who then shall go? The distinction between “coming for” and “coming with” excludes those to whom the apostle wrote, and contradicts the express statements of I Thess. iv. 15, 16, and v. 10. If we take I Thess. iii. 13 to speak of the “holy ones”, the “saints” of Deut. xxxiii. and of Enoch’s prophecy, we have the coming of the Lord *with His angels* and *for His people* set before us with clearness and without contradictory statements.

It is interesting to note that the Sinaitic MS reads: “ten thousand of His holy angels.” The angels that shall come at the end of the age are doubtless the same that were instrumental in bringing about the overthrow of Gen. i. and all the divine interpositions through the ages.

“And the armies which were in heaven followed Him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean and the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet These both were cast alive into a lake of fire burning with fire and brimstone” (Rev. xix. 14-20).

When once we are clear as to the fact that “the saints” of Enoch’s prophecy are the *holy* angels, we begin to realize their relation in the context with the *fallen* angels. Moreover, the structure shows that Michael the *archangel* is placed in correspondence with the Lord and His angels, and both in conflict with Satan. Enoch’s prophecy with its reference to Gen. i. 2, taken in conjunction with II Pet. iii., where it is stated that ‘the world that then was’ was destroyed by water, and the heavens and earth which are now shall be destroyed by fire, lifts the doctrine of the second coming into its true place in the purpose of the ages. There has been a tendency to look upon the second coming as a kind of afterthought, the next best thing that could be done in the circumstances. What we call “the second coming” was demanded by the purpose of the ages, whether Israel had

received their Messiah and His prior presentation or not. Let the scoffers say what they will.

“Behold, the Lord CAME” (Jude 14), and
“He that SHALL COME will come, and will not tarry” (Heb. x. 37).

#2. The patience of Job. pp. 69 - 72

“Oh that my words were now written! Oh that they were printed in a book! That they were graven with an iron pen and lead in the rock for ever!” (Job xix. 23, 24).

What was it that was of such consequence that Job wished a permanent record of it to be kept, comparable to a granite monument with its leaded letters? A Cenotaph, indeed, for the meaning of the word Cenotaph is “An empty tomb”, and that is what came before the eye of Job in his distress. He said that He was a stranger to his wife and children, his friends abhorred him, and they whom he had loved turned from him. His bones clave to his skin, and he had escaped by the skin of his teeth. As we read this chapter we get some sense of Job’s utter extremity, and then it is that he utters the words that he wished could be graven in the rock for ever. What were they?

“For I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that He shall stand in the latter day upon the earth: and (following the margin) after I shall awake, though this body be destroyed, yet out of my flesh shall I see God, Whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another. My reins within me are consumed with earnest desire (for that day)” (Job xix. 25-27).

The marginal reading treats the word *or*, “my skin”, as part of the verb *ur*; “to awake”, both of these words are expressed by the same letters in the Hebrew, namely, *ayin*, *vav*, and *resh*. It is difficult for unaided reasoning to come to a conclusion here, and we therefore felt it was an opportunity for the Word to prove itself. Consequently we collected all the occurrences in Job of the verb *ur*, to awake, and noted what happened when we added Job xix. 26 to the list. The moment we did so we saw the shaping together of the living Word, and this was confirmed by a most strange rendering.

When comparing the first and the last occurrences together, at first sight there did not appear any connection, and we have made it a rule in seeking the structure of Scripture to avoid the invention of headings lest we lead ourselves astray. Then suddenly these two passages took their place; the correspondence can be seen by consulting the margin of Job iii. 8, for there we find the word “leviathan”. Into the meaning of the expression “to raise up leviathan” we will not enter, as it has served its purpose by fixing the structure and the inclusion of Job xix. 25-27 seems necessary to avoid breaking that which appears to be an inspired design.

The Hebrew *ur*, to raise, in Job.

A | iii. 8. Raise up leviathan.

B | viii. 6. Bildad's challenge.

C | xiv. 12-14.

“So man lieth down, and riseth not, till the heavens be no more they shall not awake, nor *be raised* out of sleep all the days of my appointed time will I wait until my change come.”

D | xvii. 8. The innocent raise up against the hypocrite.

C | xix. 26, 27.

“After *I shall* awake, though this body be destroyed, yet out of my flesh shall I see God: Whom I shall see for myself.”

B | xxx. 29. Job's answer.

A | xli. 10. None dare raise him up (leviathan, verse 1).

The parallel is complete, and as the whole matter turns upon whether we read the Hebrew word as “skin”, or part of the verb “to raise”, the balance of thought seems clearly to point the way to a solution. The LXX appears to have attempted something in the nature of a compromise. It has accepted the idea as we have stated it and translated *ur* by *anastesai*, “to raise up”, but it slips in the word *derma*, “skin”, to supply the ellipsis. The Alexandrian version reads *soma*, “body”, instead of *derma*. We have therefore the added testimony of this most ancient translation to help us.

Our special enquiry, however, is connected with the coming of the Lord. We therefore pass over the title *Redeemer*, merely drawing attention to the articles on *Redemption* for its meaning and fulness. Job was not limiting his vision to the truth of the Saviour at Bethlehem, but looked on to “the latter day”, a term parallel with “the last day” of the prophets. Moreover, he looked to see his Redeemer standing in the latter day “upon the earth”. The parallel passage (Job xiv. 12) tells us that this shall not take place “till the heavens be no more”, which refers to the same period as II Pet. iii. 7, 10, 11, Rev. xx. 11, and Isa. li. 6. Job entertained no hope of “going to heaven”. He belonged to that company who will wake after the Millennium, when “the heavens be no more”.

If Job must be numbered with those who shall stand before the great white throne, and if Job be mentioned in Scripture as an example of patience (James v. 11), and righteousness (Ezek. xiv. 14), it but adds to the problem of those who maintain that all who stand before the great white throne are necessarily doomed. It may be objected that no mention is made in Job xix. of the “coming” of the Lord, and that this passage is not relevant to the subject of this series. The references to the latter day speak of Job's Redeemer at a period far removed from the period of His earthly life. Its close association also with the resurrection necessitates the second coming. Job had a foretaste of this hope even during his life. He could say: “now mine eye seeth Thee” (xlii. 5). “So the Lord blessed the latter end of Job more than his beginning” (xlii. 12).

The proverbial beauty of his daughters, one of whom was named, “A horn for paint” or “Paint box” (verses 14, 15), and the words of xxxiii. 25, viz., “His flesh shall be fresher than a child's; he shall return to the days of his youth”, are consistent with the

fact that Job was completely restored to health, and furnish a picture of the resurrection of that company wider than either Israel or the Church, whose place in Scripture has not been given the consideration that its importance warrants.

Thus far we have seen the testimony of men who lived before Israel's day. Apart from Balaam's prophetic allusion to the second coming, under the figure of the star and the sceptre, the remaining passages must of necessity be taken from the prophecies and psalms of Israel, but while Jerusalem and the Land, together with the nation of Israel, are central in this great section, we remember that, after all, the blessings that are to follow.

#3. The Prayers of David. **pp. 97 - 101**

The song of Moses (Exod. xv. 1-19), uttered at the overthrow of Pharaoh, necessitates the second coming for its true fulfillment, and it can never be complete until it is coupled with the song of the Lamb, sung, not upon the shores of the Red Sea, but of a sea of glass mingled with fire, celebrating a victory, not over Pharaoh, but over the beast and his image (Rev. xv. 1-3). The song of Moses, just before his death (Deut. xxxii. 36-42), equally looks forward to the second coming for its fulfillment. These passages, however, may be considered too vague to stand alone, and can be better appreciated when the more precise statements of other Scriptures have been read. Traversing the history of Israel to the time of the kingdom, we find embedded in the Psalms several testimonies to the second coming of the Lord.

When "Herod, and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles and the people of Israel were gathered together" (Acts iv. 27), there was a germinal fulfillment of the opening of Psalm ii. "The kings of the earth", however, are to gather again, with a mightier front: "And I saw the beast; and the *kings of the earth*, and their armies *gathered together* to make war against Him that sat on the horse" (Rev. xix. 19).

The answer of the Lord to this rebellion is: "Yet have I set My King upon My holy hill of Zion" (Psa. ii. 6). When this takes place, the kingdoms of this world become the kingdoms of the Lord and of His Anointed (Rev. xi. 15); "the nations are angry" (Rev. xi. 18), and the wrath of the Son has come (Rev. xi. 18; Psa. ii. 12). Then it is that the request of Psa. ii. 8 will be made and answered: "Ask of Me, and I will give Thee the heathen for Thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for Thy possession."

Except in a very figurative way, this passage can receive no fulfillment during this dispensation. It is bounded on either side by conditions that are foreign to the church of the mystery, viz.: (1) The Lord must be set as King upon Zion. (2) This inheritance is not explained in the terms of converts and missions, but as the administration of justice and judgment: "Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron; Thou shalt dash them in

pieces like a potter's vessel." The time for the fulfillment of this passage is the day of the Lord (Rev. ii. 27, xii. 5, xix. 15), when the Lord's Anointed shall ride forth from heaven as King of kings and Lord of lords. Psa. ii., then, must be included in our survey of the O.T. witness to the second coming.

A whole set of Psalms may be said to assume the fact of the second coming of the Lord. This applies to Psalms that speak of the Lord reigning as king in their midst, or over all the earth, as Psa. xlv., xlvi., xlvii., and also Psa. xlviii. where Jerusalem is seen as the city of the great King.

Psa. l. is more positive in its references to the second coming:--

"The mighty God, even the Lord, hath spoken, and called the earth from the rising of the sun unto the going down thereof. Out of Zion, the perfection of beauty, God hath shined. Our God shall come, and shall not keep silence: a fire shall devour before Him, and it shall be very tempestuous round about Him. He shall call to the heavens from above, and to the earth, that He may judge His people. Gather My saints together unto Me."

There are many features here that underlie statements in the N.T. The world-wide address reminds us of Matt. xxiv. 27, the fire and the tempest at His coming reminds us of Matt. xxiv. 29, 30, while the call to the heavens seems to refer to "angels" who gather "together His elect from the four winds" (Matt. xxiv. 31). "His saints" are evidently "Israel" (Psa. l. 7).

In his Psalms David looks forward to the coming of the Lord as the great goal of his desire. At the end of Psa. lxxii. he says: "The prayers (or praises) of David the son of Jesse are ended", and this climax is the Psalm of the King's Son. There we read of this great King as the Judge and Deliverer of the poor and needy. Peace and prosperity are the result of His reign. His dominion is from sea to sea, and from the river unto the ends of the earth. All kings fall down before Him, all nations serve Him, and bless Him. The whole earth is full of His glory.

The figure used in verse 6 is apt to be misunderstood: "He shall come down like rain upon the mown grass." There is no word for "grass" in this verse, the word translated "mown grass" being *gez*, which is also rendered by the word "fleece" and "mowings". To the farmer it is a disaster, not a blessing, for rain to fall upon his new mown grass. What the passage really refers to is the fall of the rain upon the parched earth after the grass has been cut and removed, as expressed in Amos vii. 1: "The beginning of the shooting up of the latter growth: and lo, it was the latter growth after the king's mowings." The figure of Psa. lxxii. is that the coming of the Lord will be like the latter rain. Israel shall grow and flourish a second time, there shall be a blessed aftermath, they shall revive and their end shall be glorious.

II Sam. xxiii. 1-5 should be read in conjunction with Psa. lxxii.: "Now these be the last words of David this is all my desire." These words are in much the same spirit as Psa. lxxii. 20. Both passages look forward to "The Kings' Son"; "He that ruleth over

men must be just, ruling in the fear of God.” The figure, however, is changed from that of refreshing rain upon the grass that has been cut, to the beneficent sunshine after the rain has fallen: “And He shall be as the light of the morning, when the sun riseth, even a morning without clouds; as the tender grass springing out of the earth by clear shining after rain.”

These passages help us to answer the question: “What will it be when the King comes?”

Psa. lxxxii. is prophetic of Israel’s day of trouble: ‘They said, Come, and let us cut them off from being a nation; that the name of Israel may be no more in remembrance.’ In this extremity they cry to the Lord: “Keep not silence, O God: hold not Thy peace, and be not still, O God.” The tumult of the enemies, and the “crafty counsel” taken against the Lord’s hidden ones, turn the mind back to Psa. ii. Moreover, remembering that Moab and Ammom are the children of Lot, it is interesting to note that “ten nations” are mentioned in Psa. lxxxiii. 6-8, and these are raised to be “confederate” against the Lord. These foreshadow the ten kings of Rev. xvii. 12.

Coming to Psa. xcvi. we read of millennial conditions. All the earth is called upon to “Sing unto the Lord as new song”. His glory is to be declared among the nations, and the Gentiles are called upon to bring an offering and to come into His courts.

“Say among the heathen, The Lord reigneth let the heavens rejoice, and let the earth be glad, let the sea roar and the fulness thereof FOR HE COMETH, for He cometh to judge the earth.”

This coming is further described in the next Psalm:--

“The Lord reigneth, let the earth rejoice; let the multitude of the isles be glad thereof. Clouds and darkness are round about Him a fire goeth before Him The hills melt like wax AT THE PRESENCE of the Lord, at the presence of the Lord of the whole earth.”

Psa. xcviii. ends with the words “For He cometh”, &c., and gives additional details of that day. Psa. cx. anticipates the coming of the Lord:--

“The Lord said unto My Lord, Sit Thou at My right hand until I make Thine enemies Thy footstool. The Lord shall send the rod of Thy strength out of Zion the Lord at Thy right hand shall strike through kings in the day of His wrath.”

The closing words of Psa. cl.: “Let everything that hath breath praise the Lord, Praise ye the Lord”, look forward to Rev. v. 13 for the time of their fulfillment.

The witness of the Psalms to the second coming of the Lord shews Israel to be the people, Zion the city, and the Lord’s coming like rain and sunshine on the one hand, and like fire and tempest on the other. It is a day of wrath as well as of blessing. The nations of the earth are vitally connected with this coming, and its central idea is that of a coming King. The hope of the church, as such, is not expressed in these Psalms, and however

they may minister to our comfort and help, their prophetic burden looks away to a blessed time on the earth, and not to the blessed hope of the manifestation in glory for which the church waits (Col. iii. 4; Titus ii. 11-14).

Enoch's prophecy, Job's patience, Moses' song and David's prayer, all bear their testimony that the Lord is coming to this earth once again. Coming in judgment upon the ungodly (Enoch), coming with resurrection life for those who own Him as Redeemer (Job), coming to lead a mightier exodus than that through the Red Sea (Moses), coming to reign as the greater than Solomon, David's Son and David's Lord.

#4. The Vision of Isaiah. pp. 136 - 139

We have seen in another series that the burden of all the prophets is the restoration of Israel. This being so, it is impossible for the prophets to be silent upon the second coming of the Lord, for Peter shews the restoration and the coming to be inseparable.

“The times of refreshing and He shall send Jesus Christ Whom the heavens must receive until the times of the restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all His holy prophets since the world began” (Acts iii. 19-21).

If we read Acts iii. 21 and I Thess. iv. 16 together:--

“Whom the heavens must receive until”
“The Lord Himself shall descend from heaven”

--it seems clear that the latter passage must refer to this hope of Israel and, seeing that years after I Thess. iv. was written Paul still entertained the hope of Israel (Acts xxviii. 20), the conclusion becomes practically certain.

In chapter xi. 4 is a passage which, taken alone, may not be said to speak of the Lord's coming, yet no N.T. reader who has read II Thess. i. and ii. can avoid the evident connection:--

“He shall smite the earth with the rod of His mouth, and with the breath of His lips shall He slay the wicked” (Isa. xi. 4).
“The Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with His mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance” (II Thess. i. 7, 8).
“Then shall that wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of His mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of His coming” (II Thess. ii. 8).

It is, then, fairly evident that II Thess. and Isa. xi. both deal with the same coming, but we shall see fuller corroborative detail when examining N.T. passages.

The results upon earth that follow this coming are set out in the well-known passage that speaks of the wolf and the lamb dwelling together, and of this blessing being intimately connected with the holy mountain of God (Isa. xi. 9). In verse 11 the words “the second time” are used, and we cannot separate these words from the second coming of the Lord:--

“And it shall come to pass in that day, that the Lord shall set His hand again *the second time* to recover the remnant of His people.”

This feature was impressed by Stephen upon his hearers, when he spoke of Joseph and of Moses:--

“And at the second time Joseph was made known to his brethren” (Acts vii. 13).

“This Moses whom they refused, saying, Who made thee a ruler and a judge? the same did God send to be a ruler and a deliverer” (Acts vii. 35).

“His citizens hated Him, and sent a message after Him, saying, We will not have this man to reign over us. And it came to pass, that when He was returned, having received the kingdom” (Luke xix. 14, 15).

“Unto them that look for Him shall He appear the second time without sin unto salvation” (Heb. ix. 28).

Isa. xxxiv. and xxxv. deal with “The day of the Lord’s vengeance, and the year of recompenses for the controversy of Zion” (Isa. xxxiv. 8). “Behold, your God will come with vengeance, even God with a recompense; He will come and save you” (Isa. xxxv. 4).

Owing to the events that are revealed as accompanying it, there can be but one period when this day of vengeance takes place:--

“All the host of heaven shall be dissolved, and the heavens shall be rolled together as a scroll: and all their host shall fall down, as the leaf falleth off from the vine, and as a falling fig from a fig tree” (Isa. xxxiv. 4).

“The day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up” (II Pet. iii. 10).

Not only must Isa. xxxiv. and xxxv. refer to the day of the Lord yet future, but they must refer to the period covered by the sixth seal, for Rev. vi. 12-17 reads:--

“And I behold when He had opened the sixth seal; and, lo, there was a great earthquake: and the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the moon became as blood. And the stars of heaven fell unto the earth, even as a fig tree casteth her untimely figs, when she is shaken of a mighty wind. And the heaven departed as a scroll when it is rolled together for the great day of His wrath is come.”

“Vengeance” and “recompense” are shown equally divided between Isa. xxxiv. and xxxv. The former chapter speaks of the Lord’s sword being filled with blood, streams being turned into pitch, and the dust into brimstone; the latter of the day when the blind shall see, the deaf hear, the lame leap as an hart, and the tongue of the dumb sing; when

the ransomed of the Lord shall return and come to Zion, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.

“Vengeance” and “recompense” are apparent again in Isa. lix. 16-21 where we read: “The Redeemer shall come to Zion, and unto them that turn from transgression in Jacob, saith the Lord” (verse 20). This verse, quoted by Paul in Rom. xi. 26 as taking place when the fulness of the Gentiles shall come in, prevents acceptance of the interpretation that this coming to Zion took place during the earthly life of Christ.

Isa. lxiii. 1-5 takes up the same theme. In Isa. xxxiv. the scene is laid in “Bozrah and Edom”; In Isa. lxiii. it is for Edom; the chapters refer to identical places. Isa. lxiii. moreover, speaks of the same dual object: “The day of vengeance” and “The year of My redeemed” (verse 4).

The reference to the garments of the Lord being stained with blood connects the passage with Rev. xix.:--

“And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse, and He that sat upon him
He was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood; and His name is called the Word of God
. . . . and He treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God”
(verses 11-16).

Isa. lxiii. 3 says, “I have trodden the winepress alone”, and its contexts and parallels forbid the poetic interpretation put upon it in the hymn that associates this passage with the Lord’s sufferings on the cross.

The last reference we shall make to Isaiah is that of lxiv. 1: “Oh that Thou wouldest rend heavens, that Thou wouldest come down, that the mountains might flow down at Thy presence.” Israel recognizes at last that they are the clay, and the Lord the Potter (verse 8): they beseech for mercy on the ground of being the Lord’s people (verse 9). Zion and Jerusalem are called the holy cities of the Lord, and they are described as being a wilderness and a desolation (verse 10): the holy and beautiful house, where their fathers had praised the Lord, had been burned with fire (verse 11): and then comes the cry corresponding to that with which the chapter opened: “Wilt Thou refrain Thyself for these things, O Lord? Wilt Thou hold Thy peace, and afflict us sore?”

Isaiah ends on the same note as does John in the Revelation, “Even so, come”. The wide creation makes the same appeal, while the church of the mystery is exhorted to “live looking for that blessed hope”.

There can be no cry to Israel and Jerusalem of, “Comfort ye, comfort ye”, without the accompanying “voice of him that crieth in the wilderness,. Prepare ye the way of the Lord”. What John the Baptist did at the first coming of the Lord, Elijah is destined to do at the second coming. *Restoration* and *Return* are inseparable.

#5. Daniel's Dream. pp. 177 - 179

Strictly speaking Daniel's dream is recorded in chapter vii. of his prophecy, but under our heading we must include Nebuchadnezzar's dream recorded in Dan. ii. The general outline of the latter is fairly generally known by students of the Word, and until we arrive at the prophecy as a part of our systematic study, the consideration of controversial features must be deferred. Without therefore going beyond what is actually written in Dan. ii., we may say with confidence that at the close of Gentile dominion on this earth, when it shall have passed through the several phases symbolized by gold, silver, brass, iron and clay, this dominion shall be suddenly and violently shattered, and in its place God shall establish a kingdom that shall never be destroyed (*see* Dan. ii. 44).

Daniel's dream, given in chapter vii., shows that the setting up of this kingdom takes place at the second coming of the Lord. Once more we adhere to the one theme before us, deferring the question as to whether the four beasts are parallel with the metals of Nebuchadnezzar's image, or whether they have a different time period both for commencement and for fulfillment. The theme of the second coming is found in verses 9-14. In these verses we have the apocalypse of the O.T.:--

"I beheld till the thrones were set, and the Ancient of days did sit, Whose garment was white as snow, and the hair of His head like the pure wool: His throne was like the fiery flame, and His wheels as burning fire. A fiery stream issued and came forth from before Him: thousand thousands ministered unto Him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before Him: the judgment was set, and the books were opened I saw in the night visions, and behold one like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought Him near before Him. And there was given Him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages should serve Him; His dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and His kingdom that which shall not be destroyed" (Dan. vii. 9-14).

Daniel, desiring fuller information concerning the dream, asked one of them that stood by concerning it. He was told that the saints of the Most High would take the kingdom, and in answer to a yet closer questioning concerning the fourth beast and the ten horns, he was told the condition of things that would obtain at the end, when the beast would blaspheme God, and "wear out the saints of the Most High". This, however, was for a time; oppression would at length give place to judgment.

"And the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the Most High, Whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey Him" (Dan. vii. 27).

The sphere of the dream, as also of Nebuchadnezzar's is limited to the kingdoms of this world. It is "under the whole heaven" (vii 27), it fills "the whole earth" (ii. 35), it takes the place of kingdoms ruled by man, and its dominion includes peoples, nations and languages. A reference to Dan. iii. 4 will show that this was the language of

Nebuchadnezzar's proclamation when the herald called upon all in his dominion to bow down to the golden image in the plain of Dura. There is moreover a parallel with this in the dominion of Babylon at the time of the end; "The waters which thou sawest are peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues" (Rev. xvii. 15). It is also the description of the dominion of the beast: "Power was given him over all kindreds, and tongues, and nations" (Rev. xiii. 7). At the sounding of the seventh trumpet "the kingdoms of this world become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of His Christ; and He shall reign unto the ages of the ages" (Rev. xi. 15). There is no necessity to labour the proof of the identity of the dreams of Daniel and the visions of John. Both refer to the Son of man at His coming to the earth to rule and reign.

A feature that we omitted in the quotation of Dan. vii. 9-14 deals with the beast, his blasphemy and his doom in the burning flame. This is delineated in the latter chapters of Daniel, and is also given prominence in the Revelation. The time of the second coming, referred to by Daniel as the "day of the Lord", is fixed by reference to II Thess. ii.; and it is definitely related to the end of the age in its close association with Israel and the earthly kingdom.

Many items of deep interest that are found in Daniel are necessarily omitted in this survey, but the references in it to the second coming of the Lord are clear and unambiguous. The coming, as depicted here, can have no reference to the church of the mystery and the spiritual blessings in the super-heavenlies. On the contrary, it refers to kingdoms under the whole heaven, and to God's "people" Israel, and "city" Jerusalem (Dan. ix.).

The Coming of the Lord.

The O.T. foundation.

#6. The visions of Zechariah.

pp. 22 - 24

There are allusions to the second coming in the minor prophets, such as Hab. ii. 3, 4 (with Heb. x. 37), Hag. ii. 7-9, and Joel iii. 13-16 (with Rev. xiv. 15-18), which the reader should search out in order to make full acquaintance with O.T. testimony to this important aspect of truth. For the present, however, we will turn to the visions of Zechariah:--

“Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion: shout, O daughter of Jerusalem: behold, thy King cometh unto thee: He is just, and having salvation: lowly, and riding upon an ass, and upon a colt the foal of an ass” (Zech ix. 9).

There is a notable omission in the quotation of this prophecy in Matt. xxi. 5 and John xii. 15:--

“Tell ye the daughter of Zion, Behold, thy King cometh unto thee, meek, and sitting upon an ass, and a colt the foal of an ass.”

The multitudes “shouted”, they cried “Hosannah”, which means “Save now”, but not so the inspired writer. He omits the shout and the salvation. Not until the Lord comes the second time will Zion cry out and shout, or salvation be brought to her.

Following the passage quoted from Zech. ix. 9 comes the resulting peace and dominion:--

“And I will (He shall, LXX) cut off the chariot from Ephraim, and the horse from Jerusalem, and the battle bow shall be cut off: and He shall speak peace unto the heathen: and His dominion shall be from sea even to sea, and from the river unto the ends of the earth.”

Our conception of “meekness” does not fit in with the idea of triumph and conquest, and some may object to the application of this passage to Rev. xix. and the Rider on the white horse. Psa. xlv. 4, 5, however, shows that there is no incongruity:--

“And in Thy majesty ride prosperously because of truth and *meekness* Thine arrows are sharp in the heart of the king’s enemies.”

Jerusalem is the centre of interest in Zechariah, and is prominent in the prophetic sections that speak of the Lord’s coming. For example, chapter xii., verse 2, says: “Behold, I will make Jerusalem a cup of trembling unto all the people round about.” And it is in connection with the sore straits of the besieged city that Zechariah speaks of the second coming:--

“In that day shall the Lord defend the inhabitants of Jerusalem and it shall come to pass in that day, that I will seek to destroy all the nations that come against Jerusalem. And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and supplications, and they shall look upon Me Whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for Him” (Zech. xii. 8-14).

John xix. 34-37 leaves us in no doubt as to the identity of Him Who was thus pierced, and Rev. i. 7 reveals with equal certainty that Zech. xii. is future:--

“Behold, He cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see Him, and they also which pierced Him: and all tribes of the land shall wail because of Him. Even so, Amen.”

There has never been a national mourning by Israel for the death of Christ, there has never been a destruction of the enemies of Jerusalem since N.T. times, and since the partial beginning at Pentecost there has never been poured out upon Israel the spirit of grace.

The Mount of Olives.

Zechariah resumes the theme of Jerusalem’s trouble and the Lord’s deliverance:--

“I will gather all nations against Jerusalem to battle Then shall the Lord go forth and fight against those nations and His feet shall stand upon the Mount of Olives, which is before Jerusalem on the east and the Lord my God shall come and all the saints with Thee” (Zech. xiv. 1-6).

There can be no doubt as to the literality of the Mount of Olives. It is described geographically as being “before Jerusalem on the east”. Moreover, to question the identity of the place would be to introduce a serious problem into Acts i.:--

“A cloud received Him out of their sight This same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen Him go into heaven. Then returned they unto Jerusalem from the mount called Olivet.”

The direct association between the second coming of Acts i. and Zech. xiv. established by the angel’s message, confirms the appropriateness of the apostles’ question as to the restoration of the kingdom to Israel (Acts i. 6), and leaves no room for “the church” in this aspect of hope. It can be none other than “the hope of Israel” mentioned by Paul as still obtaining in Acts xxviii. 20.

The visions of Zechariah concerning the second coming can be summed up in his own words: “*Jerusalem, Thy King cometh.*”

From one end of his prophecy to the other, Jerusalem and its deliverance and restoration are prominent, and the coming Lord is set forth as Israel’s King when the reign of peace has commenced. This is twice given in Zech. xiv. 16, 17, “*The Kings, the Lord of Hosts*”.

What is true of Zechariah is true of all the prophets.

“He shall send Jesus Christ Whom the heavens must receive until the times of restitution of all things, which God has spoken by the mouth of all His holy prophets since the world began” (Acts iii. 20, 21).

#7. The burden of Malachi. **pp. 64 - 66**

The last of the prophets, Malachi, anticipates the dual ministry of the two forerunners of the Messiah, John the Baptist and Elijah. The name Malachi means “My messenger”.

“Behold, I will send *My messenger*, and he shall prepare the way before Me” (Mal. iii. 1).

“The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God; as it is written in the prophets, Behold, I send *My messenger* before Thy face, which shall prepare Thy way before Thee John did baptize in the wilderness” (Mark i. 1-4).

“John sent two of his disciples Jesus began to say concerning John this is he, of whom it is written, Behold, I send *My messenger* before Thy face, which shall prepare Thy way before Thee” (Matt. xi. 2-10).

With the purport of these passages before us, we cannot avoid seeing that in Mal. iii. 1, John the Baptist is in view, yet when we read on we are conscious of the conflicting fact that verse 2 introduces a very different atmosphere from that of the four Gospels and John’s day. Let us notice the language:--

“But who may abide the day of His coming? and who shall stand when He appeareth? He shall purify the sons of Levi then shall the offering of Judah and Jerusalem be pleasant unto the Lord, as in the days of old, and as in former years” (Mal. iii. 2-4).

This passage most surely speaks of the second coming, yet it is closely associated with John the Baptist. In Mal. iv. 1, 2 we read:--

“For, behold, the day cometh, that shall burn as an oven; and all the proud shall be stubble but unto you that fear My name shall the Sun of righteousness arise with healing in His wings.”

Here there is close association with another messenger and forerunner, namely, Elijah:--

“Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord, and he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children lest I come and smite the earth with a curse” (Mal. iv. 5, 6).

What, then, is the connection between these two personages and the two comings? Turning to the New Testament we shall find that the two messengers are intimately

related. When the birth of John the Baptist was announced to his father, Zacharias, the angel said of John: “Many of the children of Israel shall he turn to the Lord their God. And he shall go before Him in the *spirit and power* of Elijah” (Luke i. 16, 17). When John was asked by the priests and Levites, “Art thou Elijah?” he said, “I am not” (John i. 21).

The Lord, however, when He had vindicated John the Baptist, as we have already seen in Matt. xi., spoke of the kingdom of heaven suffering violence and opposition. Then alluding to John, He says: “And if ye will receive it (i.e. the kingdom), this is Elijah, which was for to come” (Matt. xi. 14). That this was a cryptic, or parabolic, utterance seems certain by the added words, “he that hath ears to hear, let him hear” (verse 15).

When the Lord descended from the mount of transfiguration, the disciples raised the question of Elijah’s coming:--

“Why then say the scribes that Elijah must first come? And Jesus answered and said unto them, Elijah truly shall first come, And restore all things” (Matt. xvii. 10, 11).

Here is a plain answer, endorsing the belief that Elijah himself must come before the restoration of all things can take place. But the Lord then proceeds to bring the spirit of the passage to bear upon the time then present, continuing:--

“But I say unto you, That Elijah is come already, and they knew him not, but have done unto him whatsoever they listed. Likewise shall also the Son of man suffer of them. Then the disciples understood that He spake unto them of John the Baptist” (Matt. xvii. 12, 13).

While there were, therefore, at the first coming of the Lord, provisional arrangements sufficient to remove all idea that the non-repentance of Israel was destined and therefore without responsibility, He Who knew all things in a manner we cannot even imagine, knew that the Messiah would be rejected. John the Baptist was not Elijah, but he came in the spirit and power of Elijah. Except in a typical, anticipatory fashion the kingdom was not set up. The great work of redemption was accomplished, but the real coming and restoration of the kingdom await the day of days toward which all the prophets point.

We have now considered the main witnesses of the O.T. to the second coming of the Lord:--

1. The prophecy of Enoch.
2. The patience of Job.
3. The prayers of David.
4. The visions of Isaiah.
5. The dreams of Daniel
6. The visions of Zechariah.
7. The burdens of Malachi.

They unite in one grand witness to the personal return of the Lord from heaven to earth, there, upon the overthrow of Gentile dominion and Babylon, to set up a kingdom closely connected with the city of Jerusalem, the nation of Israel, and the commencement

of that period when the curse shall be removed from the earth, and also the veil from the face of all people, “beginning at Jerusalem”.

It must be obvious to all that any system of interpretation that takes up the teaching of the second coming without due regard to this consistent and far-reaching line of witnesses, is of necessity liable to lead its exponents into tremendous mistakes.

We propose examining the N.T. references in much the same way as we have those of the O.T., giving particular heed to two things:--

1. Points of agreement with O.T. prophecy, and
2. Points of departure from, or addition to, O.T. prophecy.

Not until we have so done can we feel safe in expressing our belief concerning many features of this wondrous theme that are often taken for granted.

The N.T. fulfillment.
#8. When the “any moment” coming was possible.
Matthew’s Gospel.
pp. 143 - 145

Having reviewed the O.T. teaching concerning the second coming of the Lord, we turn to the N.T. to observe how far its teaching is a confirmation of the O.T. prophecy, and how far it adds to or departs from that which has been already revealed. We propose to carry out this investigation in the following order: (1) The Gospels, (2) The Acts, (3) The Epistles of the Circumcision, (4) The Revelation, (5) The Epistles of Paul, (a) before Acts xxviii., and (b) after Acts xxviii.

The four Gospels.

Coming to the four Gospels, we find their witness divided as follows: (1) The synoptic Gospels, Matthew, Mark, and Luke, and (3) John. Our present paper is devoted to the synoptics, particularly Matthew.

Just as creation of Adam and the dominion given to him necessitates the second coming (*see* Psa. viii. and Heb. ii.), so the fact that Christ was “born King of the Jews” calls for a crowning day in the future.

First let us deal with the following somewhat problematic passages:--

“But when they persecute you in this city, flee ye unto another, for verily I say unto you, Ye shall not have gone over the cities of Israel, till the Son of man be come” (Matt. x. 23).

“For the Son of man shall come in the glory of His Father, with His angels; and then shall He reward every man according to his works. Verily I say unto you, There be some standing here which shall not taste of death till they see the Son of man coming in His kingdom” (Matt. xvi. 27, 28).

“Ye shall not see Me henceforth, till ye shall say, Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord” (xxiii. 39).

“Verily I say unto you, This generation shall not pass away, till all these things be fulfilled” (xxiv. 34).

There is in each of these verses an untranslated particle, *an*, the effect of which is to make the sentence contingent upon something expressed or implied. We can gather from other scriptures, *e.g.*, Acts iii. 19-21, that the second coming of the Lord would not take place while Israel remained unrepentant.

In “The Prophecies of the Last Days”, by *William Ker*, a suggestion is made which is helpful when considering Matt. xxiv. 34. The author draws attention to the fact that punctuation and accent are unknown in the earliest Greek manuscripts. *Aute* and *haute* would be written exactly alike, the breathing or its absence being denoted by an accent like our apostrophe. *Aute* would have the accent turned to the left (’); *haute* to the right (‘). With the recognition of these facts all difficulty vanishes from Matt. xxiv. 34.

“Verily I say unto you, THAT generation shall not pass away till all these things be fulfilled.”

“So speedy shall then be the succession of events, so shall the days be shortened (verse 22), that the same generation which witnessed the beginning of these signs shall witness also the end.”

The Son of man.

This title occurs in Matt. xvi. 27, 28; xxiv. 30, 39; xxv. 31; and xxvi. 64. The last reference is decisive in its character:--

“Hereafter shall ye see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven.”

Immediately these words are uttered by the Lord, the High Priest accuses Him of blasphemy. This is understood when seen in the light of Dan. vii. 13, 14:--

“I saw in the night visions, and, behold, One like the SON OF MAN came with the CLOUDS OF HEAVEN, and came unto the Ancient of days, and they brought Him near before Him. And there was given Him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations and languages should serve Him: His dominion is an everlasting dominion which shall not pass away, and His kingdom that which shall not be destroyed.”

By no legitimate system of interpretation can this dominion be made to refer to “The Church”. On the contrary, the passage exactly fits into Matthew’s theme, which is pre-eminently the King and the kingdom.

Matt. xvi. 27, 28 refers to the same coming and kingdom. That coming would take place either within the lifetime of some who heard the words, or, failing that, would possibly be deferred. This is implied by the particle “*an*”, “*if*”. Israel did not repent; though granted nearly forty years in which to fulfil the implication of the “*if*”. They failed to do so, and when the longsuffering of God reached this limit, they were set aside, and the possibility of the Lord’s return during the lifetime of any of His early disciples ceased to be practical truth. The transfiguration which immediately follows Matt. xvi. is a partial fulfillment and prophetic foreshadowing, as Peter himself testifies in II Pet. i. 16-18.

These four passages must be considered together if they are to be understood:--

- A | x. 23. Not finish the cities till He may have come.
- B | xvi. 28. Not taste death till see.
- B | xxiii. 39. May not see Me till say.
- A | xxiv. 34. That generation not pass till fulfilled.

It is not our purpose to tarry long over details or difficulties in this series. However, should readers find difficulty over these passages, we shall be glad to help, but we do not wish to go over ground already covered and so unnecessarily waste time.

We have touched upon these passages together in order to leave the way clear to take up the classic passage on the second coming in the Gospels, namely, Matt. xxiv. To this we hope to give attention in our next paper.

#9. Matthew xxiv.

The sunteleia. The times of refreshing. The presence of the Lord. pp. 188 - 192

The passages we have looked at in Matthew’s Gospel, while adding their quota to the teaching of the N.T. concerning the second coming of the Lord, are nevertheless isolated and fragmentary in character. Matt. xxiv. on the other hand is a discourse wholly devoted to the subject. This notable discourse is introduced by the closing verses of Matt. xxiii.:--

“O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not. Behold, your house is left unto you desolate. For I say unto you, Ye shall not see Me henceforth, till ye shall say, Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord” (37-39).

We have here a quotation from Psa. cxviii. 25, 26:--

“Save now (Hosannah), I beseech Thee, O Lord Blessed be He that cometh in the name of the Lord, we have blessed you out of the house of the Lord.”

The Hosannah quotation is found in Matt. xxi. 9. It is important to notice that the cry, “Blessed be He that cometh” is closely associated with “the house of the Lord”. This adds point to the Lord’s words, “Your house is left unto you desolate”, and also provides a reason for the disciples’ remarks concerning the buildings of the temple. When the Lord told them that there should not be left one stone upon another, it is evident by their threefold question that this desolation was connected in their minds with the coming of the Lord.

The threefold question.

This threefold question and its answer occupies the whole of Matt. xxiv. from verse 3:--

“And as He sat upon the mount of Olives, the disciples came unto Him privately, saying, Tell us:--

- (1) When shall these things be?
- (2) And what shall be the sign of Thy coming.
- (3) And the end of the age?”

In answering the disciples’ questions, the Lord deals with them in the reverse order:--

1. The end of the age (4-24).
2. The sign of the coming (25-31).
3. When these things shall be (32-42).

The answer of the Lord as to the end of the age is twofold. First, negative—“The end is not yet”; “all these are the beginning of sorrows”. Second, positive—“Then shall the end come”. Before going further we must notice that there are two words here translated “end”. In verse 3 it is *sunteleia*. In verse 6, 13 and 14 it is *telos*. The phrase “the *sunteleia* of the age” occurs only in the Gospel of Matthew, whilst “the *sunteleia* of the ages” occurs but once, viz., in Hebrews:--

- “The harvest is the *end* of the age” (Matt. xiii. 39).
- “So shall it be at the *end* of the age” (Matt. xiii. 40, 49).
- “The *end* of the age” (Matt. xxiv. 3).
- “Even unto the *end* of the age” (Matt. xxviii. 20).
- “Once in the *end* of the ages” (Heb. ix. 26).

The first occurrence connects the term with *the harvest* and in this lies the explanation of the word, for the first occurrence of the same word in the LXX of Exod. xxiii. 16 refers to the same period:--

“The feast of harvest, the firstfruits of thy labours, which thou hast sown in the field: and the feast of ingathering (*sunteleia*) which is in the end of the year, when thou hast gathered in thy labours out of the field.”

At first it may seem that there is a discrepancy between the Lord’s words in Matt. xiii. 39 and this passage. The Lord said that the harvest was the *sunteleia*, whereas

Exod. xxiii. speaks of a feast of harvest, as distinct from the feast of the *sunteleia*. The answer is suggested by the presence of the word “firstfruits”, and by the particular kind of harvest in view—“which thou hast sown in the field”. A reference to Exod. xxxiv. 22, however, makes all plain: “Thou shalt observe the feast of weeks, of the firstfruits of thy wheat harvest, and the feast of the ingathering at the year’s end.”

Now, the disciples being Jews and taught in the law, knew the order of their feasts and much of their typical nature. Unless the reader has definitely studied the feasts of Israel he is at a disadvantage here, and before we can hope to appreciate the teaching of Matt. xxiv., we must supply the deficiency. There is one chapter in the law that sets out the feasts of Israel in their order, namely, Lev. xxiii., and to that we must turn.

The feasts of the Lord.

The sabbaths (Lev. xxiii. 1-3). The first of the feasts to be mentioned is the weekly sabbath. This underlies the whole of God’s dealings with Israel. There are the following sabbaths mentioned:--

- Sabbath of *seven days* (Lev. xxiii. 3).
- Sabbath of *seven weeks* (Lev. xxiii. 15).
- Sabbath of *seven months* (Lev. xxiii. 34).
- Sabbath of *seven years* (Lev. xxv. 2-7).
- Sabbath of *seven seven years* (Lev. xxv. 8-17).
- Sabbath of *seventy years* (Dan. ix. 2), and finally the
- Sabbath of *seventy times seven* (Dan. ix. 24),
in which the whole purpose of God for Israel shall be accomplished.

This emphasis is too insistent to be avoided. Underlying the whole history of Israel is this sabbatic element. From verse 4 of Lev. xxiii. feasts “in their seasons” are recorded, which also conform to the sabbatic character. We have, in verse 5, the feast of the *first* month detailed, and in verses 34 and 39 that of the *seventh* month described. Between these two all the other feasts are found, so that while Israel’s year had twelve months, with an intercalary thirteenth month at intervals, its typical year took note only of seven of these months.

We must now tabulate the feasts in order to place the *sunteleia*:--

- (1) THE SABBATH.—Impressing the character of Israel’s typical history (*See* Heb. iv. 9, Greek).
- (2) THE PASSOVER.—Redemption, “out of”.
- (3) THE UNLEAVENED BREAD.—The sheaf waved (Lev. xxiii. 10).
A firstfruits.
- (4) PENTECOST.—Two wave loaves. Fifty days. Jubilee anticipated.
* * * * *
- (5) FEAST OF TRUMPETS.—Joel ii. 1 and 15; I Cor. xv. 52.
- (6) THE DAY OF ATONEMENT.—Repentance (Lev. xxiii. 29).
Reconciliation and access.
- (7) TABERNACLES.—The *sunteleia*. Harvest and ingathering.
The eighth day stressed (Lev. xxiii. 39).

While, experimentally, *we* must all begin with redemption—Passover, “the first month of the year to *you*” (Exod. xii. 2), God begins with the Sabbath, and the purpose of the age is to restore that which is past.

Passover, Unleavened Bread, Pentecost and the Firstfruits have received their fulfillment (I Cor. v. 7, 8; Acts ii.; I Cor. xv. 20). Between Pentecost and Trumpets (Nos. 4 and 5 in the list above) is an interval of some months, with no feast to mark it, only a reference to “the poor and the stranger”. Here, in these silent months between Pentecost and Trumpets, is where the dispensation of the mystery finds its place.

The Feast of Tabernacles, being the *sunteleia*, must be given a little closer attention. This feast celebrates both the harvests of “the corn and the wine” (Deut. xvi. 13). At the return of the captivity under Ezra, and again under Nehemiah (Ezra iii. 4 and Neh. viii. 14) this feast was observed, and this is the feast picked out by God for annual observance by all the nations that are left after the coming of the Lord (Zech. xiv. 16-19). The association of “tabernacles” and the coming of the Lord explains Peter’s suggestion on the mount of transfiguration, that he should make three tabernacles (Matt. xvii. 4).

After the detailed statement of Lev. xxiii. 34-36, the writer returns to the feast of tabernacles to give further particulars (verses 39-43), thus marking it as of great importance. Here we have the command to take boughs of trees and to dwell in booths or tabernacles. Here also is emphasized the “eighth day” which is “the last day, that great day of the feast” (John vii. 2 and 37), when the Lord spake of the full outpouring of the Spirit—upon His own glorification—partially fulfilled at Pentecost, but awaiting His second coming for its complete fulfillment.

The “eighth day” brings us to resurrection. The tabernacles speak of true “peace and safety”, and all these typical observances are covered by the word *sunteleia* used by the disciples when they came to the Lord with their question: “What shall be the sign of Thy coming, and the *end* of the age?” That “end” they knew was harvest, ingathering, rejoicing, peace; all inseparable from the coming of the Lord. Until He is “glorified” that “consummation” devoutly to be wished is as unattainable as Utopia, a mirage, the will-o’-the-wisp of politicians and reformers who have not grasped the essential relation between “the times of refreshing” and “the presence of the Lord”. That wholesome lesson it is hoped we have learned. And now, having some understanding of what the question of Matt. xxiv. 3 includes and implies, we can give more earnest heed to the answers that follow.

**#10. The Lord's threefold answer as to "When" and "What"
(Matt. xxiv.).
pp. 224 - 230**

Having seen the scriptural meaning of the "end", and its type in the feast of tabernacles, we now proceed to the continuation of the Lord's answers to His disciples' questions. In verses 4-24 He takes up this question of the "end". The first and last words in this section deal with *deception*:--

"And Jesus answered and said unto them, Take heed that no man deceive you; for many shall come in My name and shall deceive many" (verses 4, 5).

"For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect" (verse 24).

Following this opening warning concerning the false Christs the Lord tells of the feature indicative of the beginning of sorrows, but adds, "The end is not yet". Verses 6-14 are occupied with the characteristic features that lead up to the "end" (*telos*):--

Negative.—"The end is not yet" (verse 6).

Explanatory.—"All these are the beginning of sorrows" (verse 8).

Exhortative.—"Endure to the end be saved" (verse 13).

Positive.—"Then shall the end come" (verse 14).

As with the prophecies of the O.T., such as Isaiah, Daniel, and Zechariah, "the nations" are involved in this period of the "end". Wars and rumours of wars, with nation rising against nation, form part of the beginning of sorrows. Hatred by all nations, yet the preaching of the gospel to all nations for a witness, ushers in the end.

The "end" is marked by "tribulation" in two phases. Firstly, during the "beginning of sorrows", the Lord says: "They shall deliver you up to be *tribulated*" (afflicted, as in verses 21 and 29). Secondly, there comes "great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world till now, no, nor ever shall be" (verse 21).

We may now visualize the outstanding features of this first answer:--

A | xxiv. 4, 5. Warning against deception by false Christs.

B | 6-14. The beginning of sorrows. "Endure", "saved".

B | 15-22. The tribulation in full course. "Shortened", "saved".

A | 23, 24. Warning against deception by false Christs.

Intermingled with the conflict of nations we have famines, pestilences and earthquakes, as signs of the beginning of sorrows. A gleam of hope is found in these passages of gloom in the word "sorrow". *Odin* and *odino* speak, not of sorrow in general,

but pains in one particular, “pains that issue in birth”. There are altogether seven occurrences:--

“Whom God raised up, having loosed the *pains* of death” (Acts ii. 24).

“As *travail* upon a woman with child” (I Thess. v. 3).

(and in all the other references, viz., Mark xiii. 8, Gal. iv. 19, 27, and Rev. xii. 2).

This last reference is illuminated by Matt. xxiv., and sends back light in return. The birth pains of Rev. xii. 2 are followed by the rise of the beast and the false prophet, and the war on the saints of chapter xiii. There also, in Rev. xiii., is the abomination of desolation spoken of by Daniel the prophet.

The Coming of the Lord.

#11. The N.T. fulfillment. The testimony of John's Gospel. pp. 21 - 23

We come now to the Gospel of John to discover whether it contains statements concerning the second coming of the Lord distinctive enough to justify the idea that here we find the hope of the church as something distinct from the hope of Israel. The first allusion to the coming of the Lord is found in John i. 51:--

“Verily, verily, I say unto you, hereafter ye shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of man.”

Taking it for granted for the moment that this *does* speak of the second coming, what do we learn? In the first place there can be no doubt as to its reference to Jacob's dream at Bethel. That dream confirmed to Jacob the covenant made with Abraham and Isaac. Its burden was the “land”, the multiplication of the “seed”, and the great promise that in that seed all families of the earth should be blessed. Should any be tempted to introduce an argument from Galatians to the effect that the “seed” includes believing Gentiles, we would reply that the believing Gentiles cannot at the same time be both the “seed” and the “families of the earth” blessed by that seed. Details apart, however, there is nothing pre-eminently church-like in this reference to Gen. xxviii. Perhaps the context in John i. will supply the lack.

Nathaniel is described as “an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile”, and the Lord is described as the Son of God and the *King of Israel*. This is immediately followed by the wedding feast of Cana. We have therefore added to our knowledge of the second coming, but not one word have we learned concerning the distinctive hope of the church, for all is in line with Israel's hope.

In John v. 28 we have another reference that we *may* find speaks of the second coming. Take it for granted at the moment that it does speak of that coming, what do we learn?

“The hour is coming, in which all that are in the graves shall hear His voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of condemnation.”

As it is a fact of the first importance that the hope of the church precedes the resurrection of the last day, we must see that while this passage is, in itself, a wonderful revelation of truth, there is nothing distinctive of the church here.

The next references are found in John xiv. 3, 18, 28:--

“And if I go to prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto Myself, that where I am, there ye may be also” (John xiv. 3).

“I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you” (John xiv. 18).

“I go away, and come again unto you” (John xiv. 28).

We must remember that, however wide the application of these passages may be, they were spoken in the first place to the little band of disciples for their comfort and strength at the time of the Lord’s apprehension and death. In John xvii. 20 the Lord differentiates between those addressed here, and those who should hereafter believe through their word, and unless we are to disregard all the statements of Matthew, and make the twelve apostles members of the church of the mystery, we must beware of reading into the revelation given in John xiv. truth unrevealed at the time.

Seeing that the Lord was ministering to the comfort of those who would be left “orphans” (xiv. 18), we do not get the details or the view point of prophecy, but instead the statement that although the Lord was leaving them to go to the Father (verse 28), When He came again He would receive them, be with them, and share with them the prepared places in the house of many mansions. It does not require much scriptural knowledge to see in this a reference to the holy city which shall come down out of heaven. To dwell in the house of the Lord for ever was the hope of the writer of Psa. xxiii. and of all the O.T. saints. The “Father’s house” we suggest is the “tabernacle of God” which John describes in Rev. xxi. 3 and 9-27.

We know, of course, that many children of God look to the New Jerusalem as the abode of all the redeemed, and would most certainly include the apostles of the Lamb in the “church”. To such we have no word here, for the argument would necessitate a resumé of the purpose of the ages; moreover, the subject is dealt with in the pamphlet entitled *United yet Divided*. Our words are at the moment directed to those who have learned to discern between Israel and the church, and between the bride and the body. Such will fail to discover in John’s Gospel any direct or distinct testimony to the second coming that would sever it from the teaching of Matthew and the O.T. Prophets. John’s remark in xxi. 23 has no real bearing upon the matter, and with this reference our examination of the testimony of the Gospels is brought to a conclusion. The witness is one. The coming of the Lord is set before us as the coming of the Son of man to take the kingdom and to reign, coming to give blessing and peace to those Israelites indeed who are without guile, and to sit on the throne of His glory and divide the nations in connection with their entry into the kingdom.

The next book to be examined is the Acts of the Apostles, and as this is a continuation of the four Gospels, we shall have a check upon our findings by the comparison of the two sets of teaching on this great subject.

**#12. The N.T. fulfillment.
Acts, and the hope of Israel.
pp. 61 - 64**

The testimony of the Acts of the Apostles to the second coming of the Lord is found at the very opening of the book. As a result of forty days' instruction, opened Scriptures, and opened understanding, the apostles asked: "Lord, wilt Thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?" (Acts i. 6).

Restoration.

While the actual time and season were not matters of revelation, the restoration of the kingdom to Israel was a very real scriptural hope of Israel, as the testimony of the O.T. and of the N.T. proves. At the ascension of the Lord the disciples are found steadfastly looking toward heaven, and two men in white apparel, evidently angels, say to them:--

"Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, SHALL SO COME IN LIKE MANNER as ye have seen Him go into heaven" (Acts i. 11).

This ascension took place from the mount of Olives (verse 12), and the words of the angels are a direct reference to Zech. xiv. 4, Dan. vii. and Matt. xxiv. 30. The words, "shall so come in like manner" spoken on the occasion, in the place, and circumstances detailed, compel us to understand that the Lord's coming, as referred to here, will be

- (1) In connection with the restoration of the kingdom to Israel.
- (2) With the clouds of heaven.
- (3) Accompanied by angels (the men in white).
- (4) To the mount of Olives, near Jerusalem.

If these accompaniments are legitimately included in the words "so come" and "like manner", we have but added to the kingdom passages and O.T. references, and have introduced no feature that can be distinctly called "church truth", unless it be the elective character of the company that witnessed the ascension. As there was not a single Gentile in the company, this exclusiveness cannot be made to indicate the church.

Between the opening reference to the second coming and the next statement in Acts iii. 19-26 comes Pentecost, and if the statement that "the church began at Pentecost" is true, we may find a very distinct development in doctrine. It will be found that Peter addresses "men of Israel", and speaks of God as "the God of Abraham, and of Isaac, and of Jacob, the God of our fathers" (Acts iii. 12, 13).

"Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out" (Acts iii. 19).

These opening words have a more evangelical note than those of Acts i. 11, yet they are but the necessary prelude to the blessings in store for Israel. This is no gospel message to the “unsaved” as such. Further, this repentance, conversion, and blotting out of sins are

“so that seasons of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord, and He may send Jesus Christ, Which before was preached unto you: Whom heaven must receive until the times of restitution of all things which God hath spoken by the mouth of all His holy prophets since (the) age” (Acts iii. 20, 21).

If the opening reference of Acts i. 11 be connected with the “restoration” of the kingdom to Israel, this second reference is intimately connected with the “restoration” of all things that had been spoken by God through the prophets. This restoration is so clearly defined in the prophets (*see* series entitled “Studies in the Prophets” in Volume XVII), as to preclude anything distinctly applicable to the “church”, and provides a most definite answer to the apostles’ question: “Wilt Thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?”

The closing verses of Acts iii. but add their quota in confirmation of this same fact:--

“For Moses all the prophets from Samuel ye are the children of the prophets, and of the covenant, which God made with our fathers, saying unto Abraham, And in thy seed shall all families of the earth be blessed. Unto you first God, having raised up His Son Jesus, sent Him to bless you, in turning away every one of you from his iniquities” (Acts iii. 22-26).

As an immediate outcome of the healing of the lame man at the gate of the temple, Peter uttered the words we have just considered in iii. 19-26. Being further opposed by the rulers, Peter urges the typical nature of this miracle—it was the nation’s *restoration* in miniature:--

“This is the stone which was set at nought of you builders, which is become the head of the corner. Neither is there THE HEALING (i.e., the national one) in any other” (Acts iv. 11, 12).

Here we have further light upon iii. 19, 20. The heavens must receive Him until the time of restoration, because He was set at nought and will not return until the time for Israel’s healing has come.

A reference to the Psalms here quoted by Peter will show that he had the second coming in view:--

“The stone which the builders refused is become the head stone of the corner Hosannah (save now) Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord; we have blessed you out of the house of the Lord” (Psa. cxviii. 22-26).

This quotation, moreover, will show the connection between Matt. xxiii. 38, 39 and xxiv. 1, 2, a connection obvious to those who were familiar with O.T. Scripture, as the disciples were, but to the less instructed apparently without true sequence.

Rejection.

The fact that the restoration is deferred to future times indicates rejection. Stephen touches upon this in the speech that led to his martyrdom. His words revolve around two typical incidents in the lives of Joseph and Moses:--

“And at THE SECOND TIME Joseph was made known to his brethren” (Acts vii. 13).

“This Moses whom they refused, saying, Who made thee a ruler and a judge? The same did God send to be a ruler and a deliverer” (Acts vii. 35).

These two typical events Stephen brought to bear upon Israel’s rejection of the Lord and of His second coming, and when his hearers were cut to the heart, Stephen looked up into heaven and said, “I see the heavens opened, and the Son of man standing on the right hand of God” (Acts vii. 55, 56), which is but another reference to Dan. vii.

The Judge of quick and dead.

Peter and Paul refer to the second coming by stating that the Lord Jesus was to be the Judge of the quick and the dead:--

“He commanded us to preach unto the people, and to testify that it is He which was ordained of God to be the Judge of quick and the dead” (Acts x. 42).

“He hath appointed a day in the which He will judge the world in righteousness by that Man Whom He hath ordained” (Acts xvii. 31).

The charge against Paul, in this same chapter, was that he preached “another *King*, one Jesus” (Acts xvii. 7). The statement in Rev. xi. 18: “the time of the dead, that they should be judged”, is at the sounding of the seventh trumpet when great voices in heaven proclaim that “the kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ” (Rev. xi. 15-18). It needs the introduction of another word to bring these passages into the range of the hope of the church, and that word is not used of the second coming during the Acts.

The last reference we turn to is found in Acts xxviii. Paul’s ministry as recorded in this book is drawing to its close. A fresh, unexplained ministry is in view. Whatever name the apostle shall give to the hope he entertained in this chapter when the epistles to Galatians, Thessalonians, Corinthians and Romans *had already been written*, must indicate the hope that covers all that period. In verse 20 he tells us that it was “for the hope of *Israel*” that he was bound with a chain. Now if the hope of the church during the Acts was something peculiar, something secret, something special, how could Paul,--the preacher of truth, the advocate of right division, the steward of the mysteries--how could he say such a thing? The blessing of the nations under the Abrahamic covenant is not “church” truth, but is involved in the “restoration” made known by the holy prophets (Acts iii. 19-26). Throughout the Acts ministry, for this selfsame reason, Paul put the “Jew first” (Acts iii. 26; Gal. iii. 13, 14; Rom. xv. 8, 9, 12, 13).

So far, the testimony of the Acts, both before and after Pentecost, is in perfect harmony with that of the four Gospels and the O.T. Prophets. The Epistles and the Revelation must now be studied, and we shall then have considered all that has been written for our learning, and refrain from attempting to draw conclusions without sufficient information.

#13. The N.T. fulfillment.
The witness of Peter and James to the dispersion.
pp. 101 - 104

As all that we have yet seen of our subject has been very definitely connected with Israel, it would seem wise to leave Paul's testimony until we have completed our study of the remainder of the N.T., and considered the testimony of James, Cephas and John as ministers to the circumcision (Gal. ii. 7-9). Accordingly we turn to the epistle of James.

The true rendering of the word "James" is "Jacob". That the translators of the King James' Version should use this name is not surprising when we remember that followers of King James were called "Jacobites". The opening verse of the epistle reads, therefore:--

"Jacob, a servant of God, and of the Lord Jesus Christ, to the TWELVE TRIBES which are scattered abroad."

If any reader maintains that the "twelve tribes" is an appropriate title of the church which knows neither Greek nor Jew, we cannot approve of his logic, though we can readily admit his inconsistency if he takes to himself the whole epistle; but for those who have learned to distinguish things that differ, a letter addressed to the twelve tribes, though it may possess the full authority and blessing which belong to "all Scripture", must of necessity contain much that cannot strictly refer to the church.

The theme of the epistle is that of patience in tribulation, with glory in prospect at the end. With this theme the first chapter opens, and with it the last chapter closes:--

"Be patient, therefore, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord. Behold the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, and hath long patience for it, until he receive the early and latter rain. Be ye also patient: stablish your hearts: for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh ye have heard of the patience of Job" (James v. 7-11).

James here refers to some of the O.T. prophets for his figures:--

"After two days He will revive us, in the third day He will raise us up, and we shall live in His sight He shall come unto us as the rain, as the latter and former rain unto the earth" (Hos. vi. 2, 3).

Joel, also, speaks of the former and latter rain in direct connection with the restoration and Pentecost (Joel ii. 23-31). It is not by accident that towards the close of chapter v.

James speaks again of the rain, this time of its withholding from the earth for a period of *three years and a half* (James v. 17). As we have already seen, James writes to Israel, urging patience, and using the figure of the husbandman; and he includes the actual period of three and a half years that Revelation indicates to be the time of Israel's greatest testing (Rev. xiii. 5). Moreover, in chapter v., he speaks of the "Judge standing before the door" (James v. 9).

We now pass on to the fuller testimony of Peter. In the opening greeting of the epistle of James the wording is literally, "To the twelve tribes, to those in the dispersion" (*en te diaspora*). Peter follows the same course and addresses his epistle to the "sojourners of a dispersion" (*diasporas*). The word *diaspeiro* implies the thought of sowing, as seed, the choice of the term being in harmony with the prophecy of Hos. ii. 23, and the title of Jezreel.

James speaks of the need of patience during the time of tribulation; Peter also speaks of the need of patience and of a similar time of fiery trial. In connection with this period of trial the apostle brings into prominence the second coming of the Lord:--

"That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth (though it—i.e., perishing gold—be tried with fire), might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the *revelation* of Jesus Christ" (I Pet. i. 7).

It is necessary to keep distinct the two words, "appearing" and "revelation". The translators of the A.V., not having seen the dispensational distribution of terms dealing with the Lord's coming, have used the word "appearing" here for "revelation", but this is not sufficiently accurate. *Apokalupsis* should always be translated by the word "revelation"; the translators themselves have rendered its verbal form "revealed" in James i. 5 and 12, and in verse 13 the actual word is correctly rendered:--

"Wherefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and hope to the end (or perfectly) for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ."

The apostle reverts to the fiery trial and its connection with the coming of the Lord in chapter iv.:--

"Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you but rejoice inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings, that, when His glory shall be *revealed*, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy" (I Pet. iv. 12, 13).

This perfect balance of teaching is the more strikingly emphasized when we remember that the true rendering of I Pet. i. 11 is not, "the sufferings *of* Christ", but the "sufferings *for* Christ, and the glories that should follow". This does not, of course, by any means deny the truth that the one great basis of all glory is the suffering *of* Christ, and to this Peter refers before his epistles closes:--

"The elders that are among you I exhort, who am also an elder, and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed: feed the flock of God And when the Chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away" (I Pet. v. 1-4).

In this passage we have portrayed the intimate connection between the sufferings of Christ, and the sufferings for Christ, for a “witness”, here, is not a mere spectator, but one who is willing, if need be, to seal his testimony by death. The word is translated “witness” and “martyr” in the Revelation (i. 5 and ii. 13). Martyrdom was not far away from those to whom Peter wrote, and in his closing words he still has this in mind:--

“But the God of all grace, Who hath called us unto His eternal glory by Christ Jesus, *after that ye have suffered awhile*, make you perfect” (I Pet. v. 10).

The second epistle does not add materially to the teaching of the first on this subject, but is concerned with the denial of the Lord’s coming and the problem of its apparent delay. “Knowing this first” are the key-words:--

“*Knowing this first*, that no prophecy of the Scripture is of its own unfolding” (II Pet. i. 20).

“*Knowing this first*, that there shall come in the last days scoffers” (II Pet. iii. 3).

The first passage deals with the certainty of the fulfillment of the prophecy concerning the Lord’s coming; the second deals with those who, by misunderstanding the results of certain dispensational changes, denied the fulfillment of the promise altogether. In both contexts there is, as we shall see, an appeal to Scripture:--

“For we have not followed cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ” (II Pet. i. 16).

This statement the apostle establishes in two ways: first, by introducing the type of the Mount of Transfiguration; and secondly, by the word of prophecy made more sure.

In chapter iii. Peter still holds most firmly to the truth, and will not for a moment admit that the Lord is slack concerning His promise. It is unwise, the apostle declares, even to measure length of time by our own understandings, for in some things a day may be as a thousand years, or a thousand years as a day. The coming of the Lord for which Peter waited, however, was that coming which is connected with the day of the Lord, the dissolving of heavens, and the burning up of the elements, events that usher in the new heavens and the new earth. There is no uncertainty as to what Peter hoped for; the uncertainty comes in at the point where the subject passes from Peter’s province to Paul’s. Referring to the apparent delay in the fulfillment of the promise of the Lord’s return, Peter says:--

“Account that the longsuffering of our Lord is salvation, even as our beloved brother Paul also according to the wisdom given unto him hath writings unto you, as also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things; in which are some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as they do also the other scriptures, unto their own destruction” (II Pet. iii. 15, 16).

Several items of importance are contained in these words:--

1. Paul’s epistles are classed with “the other scriptures”, and these Peter has already testified to be inspired (II Pet. i. 16-21).

2. Peter, though an apostle, confesses that some of Paul's teaching is "hard to be understood".
3. The fact that the coming of the Lord had not taken place as had been expected must not, says the apostle, be considered "slackness", but concerning a full and inspired explanation of the purpose of God during this interval, one man only had received a message, and that man was Paul.

Not one word has been added by either James or Peter that is not a legitimate expansion of O.T. prophecy. The second coming of the Lord is rooted deep in the scriptures of the old covenant.

#14. The N.T. fulfillment.

The witness of John.

pp. 147 - 150

We have already considered the testimony of James and Peter; and we have now to deal with the testimony of the apostle John, who was also a minister of the circumcision. His three epistles and the book of the Revelation will complete this phase of survey, as Jude's witness has already received attention. The first reference to the Lord's coming is I John ii. 28:--

"And now, little children, abide in Him; that, when He shall appear, we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before Him at His coming."

While the general teaching of this passage is true for all the saints, there are some features that hedge it about and limit its interpretation. The "abiding" here is, in a special sense, connected with the "anointing":--

"But the anointing which ye have received of Him *abideth* in you, and ye need not that any man teach you; but was the same anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth and is no lie, and even as it hath taught you, ye shall *abide* in Him."

This anointing is a feature of the period when supernatural gifts obtained in the church, and its character may be gathered from the statement that the anointed person needed no one to teach him. By comparing II Cor. i. 21, 22 with Eph. i. 13, 14 we observe an inspired omission that reveals plainly the distinctive difference between the two dispensations:--

"Now He which stablisheth us with you in Christ, and hath anointed us, is God; Who hath also sealed us, and given the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts" (II Cor. i. 21, 22).

"Ye were sealed with the holy promissory Spirit, which is the earnest of our inheritance" (Eph. i. 13, 14).

It will be seen that the sealing and the earnest apply both before and after Acts xxviii., but that in II Cor. i. there is the added thought of "stablishing" and also the "anointing". The anointing in a special way taught the believer "to abide in Him", with the second coming in view. That coming would be a time of judgment for the works of the

redeemed, and the anointing would lead them so to live that they might not “be ashamed before Him at His coming”.

Chapter iii. continues the consideration of the effect of the hope of the Lord’s coming upon the present life of the believer:--

“We know that when He shall appear, we shall be like Him; for we shall see Him as He is. And every man that hath this hope on Him, purifieth himself, even as He is pure”
(I John iii. 2, 3).

It would often help us if we could more readily conform to the principles of Scripture concerning knowledge: “We know not”—“But we know.” There is a fascination about the unrevealed that often obscures the necessity for putting into practice the truth for the present. The Corinthians were lacking in spirituality; and it is the Corinthian church that raises the question, “With what body do they come?” (I Cor. xv. 35). They were more concerned with the unrevealed future than with the necessity to walk worthy of their calling:--

“We know not what WE SHALL BE, but WE KNOW we shall be like Him”
(I John iii. 2).

There is, possibly, a reference to the second coming in the Second Epistle of John:--

“For many deceivers are entered into the world, who confess not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh. This is a deceiver and an antichrist” (II John 7).

In the first epistle we have a similar passage:--

“Every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God; and this is that spirit of antichrist” (I John iv. 3).

In the originals of these two passages there is a difference in the verb, I John iv. using *eluluthota*—the perfect participle—and II John 7, *erchomenon*—the present participle. The intention of the writer in the use of these two participles seems to be to refer to the first and the second comings. In the first epistles, the Lord “*has come*”; while in the second, He “*is coming*”. Antichristian teaching denies both that the Lord has come and that He will come again in the flesh.

There remains the book of the Revelation. The latter is so largely concerned with the subject of the Lord’s coming that we can do little more here than refer to the series of articles concluded in Volume XV on that book. The coming of the Lord is the theme of the book and is connected with the establishment of Israel as a kingdom of priests, and of the Lord as “Prince of the kings of the earth”. It is a fulfillment of the prophecy of Zech. xii. 10, and has to do with “the tribes of the land”, and “the day of the Lord”. All this is contained in the first chapter.

The actual revelation of the Lord is described in Rev. xix., and is closely associated with the destruction of Babylon, the marriage of the Lamb, the great slaughter which is called the supper of the great God, and the millennial reign. He comes to “smite the

nations” and to “rule them with a rod of iron”; and He “treads the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God”, a fulfillment of the prophecy of vengeance in Isa. lxiii. 1-3. With the promise, “Surely I come quickly”, and the answering prayer, “Even so, come, Lord Jesus”, the testimony of this book closes.

We have now to review the teaching of the apostle Paul in order to compare it with what we have already seen. We shall then be in some degree fitted to come to a conclusion on the matter. To this study we must address ourselves in subsequent papers.

#15. The N.T. fulfillment.
The patience of hope (I Thessalonians).
pp. 190 - 194

We have now passed in review the teaching of the Scriptures concerning the second coming of the Lord, with the exception of the epistles of Paul. These epistles fall into two groups, those written before the end of the Acts, and those written during the Roman imprisonment. The first group contains six epistles:--

A | GALATIANS.
B | I & II THESSALONIANS.
B | I & II CORINTHIANS.
A | ROMANS.

We have discussed the question of the date of Galatians in our book entitled, *The Apostle of the Reconciliation*, but as the subject of the second coming does not occur in this epistle, the matter of its date is not important here. The first epistle in this group that deals with the second coming is I Thessalonians.

The patience of hope.

Are we justified in using this title for the first epistle to the Thessalonians? The answer to the question reveals an important fact that *Paul is the apostle of hope*.

Elpis, “hope”, does not occur once in the four Gospels, but in Paul’s Epistles, including Hebrews, the word is used 41 times. Of the eight occurrences in the Acts Peter is responsible for one, and Paul for six. There are only four other occurrences, so that out of a total of 53 occurrences of *elpis* (“hope” or “faith”) Paul is responsible for 47. Much the same is true of the verb *elpizo*, “to hope” or “to trust”. It occurs 31 times, and of this number Paul is responsible for 21. The word is not used by Paul or by the other writers of the N.T. exclusively of the second coming, but the fact remains that whether the hope be the second coming, the resurrection, the hope of Israel, or some more personal and immediate aspect, it is Paul who is its chief exponent.

Returning to the Thessalonian epistle:--

“Remembering without ceasing your work of faith, and labour of love and patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ” (i. 3).

This is enlarged in verses 9 and 10:--

“Ye turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God; and to wait for His Son from heaven . . . even Jesus, which delivered us from the wrath to come” (i. 9, 10).

That the verses 9 and 10 are an expansion of verse 3 seems to be clear from the structure:--

I Thess. i. 3-10.

A | i. 3. | a | Work of faith.
 b | Labour of love.
 c | Patience of hope.
B | 4, 5. “For.” The gospel to. | d | Not only.
 e | But also.
 f | What manner.
C | 6. Followers of us.
D | 6. The word received.
C | 7. Examples to others.
B | 8, 9. “For.” The word from. | d | Not only.
 e | But also.
 f | What manner.
A | 9, 10. | a | Turned to God.
 b | Serve God.
 c | Wait for His Son from heaven.

A comparison between the original words for “patience” and “waiting” is very suggestive. “Patience” is *hupomone*, from *hupomeno*, and “to await” is *anameno*. The word *meno*, “to abide”, is common to both; to one is added *hupo*, “under”, and to the other *ano*, “above”. There is a wealth of meaning here. We may not be able to find English equivalents for these words, but the instructed believer will appreciate the dual teaching. He finds strength to “remain under” because in spirit he “remains above”. So in Col. iii. we are exhorted to set our mind on things above (*ano*); and in Phil. iii. we learn that our citizenship already exists in heaven, and from that standpoint we expect the Saviour.

The words of verse 3, “Patience of hope *in* our Lord Jesus Christ”, should, literally, be rendered, “The patience of the hope *of* our Lord Jesus Christ”, a reading which must be taken into account when seeking the meaning of II Thess. iii. 5, which, as the margin shows, should read: “The love *of* God, and the patience *of* Christ.” The bearing of I Thess. i. 3 and 10 seems to justify the A.V. in its rendering of II Thess. iii. 5, unless of course we interpret I Thess. i. 3, as the patience of hope that characterized the Lord Himself, which, however, does not fit the context.

It is time we looked at the testimony of the epistle as a whole to the second coming.

I Thessalonians.

- A | i. 3. The patience of hope.
- B | i. 10. Waiting for God's Son. "Wrath."
- C | ii. 19. Servant's joy at Lord's coming. "Our."
- D | iii. 13. Lord's coming with holy ones (angels).
- D | iv. 15, 16. Lord's coming with shout (archangel).
- C | v. 2, 3. World's sorrow at Lord's coming. "They."
- B | v. 8, 9. The hope of salvation. "Wrath."
- A | v. 23. Preserve blameless.

It will be seen by comparing i. 10 with v. 8, 9, that deliverance from wrath by the coming of God's Son from heaven constituted the believer's helmet, "the *hope* of salvation". The reader will remember that the aspect is changed in Eph. vi. where the helmet is simply "the helmet of salvation". The wrath that hung over the Acts period was closely associated with the day of the Lord and with Israel, for we read in I Thess. ii. 16, that "wrath is come upon them to the uttermost".

The patience of hope in i. 3 is connected with the Thessalonians' manifest "election"; the "preserving blameless" in v. 23 is connected with their "calling". The reference in verse 23 to the hope of being preserved in spirit, soul and body blameless at the coming of the Lord has special reference to the hope of living and remaining on the earth at that time. Sanctification is stressed in iv. 3-7, but the sanctification here seems to include the preservation of the individual, the word "wholly" being *oloteles*—"completely whole". It has reference to the preservation of "spirit and soul and body", a preservation expressed in iv. 17 as being "alive and remaining" until the coming of the Lord. This hope of living and remaining until the coming of the Lord is a characteristic of the Acts period; it is warranted by the testimony of Acts iii. 19, 20, as well as of Matt. xvi. 27, 28 and other passages.

It has often been taught that chapter v. indicates that "times and seasons" did not belong to the Thessalonians as members of the church, and that the coming of the Lord for them was unrelated to the day of the Lord or to any time fulfillment of prophecy. We must remember this when we turn to the second epistle, but even in chapter v. of this epistle we find a very different reason given by the apostle:--

"But of the times and the seasons, brethren, ye have no need that I write unto you"

Why? Because the hope of the church was unrelated to times and seasons? No, rather for the obvious reason given by the apostle:--

"For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night."

This does not teach that the coming of the Lord is to be considered as a "secret rapture". The passage simply states that unlike the world, proclaiming "peace and safety" with sudden destruction imminent, the church was so instructed as to know that the day of the Lord was to come like a thief in the night, and that, knowing this, it would not be "overtaken". The church is contrasted with the "overtaken" world as children of light are contrasted with darkness. They are urged to vigilance and to put on the armour

in view of the hope of salvation. This exhortation arises naturally out of the earlier verses as written, but it has no meaning if this church expected to be taken away before that day had come.

There is an intimate connection which may be easily seen between the close of I Thess. iv. and the opening of I Thess. v. I Thess. iv. 13 opens with the words “I would not have you ignorant”, and in v. 2 the apostle continues, “You yourselves know perfectly”. Both sections deal with “sleep” and both end with the thought of “comfort”. In I Thess. iv. 14 we read:--

“For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also that sleep in Jesus will God bring with Him.”

If we interpret this to mean, that when the Lord Jesus returns He will bring the saints who have fallen asleep with Him from heaven, what can be the meaning of the next verses, which distinctly teach that the living shall take no precedence over the saints who have died, but that *together* they shall meet the Lord in the air, and “thus” and thus only be for ever “with the Lord”? The passage refers to the resurrection: “We believe that God will bring—*ago*—(from the dead) with Him” (Who was also brought from the dead—*anago*—Heb. xiii. 20). The apostle was ministering the comfort of the Scriptures to those who were sorrowing for the dead in Christ, and his comfort is resurrection at the Lord’s coming. The actual return of the Lord is described in I Thess. iv. 16:--

“The Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God.”

We see no reason to teach that the “Lord Himself” is the “archangel” here. We have already seen, in considering the teaching of Jude, that “Michael the archangel” is closely linked with the Lord’s coming. Moreover, Dan. xii. 1, 2 is a passage which must not be lightly set aside:--

“And at that time shall Michael stand up, the great prince which standeth for the children of thy people, and there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time: and at that time thy people shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the book. And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake.”

Now if the archangel of I Thess. iv. be the Michael of Dan. xii., we have a strong link established between the hope of Israel and the hope of the church during the Acts. Further links come to light in II Thess., but our space is limited, and we may be able to look back to this epistle when dealing with the second letter to the same church.

If it should be asked how it has come about that so many errors have been introduced into the teaching of these epistles, we can only put it down to the fact that as a result of confusing the two dispensations divided by Acts xxviii., truth gathered from Paul’s later ministry has been brought back into this earlier period.

#16. The N.T. fulfillment.
Rest from tribulation (II Thessalonians).
pp. 230 - 234

Unless it had been very seriously urged upon us that the teaching of I Thessalonians deals with a secret phase of the Lord's coming, while that of II Thessalonians refers to an aspect very different from the hope of the church, we should not feel it necessary to draw attention to the obvious fact that these two epistles were written to the same church upon the same theme, and that there is not the slightest warrant for the teaching that they have been used to support.

We have already seen in I Thess. i. 3 that the apostle remembered their work of faith, their labour of love, and their patience of hope. In II Thess. i. 3, 4 he takes up this same theme:--

“We are bound to thank God always for you, brethren, as it is meet, because that your *faith groweth exceedingly*, and the *love* of every one of you all toward each other *aboundeth*; so that we ourselves glory in you in the churches of God for your *patience* and *faith* in all your persecutions and tribulations that ye endure.”

This church had received the word in tribulation (I Thess. i. 6), and in every place their faith had gone forth. In II Thessalonians this tribulation had continued. And the churches of God heard of the Thessalonians' attitude through the apostle's boasting concerning them. In each of the three qualities, faith, love and hope, had these saints grown. Yet we are asked by some teachers to believe that a special secret rapture awaited I Thessalonian believers, while the believers of the second epistle were to pass through the tribulation of the day of the Lord and experience the sufferings of the reign of the beast.

While it may be easy at this distance to settle the hope of these early saints, it would have proved more difficult to have persuaded the Thessalonians themselves by such illogical deduction. The process of reasoning seems to be somewhat as follows: I Thess. iv. must be a secret rapture; and, from I Thess. v., an event having no connection with times and seasons or the day of the Lord. II Thess. ii., however, speaks of the coming of the Lord as not taking place until after the manifestation of the man of sin, and of the coming of the Lord in flaming fire. It is therefore assumed that the coming of I Thess. iv. takes place before the rise of the man of sin, and the coming of II Thessalonians after that manifestation.

The recognition that the true “secret rapture” belongs to the prison ministry of the apostle sets us free from this vain attempt to find the hope of the one body in the earlier epistles. The saints here, sorrowing for those who have fallen asleep, are comforted by the fact that they, together with those who have fallen asleep, and at the same time, shall meet the Lord in the air. The same saints in their sorrow on account of their own

tribulation through which they are passing, are comforted by the fact that “rest” shall be theirs.

“When the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with His mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God” (II Thess. i. 7, 8).

It was of this same event that the apostle had written in I Thess. iii. 13:--

“To the end He may establish your hearts unblameable in holiness before God, even our Father, at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all His holy ones” (angels).

And in verse 3 the apostle speaks of sending Timothy to comfort them—“that no man should be moved by these tribulations”.

We have not to rest our faith merely upon deduction, comparison and inference, for in II Thess. ii. 1, 2 the apostle declares that those who were spreading abroad the teaching that the day of the Lord was at hand, were false teachers, speaking the doctrine of demons:--

“Now we beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by our gathering together unto Him, that ye be not soon shaken in mind, or be troubled, neither by SPIRIT, nor by WORD, nor by LETTER, as from us, as that the day of Christ (or the Lord) is at hand.”

This was a threefold attempt to deceive.

The words, “by spirit”, refer to the miraculous gifts in the church, which, being travestied by Satan, required to be “tried” to see that they were “of God”. The evil is countered in this chapter by that sanctification of “the Spirit” that is associated with “belief of the truth” (ii. 13).

“By word” refers to the method of passing on the instruction. The apostle, at the close of chapter ii., reminds them of the source of authority:--

“Hold the traditions which ye have been taught, whether by word, or our epistle.”

And in iii. 17 he pointedly refers to the false “epistle”:--

“The salutation of Paul, with mine own hand, which is the token in every epistle; *so I write.*”

Returning to chapter i., we find that the apostle declares that a series of prophetic events must take place before the Lord’s coming:--

1. The apostacy must come, for such is the word “falling away”.
2. The man of sin must be revealed.
3. The revelation of the wicked one must take place.
4. This will be preceded by great Satanic signs, and wonders and lying miracles.

When these things have come to pass, then only will the coming of the Lord take place:--

“Whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of His mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of His coming” (ii. 3-12).

This takes us back to the first chapter, unless we are to understand that upon two separate occasions the Lord shall be revealed in flaming fire taking vengeance. As we have no warrant for this suggestion, we conclude that the “tribulation” from which these believers should find “rest” at the coming of the Lord is the tribulation connected with the “man of sin” of chapter ii. This tribulation is “such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be” (Matt. xxiv. 21). This unparalleled intensity of tribulation irresistibly takes us back to Dan. xii., where Michael the archangel is connected with a time of trouble “such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time”. Unless we can believe the contradiction of two unprecedented times of trouble, I Thess. iv. and II Thess. i. & ii. must be inseparable and refer to one event. This being so, the hope of I & II Thessalonians coincides with that of Matt. xxiv., for we have the same events foretold in each case:--

1. The desolation in the holy place (Matt. xxiv. 15 and II Thess. ii. 4).
2. The great tribulation (Matt. xxiv. 21 and II Thess. i. 6, 7; I Thess iv. 16; Dan. xii. 1).
3. The false Christs and false prophets (Matt. xxiv. 24 and II Thess. ii. 3-8).
4. The great signs and miracles (Matt. xxiv. 24 and II Thess. ii. 9, 10).
5. The brightness of His coming (Matt. xxiv. 27 and II Thess. i. 8, ii. 8).
6. The coming of the Lord *after* the tribulation, and the “gathering” of His “elect” (Matt. xxiv. 29-31; II Thess ii. 1, *episunago*).
7. The angels and the trumpet (Matt. xxiv. 31; I Thess iv. 17, iii. 13; II Thess. i. 7).
8. The parable of the fig tree. “When ye see it is near” (Matt. xxiv. 32, 33; II Thess. ii. 1-9).

The attempt to divorce the hope of Israel from that of the church of the Acts fails completely. No attempt to do so would have been made if it had been recognized that the church of the one body came into being *after* Acts xxviii. The church of Thessalonica held the teaching of Matt. xxiv. and Dan. xii. as their own, and knew that their hope found its setting amid the “blood and fire and pillars of smoke” of the Pentecostal remnant. This leads us to the day of the Lord, the great unveiling, and the book of the revelation of Jesus Christ.

I Corinthians xv. and the second death.

pp. 5 - 7

We have in earlier issues set forth the reasons that are provided in I Cor. xv. itself for limiting its references to death and resurrection to the death brought in by Adam; which necessarily excludes any reference to the lake of fire in I Cor. xv. 26. We did not at the time draw attention to the parallel that exists between the events of I Cor. xv. and of Rev. xx., xxi. As the question is one of great importance, and as I Cor. xv. 24-27 is the basis of the teaching that those cast into the second death must be revived, we need make no apology for this added note.

The records in I Cor. xv. and Rev. xx., xxi. keep pace so completely, that the parallel when set out speaks for itself. After settling the question concerning the fact of the resurrection, the apostle in I Cor. xv. 21, 22 commences the revelation of its teaching, taking us back to the first Adam, with his entail of death, and on to the last Adam, with His gift of life (I Cor. xv. 45). It is perfectly gratuitous to interpolate in verse 26 a reference to the second death which is unconnected with Adam or Adam's sin.

I Cor. xv. and Rev. xx., xxi.

THE DEAD.

“As in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive” (I Cor. xv. 22).
“I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God” (Rev. xx. 12).

THE ORDER.

“Every man in his own order. Christ the Firstfruits: afterward they that are Christ's at His coming” (I Cor. xv. 23).

“Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection; on such the second death hath no power” (Rev. xx. 6).

“The rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished” (Rev. xx. 5).

THE END.

- (i.) “That God may be all in all” (I Cor. xv. 28).
“Behold, I make all things new” (Rev. xxi. 5).
- (ii.) “He must reign, till He hath put all enemies under His feet” (I Cor. xv. 25).
“They lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years” (Rev. xx. 4).
“He that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new” (Rev. xxi. 5).
- (iii.) “The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death” (I Cor. xv. 26).
“Death and hades were cast into the lake of fire” (Rev. xx. 14).
“There shall be no more death” (Rev. xxi. 4)

Here everything is accounted for, and nothing is left to the imagination. The resurrections are from the same death; the order is the same. Paul was not making known the dispensation of the mystery in I Cor. xv., neither was he teaching the doctrine

of the ages. He was dealing with the question of resurrection, and traversed the same order of events which led up to the same goal, as John saw in the apocalypse.

At the time of writing to the Corinthians the apostle declared that at their low spiritual level they were not able to bear any teaching that was stronger than “milk”. We believe the apostle’s own statement beyond the conjectures of any man, and to foist the doctrine of resurrection from the second death upon I Cor. xv. is reprehensible.

We trust that this simple note will lead the reader to “search and see”.

The Coming of the Lord.

#17. The N.T. fulfillment.

The revelation of the Lord (I Corinthians).

pp. 23 - 27

We saw that to the Thessalonians the apostle opened up his teaching on faith, love and hope, and we found them “waiting for God’s Son from heaven”. I Corinthians defers the glorious development of the theme of faith, love and hope until chapter xiii., but gives a place in the opening chapter to another aspect of this writing:--

“I thank my God always on your behalf, for the grace of God which is given you by Jesus Christ. That in everything ye are enriched by Him, in all utterance, and in all knowledge; even as the testimony of Christ was confirmed in you; so that ye come behind in no gift; waiting for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ” (I Cor. i. 3-7).

The word that is used for the second coming in I and II Thessalonians is *parousia*, a word which is used in Matt. xxiv. 3, 27, 37 and 39. The occurrences of the word in both epistles to the Thessalonians are six in number: I Thess. ii. 19, iii. 13, iv. 15, v. 23 and II Thess. ii. 1 & 8. Omitting those passages that use the word of an individual “coming” (as in Titus), the remaining references to the *parousia* are I Cor. xv. 23; James v. 7, 8; II Peter i. 16, iii. 4, 12 and I John ii. 28. These passages provide a complete revelation of the character, time and accompaniments of the second coming and, on examination, they will be found to associate this coming entirely with the hope of Israel. The observant reader will have noticed that there are no references to the *parousia* of the Lord in the epistles of the mystery. This we must consider at some later time.

The Apocalypse.

The word used in I Cor. i. 7 is not *parousia* but *apokalupsis*, and should be rendered *revelation*. The word usually refers to a mode of inspiration (as in Gal. ii. 2—“I went up by revelation”), but in several passages it is used of the second coming of the Lord (*see* II Thess. i. 7; I Pet. i. 7, 13; iv. 13; Rev. i. 1 and I Cor. i. 7). To the churches at Corinth and Thessalonica, therefore, the apostle uses both words to express the hope before them: *parousia*—the personal presence, and *apokalupsis*—the unveiling of that Person. II Thess. i. 7 associates the unveiling with “flaming fire” and “vengeance”, and this statement is but a summary of the great book of the unveiling—“The Book of the Revelation.”

It was this that occupied the hearts of the church at Corinth and at this revelation the Corinthians were warned that there would be another unveiling—that of their own works: “For the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire” (I Cor. iii. 13). The close association of the sins of fornication and the eating of things sacrificed to idols found in I Cor. vii. and viii. becomes more intense when we read these chapters in the light of Rev. ii. 14 & 20, and of the covenants, old and new. The Corinthians were encouraged

to remember that, at this revelation, to those who had “so run”, the award of an incorruptible crown would be given.

The hope of the church during the period of the Acts was the coming of the Lord as set forth in Matt. xxiv. and in the Revelation, and, closely associated with this phase, we find, in I Cor. i. 3-7, a strong emphasis upon supernatural gifts.

Spiritual gifts.

The apostle thanks God for the rich endowment received by the Corinthians: “That in everything ye are enriched by Him, in all utterance, and in all knowledge” (I Cor. i. 5). The word *logos*, translated here “utterance”, refers to the spiritual gifts detailed in I Cor. xii. 8: “To one is given by the Spirit the *word* of wisdom: to another the *word* of knowledge, by the same Spirit.” “All knowledge” is linked with prophecy, the understanding of all mysteries, and the faith that removes mountains (I Cor. xiii. 2). And in verse 8, in association with prophecies and tongues, “knowledge” is among the gifts that shall vanish away. The apostle speaks of these gifts not only as an enrichment, but as a confirmation: “Even as the testimony of Christ was confirmed in you” (I Cor. i. 6). This confirmatory character of spiritual gifts is found in other passages, for example, in Heb. ii. 3, 4:--

“Which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard Him, God also bearing witness, both with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles, and distributions of holy spirit (the gifts, not the Give), according to His own Will.”

Again, in writing a subsequent letter to the Corinthians, the apostle refers to this same thing:--

“Now He which confirmeth (the same word as in I Cor. i. 6) us with you in Christ, and hath anointed us, is God; Who hath also sealed us, and given the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts” (II Cor. i. 21, 22).

While the inward “seal and earnest” is found in Eph. i. 13, 14, the external anointing and confirmation belong to this earlier period which is governed by the hope of Israel. The spiritual gifts are not to be separated from the hope of the Lord’s coming; they are essentially connected with it: “So that ye come behind in no gift: waiting for the revelation of our Lord Jesus Christ” (I Cor. i. 7).

“Till He come.”

The hope of the church as expressed in I Cor. i. cannot be different from that of the same church mentioned in I Cor. xi. No details concerning the Lord’s coming are given in the latter chapter because it is only introduced to convey the thought of the continued remembrance of the Lord’s death “till He come”. That this coming, however, is the revelation of the Lord already referred to in I Cor. i. 7, is indicated by its close proximity to the same spiritual gifts (I Cor. xii.). If it is argued from I Cor. xi. 26 that as the Lord has not come, we must still observe the Supper, could it not also be argued from

I Cor. i. 3-7, that as the Lord has not come, we must still “come behind in no gift: waiting for the revelation of our Lord Jesus Christ”?

In the second instance the fallacy of the argument is more manifest, *for we do not possess the gifts*. In the first instance, however, the gathering round the Lord’s table would *appear* to fulfil all the requirements, but, when we take into account the solemn statements of the closing verses of this chapter, it is manifest that the mere observance of the ordinance may only be an apparent obedience.

“Guilty of the body and blood of the Lord For this cause many are weak and sickly among you and many sleep” (I Cor. xi. 27-34).

Again, in I Cor. x. 16, 17, a vital connection is established between the “one body” and the “one loaf”. As this “one body” is clearly the one church possessed of the varied spiritual gifts (I Cor. xii. 12, 13, 27), it is clear that the continuation of the Lord’s Supper by those who have not spiritual gifts, is as lacking in scriptural justification as the observance of the Supper based upon the argument that the words “Till He come” cover the present dispensation. When the hope of Israel passed away from the immediate horizon, gifts passed with it.

The connection between the Lord’s Supper and the new covenant is another feature linking this coming with the restoration of Israel. The reader is referred to the series “Studies in the Prophets” in Volume XVIII, page 37, for an article showing the connection of the restoration of Israel with the new covenant. The church of the mystery is so far removed from the restoration of Israel, that it has its place during the very period when Israel are set aside. The phase of the Lord’s coming that constitutes the hope of that church differs in many respects from the hope of the church during the Acts. It is connected neither with spiritual gifts to confirm, nor with symbolical rites to remember, nor with the new covenant (which cannot be severed from the hope of Israel—*see* Jer. xxxi. 31-37). The “new testament” of Matt. xxvi. 28 is exactly the same as the “new covenant” of Heb. viii. 8.

The parousia.

The *parousia*, or “personal presence” aspect of the Lord’s coming occurs in I Cor. xv. 23: “Christ the firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ’s in His *parousia*. Then the end.” The reader is referred to Volume XX, page 188, for the connection between firstfruits and the second coming. While much else must be said in the exposition of this passage as a whole, in its reference to the second coming of the Lord, it is but one of a series of passages that present an unbroken testimony. It is evident that the particular resurrection of those who are in Christ at His *parousia*, that is in view here, is described with fuller detail in verses 51-58. In so doing the apostle is not inspired to add anything to prevent his readers associating the “last trump” here with the last trump of which John subsequently writes in the Apocalypse; neither does he see anything in the coming of the Lord as then taught and expected that would prevent him from intimately connecting that coming with Israel’s restoration, as witness the “When then” of I Cor. xv. 52, and Isa. xxv. 1-9. In Matt. xxiv. the Lord associates His coming with,

and indeed dates it as, the period “after the tribulation”. In II Thess. ii. that coming is directly connected with the man of sin, and must therefore come *after* the church of the one body has ceased on the earth: the same is true in I Cor. xv.

One cannot have the hope associated with the early part of the Acts, with its baptisms, its gifts and its close connection with Israel, and at the same time hold to the one hope of our calling, with its one baptism, its absence of gifts, and its dissociation from Israel. That many attempt this incongruous combination, and are apparently blessed in so doing, cannot justify any trifling with truth or the setting up of an argument of mere expediency. If the Lord were swift to mark iniquity, or if He refused to accept anything short of perfection in service, who of any of us would stand?

#18. The N.T. fulfillment.

The hope before Jew, Gentile, and “the creature” (Romans). pp. 65 - 68

In bringing our investigation of the earlier epistles of Paul to a close we have to consider the testimony of the epistle to the Romans. We shall not find in it the precision of I Thess. iv., because the hope was by that time well taught and believed. Instead, we have references to the various accompaniments of the Lord’s coming, these being necessary to complete the revelation of truth.

The seven passages in Romans.

Seven passages in the Epistle refer to the coming of the Lord, or to some event that necessitates it. These passages taken together form a complete whole:--

- A | ii. 1-6. Jew and Gentile. Reward and punishment.
- B | viii. 17-25. Deliverance from bondage of the creature.
- C | xi. 26. The Deliverer. Isa. lix. 20 quoted.
- D | xiii. 11-14. Salvation nearer than when we believed.
- C | xiv. 9-12. The Judge. Isa. xlv. 23 quoted.
- A | xv. 12, 13. Jew and Gentile. The hope.
- B | xvi. 20. Satan bruised shortly.

Jew and Gentile.

The first passage is one of judgment, and judgment yet to come: “The day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God” (Rom. ii. 5). This judgment of God is administered by the Lord Jesus Christ: “In the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ, according to my gospel” (Rom. ii.16). Jew and Gentile are in view in this passage, but there is appended the statement that “there is no respect of persons with God” (Rom. ii. 11).

The parallel passage of Rom. xv. 12, 13 brings Jew and Gentile together in hope. The force of this passage is blunted in the A.V. by the rendering of the word “hope” in verse 12 as “trust”. The passage should read:--

“There shall be a Root of Jesse, and He that shall rise to reign over the Gentiles: in Him shall the Gentiles HOPE, now the God of the HOPE fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye many abound in the HOPE through the power of the Holy Ghost.”

The argument of chapter ii. is that the Jew, equally with the Gentile, shall be judge; the argument of chapter xv. is that the Gentile, equally with the Jew, shares in the hope brought in by the “Root of Jesse”. These trains of thought we must take up more fully in the series devoted to the epistle to the Romans. For the moment we pass on to chapter viii.

The creature.

Here we leave Jew and Gentile, and deal with the creature as such. In Rom. v. 12 Adam is introduced, and from that verse to the end of chapter viii. we are dealing with deeper issues than those connected with either Gentile or Jew, considered separately. Here we find suffering endured in view of glory.

“The glory that shall be revealed in us. For the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the revelation (*apokalupsis*) of the sons of God” (Rom. viii. 18, 19).

Here we have “the creature”, a deeper principle than that of nationality, Jew or Gentile. Here, too, we have “sons of God”, equally a greater sphere, and going back to Adam and Eden (Luke iii. 38).

This revelation of the sons of God awaits resurrection, when

“the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption in the liberty of the glory of the children of God awaiting for the adoption, the redemption of our body” (Rom. viii. 21-28).

This “salvation by hope” that looks forward to the complete emancipation of “the creature”, the “redemption of the body”, demands such intimate acquaintance with the arguments of chapters v., vi. and vii. that we leave this passage also for closer study in due course. For the moment the one thing that concerns us is the gathering up of the varied items in Romans that illuminate the doctrine of the Lord’s coming.

With this passage, that goes back to Adam and Eden, it is only natural that we should take Rom. xvi. 20 that likewise goes back to the same occasion:--

“The God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly” (Rom. xvi. 20).
“I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel” (Gen. iii. 15).

While in the first instance this prophecy looks to Christ Himself at Calvary, it also looks forward to the second coming when all the “seed” shall have entered by “adoption”

into their glorious portion. Rom. viii. and xvi. deal with phases of the hope that transcends all limitations and dispensational boundaries, and make no difference to the most exclusive presentation of truth as given in the epistles written either before or since Acts xxviii.

Deliverer and Judge.

Rom. xi. 26 is part of a large section, occupying chapter ix.-xi., which deals with the dispensational positions of Israel and the Gentiles. Rom. xiv. 9-12 is part of a section, occupying the whole of chapter xiv. and part of xv., which deals with the particular interrelationship of Israel and the Gentile, the latter being now received and saved by the same Christ. In Rom. xi. 26 Gentiles are warned that a limit is set to the period of Israel's blindness: "And so all Israel shall be saved: as it is written, There shall come out of Sion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob." The hope of Israel can only be deferred to God's good time: it can never fail.

A salutary word is given in Rom. xiv., possibly to the Gentile believer in his new-found liberty, wherein he was liable to despise the weaker scruples of his Hebrew brother:--

"But why dost thou judge thy brother? or why dost thou set at nought thy brother? for we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ" (Rom. xiv. 10).

That judgment seat will be set up at the coming of the Lord, and is in view in I John ii. 28 and other similar passages. It remains therefore to heed the last central word, viz., Rom. xiii. 11-14:--

"It is high time to awake out of sleep: for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed. The night is far spent, the DAY IS AT HAND: let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light."

Whether it be Peter (II Pet. iii. 11), James (Jas. v. 7), John (I John iii. 1-3), or Paul (Rom. xiii. 11-14), all agree in the moral issue, the practical outcome of the doctrine of the Lord's coming, viz., "*Be ye also ready*".

**#19. The mystery that fills up the Word of God.
“The one hope of your calling” (Ephesians).
pp. 110 - 112**

We have now considered the complete scriptural teaching concerning the second coming of the Lord, with the exception of that of the prison epistles of Paul and of those pastoral epistles which were written after Acts xxviii. One thing at least has been established by this study—that the doctrine of the second coming is not by any means peculiar to the New Testament. Indeed it has been forced upon us by the sheer weight of the available evidence that there is not one N.T. reference to the second coming yet noticed, that is not either a quotation from the O.T. or an expansion of its teaching. The reader may find profitable study in traversing the ground already covered to discover the O.T. links. They are manifestly on the surface in Matt. xxiv. and in the Apocalypse. I Thess. iv. 16, 17 is not a new revelation; the mystery mentioned in I Cor. xv. 51 relates, not to the coming of the Lord, but to the “change” of the living believer at His coming; and the mystery of Rom. xi. 25 refers, not to the coming of the Deliverer, but to the duration of Israel’s blindness.

The one hope of your calling.

If the prison epistles belong to the same dispensation as that which obtains throughout the rest of the N.T., or even in that part of it which follows the Gospels, then the hope will be the same, and will be expressed in similar terms. It will take place at the same time, in similar circumstances, and in the same sphere. There need be no mystery about our quest here; we have but to “search and see”. While it is true that spiritual things can only be spiritually discerned, it is also true that the spirit of wisdom and revelation is not needed to count the number of times the *parousia* is mentioned in Ephesians, or to determine whether or not the archangel’s voice is said to arouse the members of the one body.

In Eph. i. 17-23 we have a wonderful prayer recorded. It was in the first instance the prayer of the apostle Paul for the Ephesian saints, and he prays for nothing less than the spirit of wisdom and *revelation* in the knowledge of “Him”—either of Him (the Lord) or of it (the mystery) or probably of both, for they are inseparable (Col. ii. 2, R.V.). This spirit is in the first instance that “ye may know what is the *hope* of His calling”. Now if the hope before the Ephesians had been already expounded in Paul’s earlier epistles and public ministry, why should teaching cease at Eph. i. 16, and prayer for *revelation* commence? The prayer includes three subjects, two of which are confessedly new:--

“The riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints” and
“The exceeding greatness of His power to usward who believe when He raised
Him from the dead far above all.”

The hope of His calling forms one of the seven features in the unity of the Spirit given in Eph. iv., where it is called “the hope of your calling”. This one hope cannot be

severed from the “one body” and the “one Spirit”, for they are linked by the words “*even as ye are called—in one hope of your calling*”.

There is no actual mention of the second coming of the Lord in Ephesians, but one or two statements are given that look forward to the end, and we must consider the evidence which they provide. “The dispensation of the fullness of times” when all things shall be gathered up in Christ, whether things in heaven or in earth, may refer to the great consummation towards which the purpose of the ages moves, but if it does, nothing is said as to the Lord’s coming from heaven to earth.

The prior hope.

In Eph. i. 12 we read: “That we should be to the praise of His glory, who first trusted in Christ.” The word for “first trusted” is, in the original, *proelpizo*, and does not occur elsewhere in either the N.T. or the LXX—its literal meaning is “pre-hoped”. The passage is in correspondence with the words of verse 6, as shown in the structure:--

Eph. i. 5, 6. | A | Predestinated as children.
 B | According to the good pleasure of His will.
 C | To the praise of glory of His grace.
 D | *Highly favoured in the Beloved.*
 * * * * *
Eph. i. 11, 12. | A | Predestinated as to inheritance.
 B | According to purpose will.
 C | To praise of His glory.
 D | *Who fore-hoped in Christ.*

Pro in composition indicates *place, time or preference*. Instances of the third meaning are found in Rom. iii. 9 and xii. 10: “Are we better than they?” and “In honour preferring one another”. And this meaning harmonizes with the parallel, “highly favoured”, of verse 6. The hope of Ephesians is “prior” not only and not so much in the sense of time, although this is undoubtedly true, but rather in the sense of high favour and dignity—indeed, “far above all principality”. “The *exceeding riches* of His grace” follow closely upon the statement of our being “made to sit together in the heavenlies in Christ Jesus” (Eph. ii. 6, 7).

It must be acknowledged that positive teaching concerning the second coming of the Lord does not enter into the revelation of the mystery in this epistle. If, however, we believe that “the hope of Israel was entertained by the apostle up to the time of his visit to Rome and his all-day conference with the leaders of the Jews there, then we are faced with two alternatives: either we must believe that the one hope concerning which the apostle prayed so deeply in Eph. i. was a hope known to all familiar with those O.T. passages considered in this series, or we must believe that with the revelation of the mystery was made known a new and corresponding hope. If the latter of these alternatives is not true, then the character of our hope is not, after all, distinctive or unique, and our calling, associated with a mystery hitherto unrevealed (Eph. iii.) and a

sphere and period hitherto unknown (Eph. i. 3, 4) has no corresponding hope. But such is not the case; our hope and our calling are in harmony.

We have other epistles to examine before our study is complete, and we shall find in them evidence which is both positive and conclusive. To this investigation we must address ourselves in our next article.

**#20. The mystery that fills up the Word of God.
“The hope of glory” (Colossians).
pp. 146 - 149**

It will be remembered that in writing to both the Thessalonians and the Corinthians, the apostle brings together in very vital connection “faith, hope and love”. This blessed trio is found both in Ephesians and Colossians. In Ephesians we read:--

“That we should be to the praise of His glory, who had a prior *hope* in Christ
after I heard of your *faith* in the Lord Jesus, and *love* unto all the saints” (Eph. i. 12-15).

The passage in Colossians is somewhat similar, the order, however, being reversed, and hope mentioned last:--

“We give thanks . . . since we heard of your *faith* in Christ Jesus, and of the *love* which ye have unto all the saints, on account of *the hope* which is laid up for you in heaven, whereof ye heard before in the word of the truth of the gospel . . .” (Col. i. 3-5).

The subject that receives the fullest attention in this passage is “the hope”. Let us note the various items in its definition.

- (1) It is laid up in heaven.
- (2) It formed part of the “word of the truth of the gospel”.
- (3) Which had all the world in view.

A superficial reading has led some to make of this passage a close parallel with I Pet. i. 4: “An inheritance reserved in heaven for you.” The words “reserve” and “lay up”, however, are different, and the occasion when this inheritance is entered is very different also. “To lay up” is the translation of *apokeimai*, which occurs four times in the N.T.:--

“Here is thy pound which I have kept laid up in a napkin” (Luke xix. 20).

“The hope which is laid up for you in heaven” (Col. i. 5).

“Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness” (II Tim. iv. 8).

“As it is appointed unto men once to die” (Heb. ix. 27).

The first occurrence, a non-doctrinal usage, gives the elementary meaning of the word, “laid up as in a napkin”. The parallel passage (Matt. xxv. 18) indicates that this man “went and digged in the earth, and *hid* his lord’s money”.

We are already acquainted with the fact that the mystery as revealed in Ephesians and Colossians is said to have been “hidden” from ages and generations (Col. i. 26; Eph. iii. 9), and that the very life of the members of the one body is said to be “hid” with Christ in God, so that a hope “laid up” as a talent in a napkin is in harmony with a life “hid” and a mystery hitherto unrevealed.

This hope is laid up “in heaven”. In one sense this is true of all blessings, for “every good and every perfect gift cometh from above”, but it is not true that every blessing will be enjoyed “in heaven”. Some will be enjoyed on earth, and some in the new Jerusalem. Those blessings that are not only heavenly in character, but which can only be enjoyed “in the heavenly places far above all”, are those which pertain to the high calling of the mystery.

This special hope was made known to the Colossians by “the word of the truth of the gospel”, an expression so in line with Eph. i. 13 as to be an intentional reference to the same thing. Let us put them together:--

“Who had a prior hope in Christ, in Whom, ye also, upon hearing THE WORD OF TRUTH, THE GOSPEL of your salvation having believed, were sealed with the holy spirit of promise.”

“For the hope that is laid up for you in heaven, whereof ye heard before in THE WORD OF THE TRUTH OF THE GOSPEL which bringeth forth fruit your love in the spirit.”

This gospel had come unto the Colossians and all the world. The word “come” does not imply that when the apostle wrote these words the gospel referred to had actually been preached “in all the world”. The word “come” is *parontos*, a participle of the verb *pareimi*, “to be beside”, which also supplies us with the more familiar *parousia*, which means the actual, personal, presence of the Lord.

Peter, it will be remembered, emphasized that which he called “present truth” in II Pet. i. 12, which had in view the coming of the Lord as the day-star of Old Testament prophecy (II Pet. i. 16-21). That phase of truth was “present”, or, as we sometimes say, “obtained”, for the dispersion for whom he wrote. In the same sense the “laid up” hope of the mystery was “present”, or “obtained”, for those to whom Paul ministers in these prison epistles. This is “the present truth” for us, and just as Peter prayed that his hearers might be established in the present truth, so Paul prayed also (Col. i. 28, ii. 13). What we do well to remember is that a redeemed Israelite, called under the dispensation ministered by Peter, could not be “established” in truth that belonged to members of the one body; it would not be *present* truth to him. And just in the same way, the members of the one body cannot be established in truth outside that which is *present* to them, but only in that which has to do with the high calling of the mystery.

The apostle expands this idea of “present truth” a little later in the same chapter. After claiming the ministry of the one body as something very exclusively his own by reason of a dispensation given to him by God, “even the mystery” hitherto hidden from ages and generations, he proceeds:--

“But now is made manifest to His saints (*see ‘all saints’ in i. 4*): to whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery (*see Eph. i. 18: ‘The hope of His calling, the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints’*), among the Gentiles (*see Col. i. 6: ‘Unto you and all the world’*) which is Christ among you the hope of glory” (Col. i. 26, 27).

The very fact that, in spite of the setting aside of Israel, and in spite of the cessation of supernatural gifts, Christ could be preached “among the Gentiles” necessitated some basis other than that given in earlier Scriptures. For where, apart from the mystery epistles, can we find warrant for going with a message of supernal grace and glory to Gentiles, independently of Israel, the new covenant, and the promises made to Abraham? Neither Israel, the new covenant, nor the promises to Abraham enter into the gospel and hope of the church which is His body.

The third chapter contains a further statement concerning our hope:--

“When Christ, Who is our life, shall be made manifest, then shall ye also be made manifest with Him IN GLORY” (Col. iii. 4).

With this passage we should read Titus ii. 13:--

As we should like to devote rather more space than we have at our disposal now to a consideration of one or two other distinctive features of this hope, we reserve further comment until we write the next article of the series. For the moment we have seen that the same exclusiveness that belongs to the mystery itself belongs also to the hope of the mystery. We leave with the reader the thought that while some may look forward to the high privilege of meeting the Lord *in the air*, and others of going *in with Him to the marriage feast*, those blessed with all spiritual blessings according to the terms of Eph. i. 3-14 entertain the hope of one day being made manifest with Him *in glory*.

#21. The mystery that fills up the Word of God. His appearing (II Timothy). pp. 186 - 189

In our last article we paused at the comparison between Col. iii. 4 and Titus ii. 13. These passages have two features in common which are specially connected with the hope of the mystery.

The first is the word “appearing”; the second the word “glory”. In Col. iii. 4 “appear” in the original is *phaneroo*, and in Titus ii. 13 it is the cognate word *epiphaneia*. Before Acts xxviii. Paul uses the two words *parousia* and *apokalupsis* (“coming” and “revelation”) when speaking of the Lord’s coming, using *epiphaneia* once when speaking of the “brightness” of the *parousia* (II Thess. ii. 8). After Acts xxviii. he never again uses either of the words *parousia* or *apokalupsis* to define the second coming

of the Lord, but takes up and uses the word *epiphaneia*. The very distinction of terms is eloquent. If the inspired apostle thus indicates a difference by the marked way he uses terms, it is for us, if we really believe God's Word, to acknowledge the difference and approve the things that are more excellent.

Epiphaneia occurs in Paul's epistles after Acts xxviii. as follows:--

"Keep until the *appearing* of our Lord Jesus Christ" (I Tim. vi. 14).

"The *appearing* of our Saviour Jesus Christ" (II Tim. i. 10).

"The Lord Jesus Christ, Who shall judge the quick and the dead at His *appearing* and His kingdom" (II Tim. iv.1).

"Them also that love His *appearing*" (II Tim. iv. 8).

"The glorious *appearing* of the great God" (Titus ii. 13).

The first reference in II Timothy does not relate to the second coming, which leaves us four passages. This "appearing" was the object, not only of the apostle's hope, but also of his love. He speaks of a crown of righteousness which shall be given not to himself only, but also to all those who love His appearing. That this is a most practical thing is evident by reading the verses that follow. In direct contrast with those who "love His appearing" is the pitiable example of Demas, who forsook the apostle—"having *loved* this present age".

There are some who put the doctrine of the second coming aside as being most impracticable teaching, and likely to breed a company of mere dreamers. II Tim. iv. reveals that this is far from being the truth, and Titus ii. is most positive in its teaching concerning the practical value of the hope of the church.

Titus ii. gives words of practical instruction to old and young; men and women. Servants, or more strictly speaking slaves, are exhorted to "adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things", and this practical exhortation is emphasized by the passage dealing with the hope of the church:--

"For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world; looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ; Who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto Himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works" (Titus ii. 11-14).

The gist of this passage appears to be that the grace of God not only saves, but teaches us how to live subsequently, and that new life is expressed negatively by the denial of worldly lusts, and positively by righteousness, which, in its turn, is further expanded by placing in contrast "this present world" and "the glorious appearing", as in II Tim. iv. 8-10.

The simple sentence shorn of all explanatory matter is—"The grace of God teaches us that we should *live looking*." This is in marked contrast with II Tim. iv., where Demas "loved this present age": here, we are taught how to live "in this present age". There Demas is contrasted with those who "love His appearing"; here the true life in this

present age is characterized by “looking for the appearing”. The words “glorious appearing” should be remembered that in Col. i. 27 we found that the preaching of Christ among the Gentiles during this parenthetical period (“to fill up the Word of God”, Col. i. 25) was the pledge of their hope of *glory*, and that when Christ, Who is our life, shall be made manifest, then ye also, shall be made manifest with Him in *glory*. So it is with Titus ii. 13, the blessed hope is the manifestation of the *glory*. When hope is realized, then that which has only been partially enjoyed “by faith” will be entered in reality. Even now “by faith” we are raised together and made to sit together in the heavenlies: then, when hope is realized, we shall sit there in reality.

It would not be a realization of my calling to find myself in the millennial kingdom, however blessed and far beyond all merit such a lot would be. It would not be a realization of my calling to find myself, for any possible reason, occupying one of the twelve thrones of the apostles. No, my faith has received the testimony of God concerning this dispensation of the mystery, and the hope of that calling can only be realized “far above all”. At present the Lord Jesus waits until the time appointed shall come. Before He descends, with all His angels, to take the kingdom and reign, He will be made manifest “in glory”. There will be a moment which will be “the manifestation of the glory of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ”. When that takes place, every member of the blessed company that constitutes “the church which is His body” shall be “made manifest with Him in glory”. How do they get there? We are not told, and some questions of a similar nature are not answered (I Cor. xv. 35). No one, whatever be his calling, can enter into the realization of it apart from resurrection, but whether the resurrection of this church will be individual or collective, visible or invisible, is not revealed. The church of the mystery is not numbered among the denominations of Christendom. Its sudden cessation would have no effect upon the religious world. Its inception, its course, and its conclusion, are alike secret. Some will hear the archangel’s voice; some will hear the last trump; but not so the church of the one body. Before that archangel speaks, or that last trump shall have sounded, every member of His body shall have been “manifested with Him in glory”.

We have not included Phil. iii. 20 in our study, believing that there the apostle deals with the *prize* of the high calling and not its *hope*. We mention this in case our readers should think that it had been overlooked. This “blessed hope” is unconnected with signs of the times, except that as we see on the horizon the gathering together of events prophesied in Scripture, we know that our own hope is nearer. If only we could just “live looking”, this present age would have no hold upon us; we should indeed “love His appearing”.

We have now given the doctrine of the Lord’s coming a survey, in which, though we have had to pass over many interesting details, we have not consciously omitted any item of importance. Apart from the hope of the one body, the whole doctrine of both the O.T. and the N.T. on this subject is one and indivisible. While we dare not attempt to decide for others what constitutes their hope, it is plain to ourselves that I Thess. iv. is not the blessed hope of Titus ii. or of Col. i. and iii.

Here we must take leave of the subject, and in closing return to the point from which we commenced. The second coming of the Lord, as generally received, is not *the theme* of the prison epistles, and as their peculiar message is the basis of our own testimony, the absence of that doctrine from our pages in the past can be easily understood. We do, however, entirely endorse the teaching that the world can never grow better apart from the personal presence of the Lord, neither can the great and precious promises to Israel, the nations, or creation itself, be realized apart from His return. All this is true, without altering our own sphere of blessing and hope. Though different companies of the redeemed have as their respective hopes varying phases of the Lord's manifestation, differing as greatly as the hope of those whose inheritance is found "above all principality" differs from that of those meek ones who shall "inherit the earth", nevertheless all—kingdom, church, body and bride—are united in the one blessed fact that the Lord Himself is their hope. "Let us "live looking".