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When the Son of Man is Revealed

[Contributed]

IF WE could come to the Gospels for the first I time, with a virgin mind, free from all contact with any form of religious belief, we would, as we parted company with Jesus on His ascension to heaven, be left with -a vivid impression that the story was not complete-that the Savior was going away when apparently He was most needed, leaving His devoted followers to the perils of a hostile world, which had not only rejected and crucified their Lord, but they were told, would also do the same to them. The Messiah quietly leaves the earth for heaven, disappearing in the clouds, and His followers are left behind, apparently no better off, and the world continues on its course as if nothing had happened. Is this the end of the story? Multitudes think so! What is going to complete it, and crown the whole work of Christ's First Advent? There is no obscurity about the answer given by Jesus Himself. "If I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto Myself." (John 14:3.) The disciples, as they looked longingly towards heaven into which Jesus had visibly ascended before their eyes, were comforted by the angelic reminder of this important fact: "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 1:11.

Looking for that Blessed Hope

To the unprejudiced mind there is no truth more plainly stamped across the New Testament than this return of the Lord-not so much the fact of His coming again, as the fact that no salvation is complete, no deliverance can be expected, no resurrection glory or Kingdom reign possible, until He comes back to this earth a second time, when, it is most plainly declared, all these things will be realized, and not before! Of course the spirit of error quickly beclouded this most important

teaching, and it, was not long before the "patient waiting for Christ" gave place to the conduct begotten of the mind which says, "the Master delayeth His coming, with the inevitable-consequences of confusion in the household. But the Apostles lived and worked and watched in the light of this hope. It is interwoven in their thoughts, and expressed time and again in their epistles to the Church; they had no other hopes beyond it. For instance: "Repent ye therefore and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord: **and He shall send Jesus Christ**, which before was preached unto you' whom the 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 world began." (Acts 3:19-21.) "For what is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? Are not even ye in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ **at His coming?**" (1 Thess. 2:19.) "I charge thee before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead **at His appearing and His Kingdom.**" (2 Tim. 4:1.) "For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. ... Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me, at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that **love His appearing.**" (2 Tim. 4:6-8.) "For yet a little while, and He that shall come will come, and will not tarry." (Heb. 10:37.) "Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time." (1 Pet. 1:5.) "Looking for and hastening unto the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat. Nevertheless; we, according to His promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness. Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for such things, be diligent that ye may be found of Him in peace, without spot, and blameless." - 2 Pet. 3:12-14.

The thought always was that they were left behind here to occupy until - He comes back again for them.' They were to be in the world but not of it if the world hated their Master, it would hate them, but here they were to remain, as pilgrims and as strangers, until His glorious return, when He shall send His angels to gather them together from the four corners of the earth. "And the dead in Christ shall rise first: then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. Wherefore comfort one another with these words." - 1 Thess. 4:16-18.

Servants Watching for Their Master

It is because He desired this ever to be the hope of His people, the great object of their faith and love, that the Lord laid such stress on the importance of watching thereunto " with all prayer and supplication, in order to be found ready. "Let your loins be girded about, and your lights burning; and ye yourselves like unto men that wait for their Lord, when He will return. from the wedding, that when He cometh and knocketh, they may open unto Him immediately. Blessed are those servants, whom the Lord when He cometh shall find watching." (Luke 12:35-37.) "For the Son of Man is as a man taking a far journey, who left his house, and gave authority to his servants, and to every man his work, and commanded the porter to watch. Watch ye therefore: for ye know not when, the Master of the house cometh, at even, or at midnight, or at the cockcrowing, or in the morning lest coming suddenly He find you sleeping." - Mark 13:34-36.

We note how different is our position of watching at the end' of this long Age, to that of the early-Church. To them Jesus truly said, "Ye **know** not when the Master of the house cometh," but to His Church at the last days, He. said, "Know ye that the Kingdom of God is nigh at hand, when ye see these things come to pass." As one has well expressed it: "The facts of history have explained the predictions of Scripture; experience has demonstrated the true scale of the

chronology of symbolic prophecy; our expectations are consequently confined to a much narrower range. The 'evening' light of the early ages of the Church history faded away, long ago, into the 'midnight' of the Dark Ages of the great Apostasy: the 'cockcrowing' of the Reformation has already brightened into the dawn of morning light, and our uncertainty is limed to ignorance of the precise moment, at which the Sun of Righteousness will rise in visible glory above our horizon. The scheme of Divine providence has been by degrees unfolded, and the signs of the times assure us, that we are not out in our reckoning."

However, at this time, and in this connection, we perhaps should give more consideration to our Lord's own description of- the attitude and outlook of the world-(the nominal Christian world as it

would become) for of necessity it must control our own understanding of the times, and it will also help to preserve us from dropping into a similar attitude.

The Days of Noah

When the disciples approached Him on the Mount of Olives, to inquire as to what, would be the sign of His coming and of the end of the world, Jesus, after giving a brief summary of the Age that would intervene before His return in glory, declared: "As it was in the days of Noah, so shall it be also in the days of the Son of Man. They did eat, they drank, they married wives, they were given in marriage, until the day that Noah entered into the ark, and the flood came, and destroyed them all. Likewise- also as it was in the days of Lot; they did eat, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they builded; but the same day that Lot went out of Sodom it rained fire and brimstone from heaven, and destroyed them all, Even thus shall it be in the day when the Son of Man is revealed." - Luke 17:26-30.

These words of our Lord, as they appear to us, can convey only one picture to the mind of what the world will be thinking and doing right up to the time He speaks of. There can be no mistaking the two well known cases quoted of past judgments. They are not capable of any symbolical application or spiritual interpretation on any system. The flood and the fire and the brimstone, the termination of a world, the utter destruction of a city, were all concrete realities; and as it was then, said Jesus, "so shall it be in the day when the Son of Man is revealed." A brief summary of the principal points in the comparison would be as follows:

(1) In Noah's day it was a busy, pleasure-loving, degenerate, unbelieving world, filled with violence and all manner of wickedness, teaching clearly, in harmony with direct testimony on the point, a similar condition at the end of this World.

(2) The record shows that its conversion was impossible; nor is there any indication that Noah attempted it. This also covers the present evil world and the Church's, relation to it.

(3) They knew not, in spite of Noah's ark, or the presence of the angel-messengers at Lot's house; and this ignorance and wholesale preoccupation with the cares of this life, continued on to the very day that Noah entered the ark, and to the same day that Lot fled from Sodom.

(4) The World then ended definitely, completely, in an overwhelming judgment, in the process of which, of course, all the building and planting, buying and selling, etc., was stopped as far as that generation was concerned. "The world that then was, being overflowed with water, perished: but

the heavens and the earth, which are now, by the same word are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men."

Remember Lot's Wife

The Church's position, it can be said, is further foreshadowed in Noah and Lot; and also Lot's wife is given us as a warning example. Jesus goes on to say, in the same prophecy and in the same connection, "Remember Lot's wife. Whosoever shall seek to save his life shall lose it; and whosoever shall lose his life shall preserve it." (Luke 17:32-33.) The connection between Lot's wife and the rest of our Lord's words-His comment on the incident-may not be apparent from the bare record. Surely Lot's wife was saving her life, not losing it. So she was, but she did not think so. It is hers and Sodom's outlook, governed by the all-powerful circumstances of the case, that must be kept in mind if the point of the application is to be preserved. Lot's wife looked back in disobedience to the angels' (her saviors') injunction, and, from Luke's context, this **looking** back was equivalent to turning back. It was not a look prompted by curiosity, but of regret, unbelief, of desire to return if the word of the Lord did not come true: Lot was as one who mocked when he pleaded with his sons-in-law. To them, and also his wife, Lot was simply losing his life-and all that made life worthwhile, by forsaking the security of the city and all his possessions, and going out in childlike dependence on these two strangers' word. But Lot, thus apparently throwing his life away, alone preserved it through his faith and obedience to the word of the Lord.

Jesus Himself applies this lesson for us: "Take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting, and drunkenness, and cares of this life [a trusting in Sodom-its gold, its goods, its lasting our time], and so that day come upon you unawares. For as a snare shall it come on all them that dwell on the face of the whole earth. Watch ye therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of Man." - Luke 21:34-36.

Noah and Lot were accounted worthy to escape the judgments of their day, not by anything they could do to avert it by witnessing, or converting, or by making provision for the coming trouble in their own strength and wisdom, "but by faith in the word of the living God, and in His power and love, counting Him faithful who had promised. We too must have that living faith in the same Word, and allow it to bear fruit in our daily lives. These words of the Master must abide in us, and if so, we will take more earnest heed to these very dangers to our spiritual life which He points out-cares of this life" or over-indulgence in its good things; and above all, to pray always to be accounted worthy to escape, "for the effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much."

The other injunction of Jesus is: "Watch ye therefore," in view of these very deceptive world conditions that will exist in the day "when the Son of Man is revealed," for as a snare shall it come on all them that dwell on the face of the whole earth." If this is really to be the case, then these words of the Lord take on new light, and we can again profitably ask ourselves the question, What are we to watch? Certainly the attitude of Christendom-the doomed city-is not to be taken into consideration here, except that of her profound belief that all things are going to continue as they were from the beginning of creation. Modern science and Evolution have assured her of that. Also whatever signs we are to watch for cannot in any way disturb the world from its usual course of buying and selling, etc.: Therefore, this is one reason why they cannot be a series of supernatural wonders in the heavens, or even a long period of anarchy in the world suspending these operations. We must remember that the signs predicted in the Word are for Christians, not

for Christendom, while they are still in the world, in order to prepare them and to sustain their hopes to the end. If the signs were along the lines mentioned, as many falsely anticipate, then they must by their very nature and universal appeal affect all Christendom, and thus instead of having a world as. in the days of Noah, the Lord ' would find a world all prepared outwardly (but not in the heart) to receive Him.

The Friends of Jesus Know

Jesus said, "Ye are My friends if ye do whatsoever I command you. Henceforth I call you not servants, for the servant knoweth not what his lord doeth; but I have called you friends, for all things that I have heard of My Father I have made known unto you. These things I command you that ye love one another." For those who are seeking to keep this, the chief commandment, without which the gift of prophecy, understanding all mysteries and all knowledge, would be useless, God through Jesus, has indeed made every provision for their understanding of His purposes, of His times and seasons, and all the true signs -of the times in the light of which they can watch and wait patiently for the end of the Age and the return of the Lord. Even thus in the past God revealed His purpose unto Noah because he found grace in His sight. That Word told him concerning (1) the judgment decreed, (2) the time of it, (3) the manner of it, (4) the ark as the means of salvation, (5) who and what was to be saved. Even so the Word of God by the illumination of the Holy Spirit reveals to us the Divine program along the antitypes of these things; and as we see them come to pass, our faith is confirmed and **we know** quite apart from what Christendom is thinking and doing, that our redemption draweth nigh.

The prophecy of Jesus on the Mount of Olives revealed briefly the purpose of His 'Father in connection with the new Age then commencing, but later, after the passing of the early Church, He granted a fuller revelation of the same Age "to show unto His servants things which must shortly come to pass." This Book opens with a blessing on him "that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein: for the time is 'at hand." Also the words of Jesus in the earlier prophecy apply more fully to this: "Behold the fig tree, and all the trees: when they now shoot forth, ye see and know of your own selves that summer is now nigh at hand. So likewise ye when ye see these things come to pass, know ye that the Kingdom of God is nigh at hand."

The world will "know not," but "ye will know" from the testimony of this Word, even as you can tell the approach of summer from the shooting forth of the trees.

The Tree in Winter

Taking the tree as representing the growth and development of the purposes- of God through the Age, every detail of which had been foretold, then every new shoot would represent a prophetic fulfillment - "things [predicted] coming to pass." Our Father's Plan has its appointed times and seasons, even as the natural year with its autumn, winter, spring, and summer. Jesus, before whose vision the whole future lay bare, knew of the long winter yet to come when the purposes of God would seem to be at a standstill, if not dead. "And ye shall hear of wars and rumors of wars: see that ye be not troubled: for all these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet. For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom; and there shall be famines, and pestilences, and earthquakes, in divers places. , All these are the beginning of sorrows. Then shall they deliver you up to be-afflicted, and shall kill you; and ye shall be hated of all nations for My

name's sake. And then shall many be offended, and betray one another . . . , and because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold. . . . For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall show great signs and wonders; insomuch that, -if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect. Behold, I have told you before." Here was the long winter of the Church's experience and if it had not been foretold as part of God's Plan, how awful would have been the position of believers during this period!

Portrayed in the Apocalypse

But even this foreview was only of the briefest description, merely anticipating the fuller details of the Apocalypse. For after "the falling away," foretold by Paul, "the man of sin," that "mystery of iniquity," had to be revealed. And who alone could reveal its terrible character and long duration but the Lord Jesus, which He did in His last message to the Church.

One has ably summed up this matter thus: "The Holy Spirit, foreseeing, no doubt, that the Church of Rome would adulterate the truth by many gross and, grievous abominations; that she would anathematize all who would not communicate with her, and denounce them as cut off from the Body of Christ and the hope of everlasting salvation; foreseeing also that Rome would exercise a wide and dominant sway for many generations, by boldly iterated assertions of unity, antiquity, sanctity, and universality; foreseeing also that these pretensions would be supported by the civil sword of many secular governments, among which the Roman Empire would be divided at its dissolution, and that Rome would thus be enabled to display herself to the world in an august attitude of imperial power; and with the dazzling splendor of temporal felicity foreseeing also that the Church of Rome would captivate the imaginations of men, by the fascinations of art allied with religion, and would ravish their senses, and rivet their admiration, by gaudy colors and stately pomp, and prodigal magnificence; foreseeing also that she would beguile their credulity by miracles and mysteries, apparitions and dreams, trances and ecstasies, and would appeal to such evidences in support of her strange doctrines; foreseeing likewise that she would enslave men, and (much more) women, by practicing on their affections, and by accommodating herself with dangerous pliancy to their weakness, relieving them from the burden of thought, and from the perplexity of doubt, by proffering them the aid of infallibility; soothing the sorrows of the mourner by dispensing pardon, and promising peace to the departed; removing the load of guilt from the oppressed conscience by the ministries of the confessional, and by nicely poised compensations for sin: and that she would flourish for many centuries in proud and prosperous impunity, before her sins would reach to heaven, and come in remembrance before God; foreseeing also that many generations of men would thus be tempted to fall from the faith, and to become victims of deadly error; and that they who clung to the truth would be exposed to cozening flatteries, and fierce assaults, and savage tortures, from her; the Holy Spirit, we say, foreseeing all these things, in His Divine knowledge, and being the ever blessed teacher, guide, and comforter of the Church, was graciously pleased to provide a heavenly antidote, for all these dangerous, wide spread, and long enduring evils, by 'dictating the Apocalypse. In this Divine Book the Spirit of God has portrayed the Church of Rome, such as none but He could have foreseen that she would become, and such as, wonderful and lamentable to say, she has become. He has thus broken her magic spells He has taken the wand of enchantment from her hand; He has lifted the mask from her face, and with His Divine hand, He has written her true character in large letters, and has planted her title on her forehead, to be seen and read of all, 'Mystery, Babylon The Great, The Mother of Harlots and Abominations of the Earth.'"

Earth's Winter an Appointed Season

As winter is a definite season of the year, even so has God definitely fixed the duration of these winter conditions to a period of 1260 years. We quote from another godly writer on this point

"Notice the predicted duration of this persecuting power. Daniel mysteriously announces its duration as three and a half times; John as forty-two months. The symbolical nature of the prophecy as well as the vastness of the subject, forbids us to take these times literally. As the beast is symbolical, and its various parts symbolical, so the period of its persecuting head is symbolical. Has the Papacy endured this period? An examination of the facts of history will show that it has. From the era of its rise in the sixth century, at the notable decree of the Emperor Justinian, constituting the Bishop of Rome head of all the Churches of Christendom, A. D. 533, 1260 years extended to 1793, the date of the tremendous Papal overthrow in the French Revolution. Here we have a fact of great importance. Note it well. To this we add the further fact, that from the analogous decree of the Emperor Phocas, conferring the headship of the pope over Christendom, in the year 607, 1260 years extended to 1866-7, the initial date of the recent remarkable overthrow of Papal governments which culminated in the loss of the pope's temporal power in 1870. In that year the Papacy assumed the highest exaltation to which it could aspire, that of infallibility, and lost the temporal sovereignty, which it had held for more than a thousand years. Thus the predicted period **has been fulfilled.**"

The Coming of Spring

Winter merges into spring; changes come over nature slowly at first, then increasing in vigor and life. The trees begin to shoot forth, and we look forward to the summer. And so with earth's winter passing, the "tree" of God's purposes begins to show signs of powerful development as fulfillment after fulfillment springs forth to fill His watching saints with hope and joy, for now the Sun of Righteousness is at hand with healing in His beams.

The judgments commencing with the French Revolution opened up the era of the time of the end—the spring that will prepare the way and introduce the summer of God's Kingdom. That opening judgment brought the Papacy to the verge of extinction at the hands of her chief supporters. As she rose, in successive stages, so she fell; and the fatal 1260-year period from point to point is always there. In 1870 she fell finally as a reigning dynasty in Europe, when all her temporal power was swept away. And as if to impress the importance of this fact on all, the popes have, ever since then, become prisoners in their own temple, for to move a foot outside it is to become subject to another king, which neither her pride nor her claims will admit. After 60 years of this humiliating judgment, she is once again lifted up for a little season by being made ruler over her own grounds, the ludicrous little state of **one hundred acres**. This last permitted prominence is to make her final destruction more apparent. She has been reduced by the "consuming" process to the lowest point consistent with existence, for she is to exist to the end, to be **destroyed** "with the brightness of His coming."

The Fig Tree

The fig tree is a special symbol of the Jewish people, that our Lord gave them, and the condition of their land, as a sign of the times, when He declared, "Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the

Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled." We know also that a measure of Jewish revival and restoration is indicated in the prophecies before their final deliverance and conversion, when "they shall look upon Him whom they pierced, and shall mourn for Him, as one mourneth for his only son." As the times of the Gentiles draw to a close, we see the fig tree vigorously putting forth its branches as foretold; and there is no more potent sign than this for the consolation of the saints. "And it shall come to pass, that like as I have watched over them, to pluck up, and to break down, and to throw down, and to destroy and to afflict; so will I watch over them, to build, and to plant, saith the Lord." (Jer. 31:28.) As the "seven times more" of punishment have duly come as here indicated, even so we now see the promised restoration commencing in the building and the planting now going on in the most prosperous country in the world.

The Harvest Before Summer

We must remember that Satan too has his seasons, which are the opposite of God's. That is why the saints can speak of the "summer" of the Kingdom reign being nigh, and yet look for the harvesting of the earth to precede it. God's winter is Satan's summer, and God's spring is Satan's autumn and the gathering in of the harvest of his reign. But God's summer is Satan's winter in the which he passes into his lowest period of activity --bound for a thousand years. Satan's seasons -- his spring, summer, and autumn, have all run their course, but the harvest has yet to be reaped and destroyed in its final sense. "And the angel thrust in his sickle into the earth, and gathered the vine of the earth, and cast it into the great winepress of the wrath of God. And the winepress was trodden without the city, and blood came out of the wine-press, even unto the horse bridles, by the space of a thousand and six hundred furlongs." (Rev. 14:19, 20.) We leave events to interpret the **manner** of the fulfillment of this, but what it teaches is quite clear. We know it lies in the immediate future.

Of all the processes of nature the harvest occupies a unique place. It is the goal of achievement, the desired climax of all the previous slow-moving processes from germination to maturity. It is the close, the terminus, of the whole complicated system of growth, orderly, progressive, to which time was the essential element. The harvest is an act as against a process. The time element .can hardly be said to be in it in comparison to the growing period. A field of corn, waving in the sunlight, with months of culture behind it, and which for a time is almost regarded as -a permanent feature of the landscape, suddenly disappears before the harvesters in a few hours. Today it stands; tomorrow it is gone. The suddenness is not contrary to nature, but a part of it. As we are given these natural illustrations of the workings of God, and have been initiated into His times and seasons, we can, as we intently watch the growth and maturing of the Divine Plan, closely approximate the hour for the great harvest, which according to illustration, to Noah's day, and the Lord's own positive statement, will be an act, mighty and terrible over the briefest period, on an unsuspecting world. "For as a snare shall it come upon all them that dwell upon the face of the whole earth."

Blessed is He that Watcheth

Finally, we have these last words of the Lord on this matter, chronologically placed in connection with the seventh and last judgment vial: "Behold, I come as a thief. Blessed is he that watcheth and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked, and they see his shame." (Rev. 1-6:15.) There is no more solemn period in the history of the Church than this, and we have in the merciful providence of God been privileged to reach this point, and to be of that generation concerning whom Paul revealed the great mystery given him for us. "Behold, I show you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump; for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed." (1 Cor. 15:51-52.) But the conditions have been laid down and only as they .are fulfilled in daily watching and prayer will we be ready for the realization of this blessed hope.

The Garments

The Lord, in the above exhortation, associates watching with keeping one's garments. What are these garments which cover our nakedness before the Lord and our fellow-Christians? We suggest that they are the garments woven by the Holy Spirit with the materials of faith, hope, and love, which effectually hide the "old man," the flesh, "in which dwelleth no good thing." To "keep" these garments, is to walk not after the flesh but after the Spirit, patiently waiting for Christ. "If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His," nor would he love His appearing. To lay these garments of faith and hope aside is to once more expose the heart of flesh in all its naked workings-not to the one, who so acts, for he is losing all moral consciousness, but "lest they"-the clothed and Spirit enlightened-see his shame. And what more shameful and pitiful sight than to see "the sow that was washed, returning to her wallowing in the mire"-the old dirt of human selfishness, meanness, pride, envy, lust for money, and blind unbelief.

Let us remember in our human relations the importance we place on being properly clothed before one another. And nothing creates more confusion and dismay than to have an unexpected caller at our house when we are in no state to receive him. He may have important news for us; he may be one we have been wanting to see for some time; but because we are unprepared for him, we wish he was anywhere at that moment but at our door. What a state for any Christian to be in at his Lord's coming! After all the warnings received, to find himself with not a thing ready to receive the Lord of Glory! Oh, how earnestly Jesus warns against such a condition of heart and life: "Ye yourselves must be like unto men that wait [with longing] for their Lord.... that when He cometh and knocketh, they may open unto Him **immediately.**" There can be no delay then, nor any desire for it, but with open arms, and loving hearts, we run to welcome our long absent Lord, our Savior, our All, who has returned at last. "Blessed indeed," said Jesus, "are those servants" whom He thus finds patiently waiting for Him.

"Now unto Him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy, to the only wise God our Savior, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen."

The Blessedness of Longing

"My soul longeth, yea, even fainteth for the courts of the Lord: my heart and my flesh crieth out for the living God." - Psa. 84:2.

AMONG the many paradoxical expressions of the Lord's Word, perhaps few are more of this nature than the., frequent reminders that to hunger and thirst represents a state of blessedness. This seeming contradiction of thought appears in the repeated promises that those who thirst for God, "shall never thirst" after they drink of the living water He supplies, and yet, Christian experience seems to contradict that expectation; for is it not true that a greater and yet greater thirst is created by that wonderful living water? Will not the testimony of all who drink deeply of that water agree that it produces a soul thirst such as our text clearly teaches? How, then, can it be said that such "shall never thirst"? To be filled with a longing such as this text represents would seem suggestive of a rather unhappy or unsatisfied state of mind, and therefore the very reverse of blessedness, yet how many there are who will readily confess that

*"Of all the myriad moods of mind
That through the soul come thronging,
Which one was e'er so dear, so kind,
So beautiful as longing."*

In spiritual life, longing is a sign of a healthy state of the soul, whereas satisfaction frequently gives evidence of disease. The very best evidence of heart relationship with the Lord, according to His own Word, is to be found in being possessed of so intense a love for Him, that He alone can satisfy the deepest longings of our soul. Thus viewed, our text is not suggestive of a heart painfully unsatisfied, seeking for some unfound source of delight and joy, but of a heart that **has found** a source so completely satisfying that nothing else could possibly supply its need. This thought is contained in several of the Psalms. In the sixty-third we find it expressed in these words, "My soul thirsteth for Thee, my flesh longeth for Thee in a dry and thirsty land. (Verse 1.) And again we read, "As the hart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after Thee, O God." (Psa. 42:1.) In both of these sublime expressions- of the heart's longing after God, we are shown that "there is something deeper and more urgent than -the intellectual craving for the Infinite, the natural desire and impulse of the human mind to seek a perfect object for its thought. It is something more, even, than the aspiration of a sinful and self-disappointed soul towards moral beauty and sinless holiness. It is the personal longing for intimate communion with the living God. To come into vital contact with God, not as a Remote Thought, but as a living Person; to feel that He who made the universe is not only' the Eternal Wisdom but the wise God, not only the Infinite Love, but the loving Father; to be assured by touch of soul that He is an ever-present Reality, and to perceive the gentle flow of His affection within the channel of the heart; - this is the water of everlasting life, the only draught that can truly quench the craving of the spirit. The assurance of immortality alone is not enough. For if we are told that we are to live forever and still be left without God, eternity stretches before us like a boundless desert, a perpetual and desolate orphanage. **It is Divine companionship that the spirit needs first of all and most deeply."**

This, then, is the larger meaning of our Lord's statement, "Blessed are they who do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled." (Matt. 5:6.) Just so long as such longing continues to be an active factor in the life, just so long will the search after God be continued, and as the heart expands through the knowledge of God, so will the capacity to enjoy Him also continue

to expand, and the thirsty, yet happy, satisfied heart, well knows that "of all the myriad moods of mind" there is nothing "so dear, so kind, so beautiful as longing" after the living God.

What is Longing?

A Divine law always operative in God's dealings with His people is given us by the Apostle James (4:8.) "Draw nigh to God, and He will draw nigh to you." Our hearts must be reaching out with intense desire for the enriching knowledge of God, ere He will reveal Himself to us. The door to this intimate fellowship stands open to all 'who desire to enter, and once really entered, it will reveal boundless fields waiting our survey and exploration. There is therefore no condition of heart more to be sought after than this desire to draw nigh to God, since His law or requirement is that we furnish this evidence of a genuine longing for the special blessings He desires to give us. This being true, we must agree that "the highest state is one of hunger and thirst, intense desire for more life, more holiness, more power, closer communion with God, more of the Divine likeness in the soul.

"The Gospel promises rest to those who come to Christ. Peace was 'one of the benedictions the Savior left for His people. Contentment is one of the graces and duties enjoined upon the Christian, but spiritual hunger is not incompatible with either peace or contentment. It is not unrest; it is not anxiety or worry; it is not murmuring discontent it is a deep longing for more and ever more of all blessings, - calmer rest, sweeter peace, more perfect contentment, with richer heart-fulness of Christ, and more and more of all the gifts of the Spirit. It is depicted in the Psalms as an intense thirst for God, not the bitter cry of an unforgiven soul for mercy, but the deep, passionate yearning of a loving spirit for closer, fuller, richer, more satisfying communion with God Himself. We find it in the life of the greatest of the Apostles, who, wherever we see him, on whatever radiant height, is still pressing on, with unsatisfied longing and quenchless ardor, toward loftier summits and more radiant peaks, crying ever for more intimate knowledge of Christ, and more and more of the fulness of God. The ideal Christian life is one of insatiable thirst, never pausing in any arbor of spiritual content, but ever wooed on by visions of new joys and attainments."

Ask and Ye Shall Receive

How wonderful it is that God should leave it to us to determine the measure of happiness we shall enjoy. Though the storehouse of His gifts is full to overflowing, and though opening the windows of heaven to flood us with blessings 'beyond our capacity to contain, does not in any way diminish its supply, yet for all that, the measure we receive will be proportionate to our asking in faith. As in the case of the widow whose supply of oil was-replenished by the Prophet just in proportion to the number, and size of the vessels she brought to him, so with us, as we come desiring more of God, more of the Holy Spirit, according to our faith and the intensity of our longing, it shall be given unto us. Longing, therefore, is the very soul of true faith expecting answers to prayer. Certainly we really desire nothing more than we are eager to ask for. There are many who pray for a closer walk with God, and for a more definite experience of His presence, but all such praying is profitless if it does not represent a consuming desire, a longing to enter into such a joy and fellowship. Mere desire will of itself open none. of the windows of heaven to us, take us into no greater experiences of the power of Christ in the heart, give us no verification of promises actually fulfilled to us, wherein God has pledged Himself to reward our never ceasing desire to know Him (better. Without effort, prayer is null and void. Inactive day-dreaming is not

prayer. Only when there is that peculiar combination of experience, earnest longing -and consistent effort, illustrated in the various expressions of the Psalmist which we are now considering, does the Lord have any interest in -our petitions. Only let our longing be such as will make it possible for us to truthfully say, "My soul longeth, yea, even fainteth for the courts of the Lord: my heart and my flesh crieth out for the living God," and there will be no vagueness of conviction about the meaning of God's promise to open heaven's windows.

Becomes a Transforming Power

The hunger of heart of which the Bible so often speaks, must, like every holy aspiration, have its origin in God. This very longing of our heart, therefore is nothing more nor less than the life of God imparted to us, and yearning within us to grow from glory to glory up into the full stature of Christ. Under God's gracious hand, this hunger becomes a transforming power, purifying these characters of ours, changing them little by little, and day by day into the likeness of His own dear Son. In other words, we are "transformed by the renewing of our mind, proving [experiencing] what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God." Thus it is that Scripture teaches us that, "as a man thinketh in his heart so is he." "The heavenly ideal ever kept before the mind, and longed after with intensity of desire, carves it into the soul." What an incentive to great ideals, and large expectations! Who would think it sufficient to sit: down contented with present attainments of knowledge and grace, or to merely sigh for a greater measure of the more abundant life? Properly understood and acted upon, our every longing after God should at once begin to fill us with an impulse as effective as thirst impels the hart -to search for the water brooks. As the poet has very well expressed it,

"I will not waste one breath of life in sighing;
For other ends has life been given to me
Duties and self-devotion, daily dying
Into a higher, better life with Thee,
My God, with Thee."

And then, as we find our heart's cry for the living God being answered 'by His drawing nearer and nearer to us, what- results may be expected? Will there be any tangible evidence that life and character do change under the influence of 'an enlarging revelation of God? Surely so! If in truth it can be said, "a man is known by the company he keeps," and who can dispute it? then if we keep company with God and Jesus will there not be a manifest evidence of it? Surely there will be. If keeping company with Jesus affected men so manifestly years ago, so that their none too sympathetic contemporaries were ready to acknowledge that "they 'had been with Jesus and learned of Him, can it be otherwise today? It cannot be. As they were molded by His presence, so we will be.

Dwelling with the Rose

Very; beautifully has this truth been set forth in, familiar verse, and' who can read it without feeling a strengthening impulse to keep 'very much closer to Him whose garments are "perfumed with myrrh and frankincense."

"In memory's halls there wakes, the while, a legend, quaint and old.
How once upon a time, one day, a sage picked up; we're told,
A lump of common clay, so redolent with perfume rare,
He marveled, and the question wondering asked,
'Whence dost thou bear
Such fragrance, O, thou lump of clay?' In tones of deep repose
There came the sweet reply, 'I've been dwelling with the rose.'"

. . . . From my heart of hearts I cry,
'Thou lovely Rose of Sharon, may I ever dwell with Thee,
So closely that the fragrance of Thy love shall cling to me!
Oh, fill me with the spirit of Thy sweet humility,
Then all shall see and know, dear Lord, that I have learned of Thee;
And let mine earthly pilgrimage, until its blessed close,
Each day and hour bear witness, I've been dwelling with the Rose!'"

A day dream surely! An impractical idealism, likely to vitiate the real business of Christian life! Yes, so some might think. Must we then conclude that the Psalmist in the texts we are considering cannot be regarded as a personification of practical devotion? God's blessed Word answers in numberless ways, No, that cannot be! From a vast multitude who have in all ages known what it means to long after God with heart and flesh like the Psalmist, will come an emphatic, No! it cannot be. Many such bear testimony to having oftentimes fainted for the courts of the Lord, with heart and flesh crying out for the living God, and have gratefully appropriated to themselves the words of the Psalmist so expressive of longings that only God-centered hearts **can** know, and heaven-inspired language can express. Oh! "Great is the mystery of godliness!" -- "Christ in you the hope of glory!" The "life of Christ manifest in our mortal bodies." "I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me." "Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own?" What real possibilities lie in these "spirit and life" statements of the Word of God! If our crying after God is an intelligent searching after Him, with a clearly defined objective before us, will the ultimate result not be just a blessed verification of all these texts quoted above, wrought out in our lives? Surely so! and, this alone is the only possible satisfaction to the soul athirst for God.

Brethren, to what we have already attained of these blessed verities, let us follow on by the same rule, until that which is perfect has come, until we see Him face to face, until we awake, satisfied forever with His likeness. Praise His name for the assurance of such a consummation to all who with thirsty, hungering, longing hearts, perseveringly "follow on to know the Lord."

Christ on the Cross

"And after that they had mocked Him, they took the robe off from Him, and put His own raiment on Him, and led Him away to crucify Him." - Matt. 27:31.

IT SEEMS eminently appropriate that at this season of the year when the Lord's people are - pondering events associated with our Lord's last hours, we should pause once more at the foot of the cross and gaze upon our blessed and adorable Master whose shameful death hath wrought the great redemption of God.

Well did the writer of the Hebrews admonish, "For consider Him that endured such contradiction of sinners against Himself lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds." Indeed the narrative of our dear Redeemer's shameful sufferings endured so patiently on our behalf, is most touching, and perhaps the relating of it and the reading of it have brought more hearts to the place of repentance and surrender to God than any other portion of the entire volume of Divine revelation. Nor does it lose its power with those who have already accepted our Lord and the redemption which His sacrificial death effected; it mellows our hearts every time we consider Him who endured such contradiction of sinners against Himself, when we remember that it was unmerited by Him and that it was a part of His sacrifice on our behalf.

Again, the author of the Hebrews refers to how in the days of His flesh "He offered up prayers with strong crying and tears unto Him that was able to save Him from [out of] death 'and was heard in that He feared. (Heb. 5:7.) He was heard in respect to that He feared: He was delivered from death by a resurrection. More than that, He was delivered from the fear of death, from all doubt as respecting His faithfulness to the Father's will and His acceptance of the Father down to the bitter end.

We take our position then at the close of our Lord's trial before the Roman Governor. Pilate sent for water; he washed his hands before the multitude. Thus he went through the solemn farce of trying to 'absolve his conscience from the guilt and said, "I am innocent of the blood of this just person; see ye to it. And in response there came a yell that seems the most awful, the most hideous, the most memorable that history records: "His blood be on us and on our children." It will be to our edification in this connection to quote lavishly from Dean Farrar's celebrated work "The Life of Christ"

'I, Miles, expedi crucem' ('Go, soldier, get ready the cross'). In some such formula of terrible import Pilate must have given his final order. It was now probably about nine o'clock, and the execution followed immediately upon the judgment. The time required for the necessary preparation would not be very long, and during this brief pause the soldiers, whose duty it was to see that the sentence was carried out, stripped Jesus of the scarlet war-cloak, now dyed with the yet deeper stains of blood, and clad Him again in His own garments. When the cross had been prepared they laid it-or possibly only one of the beams of it-upon His shoulders, and led Him to the place of punishment. The nearness of the great feast, the myriads who were present in Jerusalem, made it desirable to seize the opportunity for striking terror into all Jewish malefactors. Two were therefore selected for execution at the same time with Jesus-two brigands and rebels of the lowest stamp. Their crosses were laid upon them, a maniple of soldiers in full

armor were marshalled under the command of their centurion, and, amid thousands of spectators, coldly inquisitive or furiously hostile, the procession started on its way.

The Sorrowful Way

"The cross was not, and could not have, been, the massive and lofty structure with which such myriads of pictures have made us familiar. Crucifixion was among the Romans a very common punishment, and it is clear that they would not waste any trouble in constructing the instrument of shame and torture. It would undoubtedly be made of the very commonest wood that came to hand, perhaps olive or sycamore, and knocked together in the very rudest fashion. Still, to support the body of a man, a cross would 'require to be of a certain size and weight; and to one enfeebled 'by the horrible severity of the previous scourging, the carrying of such a burden would 'be an additional misery. But Jesus was enfeebled not only by this cruelty, but by previous days of violent struggle and agitation, by an evening of deep and overwhelming emotion, by a night of sleepless anxiety and suffering, by the mental agony of the garden, by three trials and three sentences of death before the Jews, by the long and exhausting scenes in the Praetorium, by the examination before Herod, and by, the brutal and painful derisions which he had undergone, first at the hands of 'the Sanhedrin and their servants, then from Herod's body-guard, and lastly from the Roman cohort. All these, superadded to the sickening lacerations of the scourging, had utterly broken down His physical strength. His tottering footsteps, if not His actual falls under that fearful load, made it evident that He lacked the physical strength to carry it from the Praetorium to Golgotha. Even if they did not pity His feebleness, the Roman soldiers would naturally object to the consequent hindrance and delay. But they found an easy method to solve the difficulty. They had not proceeded farther than the city gate, when they met a man coming from the country, who was known to the early Christians as 'Simon of Cyrene, the father of Alexander and Rufus'; and perhaps, on some hint from the accompanying Jews that Simon sympathized with the teaching of the Sufferer, they impressed him without the least scruple into their odious service.

"The miserable procession resumed its course, and though the apocryphal traditions of the Roman Church narrate many incidents of the Via Dolorosa, only one such incident is recorded in the Gospel history. St. Luke tells us that among the vast multitude of people who followed Jesus were many women. From the **men** in that moving crowd He does not appear to have 'received' one word of pity or of sympathy. **Some** there must surely have been who had seen His miracles, who had heard His words; some of those who had been almost, if not utterly, convinced of His Messiahship, as they hung upon His lips while He had uttered His great discourses in the Temple; some of the eager crowd who had accompanied Him from Bethany five days before with shouted hosannas and waving palms. Yet if so, a faithless timidity or a deep misgiving -perhaps even a boundless sorrow-kept them dumb. But these women, more quick to pity, less susceptible to controlling influences, could not and would not conceal the grief and amazement with which this spectacle filled them. They beat upon their 'breasts and rent the air with their lamentations, till Jesus Himself hushed their shrill cries with words of solemn--warning. Turning to them -which He could not have done had He still been staggering under the burden of His cross-He said to them, 'Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not for Me; but for yourselves weep, and for your children. For lo! days are coming in which they shall say, Blessed are the 'barren, and the wombs which bare not, and the breasts which gave not suck. Then shall they begin to say to the mountains, Fall on us, and to the hills, Cover us; for if they do these things in the green tree, what shall be done in the dry?' Theirs was but an emotional outburst of , womanly tenderness, which they could not repress as they saw the great Prophet of mankind in 'His hour of shame and weakness, with the herald proclaiming 'before Him the crimes with which He was charged, and the Roman soldiers

carrying the title of derision, and Simon bending under the weight of the wood to which He was to be nailed."

Thus so far as the record informs us, there was but this one sad episode on the way to the place where it was determined to carry out the deadly purpose, and that place was called Golgotha, the Latin form of which is Calvary, that is, the place of a skull. It 'has been suggested that the place may have been so designated because of its being a bare, rounded, scalp-like elevation. "Death by crucifixion seems to include all that pain and death **can** have of horrible and ghastly-dizziness, cramp, thirst, starvation, sleeplessness, traumatic fever, tetanus, publicity of shame, long continuance of torment, horror of anticipation, mortification of untended wounds-all intensified just up to the point at which they can be endured at all, but all stopping just short of the point which would give the sufferer the relief of unconsciousness. The unnatural position made every movement painful; the lacerated veins and crushed tendons throbbed with incessant anguish; the wounds, inflamed by exposure, gradually gangrened; the arteries-especially of the head and stomach-became swollen and oppressed with surcharged blood; and while each variety of misery went on gradually increasing, there was added to them the intolerable pang of a burning and raging thirst; and all these physical complications caused an internal excitement and anxiety, which made the prospect of death itself -of death, the awful unknown enemy, at whose approach man usually shudders most-bear the aspect of a delicious and exquisite release.

"Such was the death to which Christ was doomed; and though for Him it was happily shortened by all that He had previously endured, yet He hung from soon after noon until nearly sunset, before 'He gave up His soul to death.'"

Women Who Ministered unto Him

It is written of our Master that He "trode the winepress alone"; that of the people "there was none with Him"; that is, in the sense of being fully able and capable of really entering into the experience with Him. "Though none spoke comfort to Jesus-though deep grief, and terror, and amazement kept them dumb-yet there were hearts amid the crowd that beat in sympathy with the awful Sufferer. At a distance stood a number of women looking on, and perhaps, even at that dread hour, expecting His immediate deliverance. Many of these were women who had ministered to Him in Galilee, and had come from thence in the great band of Galilaean pilgrims. Conspicuous among this heart-stricken group were His mother Mary, Mary of Magdala, Mary the wife of Clopas, mother of James and Joses, and Salome the wife of Zebedee. Some of them, as the hours advanced, stole nearer and nearer to the cross, and at length the filming eye of the Savior fell on His own mother Mary; as, with the sword piercing through and through her heart, she stood with the disciple whom He loved. His mother does not seem to have been much with Him during His ministry. It may be that the duties and cares of a humble home' rendered it impossible. At any rate, the only occasions on which we hear of her are occasions when she is with His brethren, and is joined with them in endeavoring to influence, apart from His own purposes and authority, His Messianic course. But although at the very beginning of His ministry He had gently shown her that the earthly and filial relation was now to be transcended by one far more 'lofty and Divine, and though this end of all her high hopes must have tried her faith with an overwhelming and unspeakable sorrow, yet she was true to Him in this supreme hour of His humiliation, and would have done for Him all that a mother's sympathy and love can do. Nor had He for a moment forgotten her who had bent over His infant slumbers, and with whom He had shared those thirty years in the cottage at Nazareth. Tenderly and sadly He thought of the future that awaited her during the remaining years of her life on earth, troubled as they must be by the tumults and

persecutions of a struggling and nascent faith. After His resurrection her lot was wholly cast among His Apostles, and the Apostle whom He loved the most, the Apostle who was nearest to Him in heart and life, seemed the fittest to take care of her. To him, therefore-to John whom He had loved more than His brethren -to John whose head had leaned upon His breast at the Last Supper, He consigned her as a sacred charge. 'Woman,' He said to her, in fewest words, but in words which breathed -the uttermost spirit of tenderness, 'behold thy son'; and then to St. John, 'Behold thy mother.' He could make no gesture with those pierced hands, but He could bend His head. They listened in speechless emotion, but from that hour-perhaps from that very moment-leading her away from a spectacle which did but torture her soul with unavailing agony, that disciple took her to his own home. . .

"Of the incidents of those last three hours we are told nothing, and that awful obscuration of the noonday sun may well have overawed every heart into an inaction respecting which there was nothing to relate. What Jesus suffered then for us men and our salvation we cannot know, for during those three hours He hung upon His cross in silence and darkness; or if He spoke, there were none there to record His words. But towards the close of that time His anguish culminated, and-emptied to the very uttermost of that glory which He had since the world began-drinking to the very deepest dregs the cup of humiliation and 'bitterness-enduring, not only to have taken upon Him the form of a servant, but also to suffer the last infamy which human hatred could impose on servile helplessness He uttered that mysterious cry, of which the full significance will never be fathomed by man:

"Eli, Eli, lama, sabachthani?" ('My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?')

"In, those words, quoting the Psalm in which the early Fathers rightly saw a far-off prophecy, of the whole passion of Christ, He borrowed from David's utter agony the expression of His own. In that hour He was alone; sinking from depth to depth of unfathomable suffering. . . Doubtless the voice of the Sufferer -- though uttered loudly in that paroxysm of an emotion which, in another, would almost have touched the verge of despair -- was yet rendered more uncertain and indistinct from the condition of exhaustion in which He hung; and so, amid the darkness, and confused noise, and dull foot steps of the moving multitude, there were some who did not hear what He had said. They had caught only the first syllable, and said to one another that He had called on the name of Elijah. The readiness with which they seized this false impression is another proof of the wild state of excitement and terror-the involuntary dread of something great, and unforeseen, and terrible -- to which they had been reduced from the former savage insolence. For Elijah, the great Prophet of the Old Covenant, was inextricably mingled with all the Jewish expectations of a Messiah, and these expectations were full of wrath. The coming of Elijah would be the coming of a day of fire, in which- the sun would be turned into blackness and the moon into-blood, and the powers of heaven should be shaken. Already the noonday sun was shrouded in unnatural eclipse; might not some awful form at any moment rend the heavens and come down, touch the mountains and they should smoke? The vague anticipation of conscious guilt was unfulfilled. Not such as yet was to be the method of God's workings. His messages to man for many ages more were not to be in the thunder and earthquake, not in rushing wind or roaring flame, but in the 'still small voice' speaking always amid the apparent silences of Time in whispers intelligible to man's heart, but in which there is neither speech nor language, though the voice is heard. . . .

"And now the end was come. Once more, in the words of the sweet Psalmist of Israel, but adding to them that title of trustful love which, through Him, is permitted to the use of all mankind, 'Father,' He said, 'Into Thy hands I commend My spirit.' Then with one more great effort He uttered the last cry-the one victorious word 'It is finished.' It may be that that great cry ruptured some of the vessels of His heart; for no sooner had it been uttered than He bowed His head upon

His breast, and yielded His life, 'a ransom for many-a willing sacrifice to His Heavenly Father: 'Finished was His holy life; with His life His struggle, with His struggle His work, with His work the redemption, with the redemption the foundation of the new world.'

The Hope of the Resurrection

'But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept.' - 1 Cor. 15:20

IT IS CAUSE for the most profound thankfulness, that indisputable proof of our Lord's resurrection was given to His disciples for themselves and for all the members of the Church coming after them. The great resurrection hope must be well established for all believers. The necessity for this lay in the fact that in the Divine Plan this Gospel Age was marked out to be a faith Age-for the selection of a specially chosen and favored class, able, like Father Abraham, to walk by faith and not by sight. But faith in order to be faith and not merely credulity must have some reasonable foundation on-which to build its superstructure. And it was to provide this foundation for faith that our Lord remained with His followers for forty days after His resurrection, before ascending to the Father-as the Evangelist declared "He showed Himself alive after His passion, by many infallible proofs, being seen of them forty days, and speaking of the things pertaining to the Kingdom of God." - Acts 1:3.

St. Paul's great chapter on the resurrection explains the subject more lucidly than does any other portion of the Bible. He assures us that Christ was dead and that He is risen from the dead. In this, his words agree with our Lord's own statement (Rev. 1:18), "I am He that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore." How plain, how forceful are these words when given their proper weight, their true signification! Thus life and death are here referred to as opposites-He is not dead now, but is alive; when He was dead, He was not alive.

Further, we have the Apostle's affirmation that our Lord in His resurrection became the "firstfruits of them that slept." And of what does this speak? Surely it means -what the Apostle states in other language, saying that "He should be the first that should rise from the dead." And again, He was the "firstborn from the dead. (Acts 26:23; Col. 1:18.) None before Him was ever resurrected, though a few were temporarily awakened, as for instance, Lazarus, the daughter of Jairus, and the son of the widow of Nain. Jesus was the first to be raised completely out of death's power-to perfection of life, of being on any plane of existence, and the word firstfruit carries with it the thought that there are to be others who similarly will pass completely out of death conditions into perfect life conditions.

All shall be made Alive

How truly the Apostle reassures us that it is no fable that Christ rose from the dead, that it was not only necessary to our salvation, but that it is a fact well attested. He proceeds in his argument to show that thus by the resurrection of Christ is ultimately to come the resurrection of the Church to full harmony with God, ultimately to be completely delivered from the power of sin and death-"As all in Adam die, so all in Christ shall be made alive"-a full release from death, which is the great enemy. He proceeds to say that ultimately, at His Second Advent, "Christ must reign until-He hath put all enemies under His feet. The last enemy to be destroyed is death."

With this view of the importance of the resurrection of Jesus we cannot wonder that the Scriptures lay great stress upon that fact, and deduce various proofs and demonstrations intended to establish our faith in it. All four of the Evangelists, with great particularity, give details respecting our Lord's resurrection and His manifestations to His Apostles.

When the Apostle would outline the great Plan of God, He shows the importance of the -resurrection, not only for Jesus but also for all who shall be blessed through Him as the Savior. He begins his dissertation on the subject by saying, "I delivered to you first of all that which I also received [first of all]; how that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that He was buried and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures: and that He was seen of Cephas, then of the twelve, and after that He was seen of above five hundred brethren at once, of whom the greater part remain until now, but some are fallen asleep. After that He was seen of James, then of all the Apostles, and last of all He was seen of me also, as of one born out of due time." . When we have the proper conception of death we recognize that it is the being or soul that has the promise of a resurrection; and some beings or souls are to be resurrected to one plane of existence and others to another plane. For instance, the promise to the Church of Christ is a resurrection in a spirit body. The Apostle describes "the" resurrection of "the" dead as the resurrection of the Church, born again to a new nature, a spiritual, a heavenly nature. He says of the being or soul of such, "It is sown in corruption, it is raised in incorruption; it is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory; it is sown in weakness, it is raised in power; it is sown an, animal body, it is raised a spiritual body."

Firstfruits in First Resurrection

Although not discussing particularly the resurrection for the remainder of the world, the Apostle - intimates that not all will be raised celestial bodies, heavenly bodies, and he explains that there is a glory for the celestial and a glory also for the terrestrial. He proceeds to contrast the First Adam, of the earth earthy, with the Second Adam, the heavenly Lord, saying, "'The first was made a living soul [an animal being], the last was made a life-giving spirit.'" But it was not until our Lord's resurrection that He became a life-giving spirit, for as the Apostle Peter declares elsewhere, "He was put to death in the flesh, but quickened in the spirit. These two Adams are samples or patterns of what mankind may attain to in the resurrection: the Church is to attain to the likeness of the Second Adam, the world to the likeness of the First Adam - "as is the earthy, such are they also that are earthy; and as is the heavenly, such are they also that are heavenly."

Only the Church of this Gospel Age has been granted the opportunity of becoming spiritual children of God, joint-heirs with Christ their Lord. There is the great blessing, the privilege of the First Resurrection, concerning which the Scriptures declare, "Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the First Resurrection; on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with Him a thousand years." It is this wonderful hope that God has set before us in the Gospel, the hope of participation with our Redeemer in the sufferings of this present time and also in the glories that shall follow, and our hope is attainable in and through and by the First Resurrection, of which the Lord was the firstfruits.

If Ye then be Risen with Christ

Nor do the processes of sanctification of the Spirit, the begetting of the Spirit, the quickening of the Spirit, represent any small phase of the Church's resurrection. In-deed the final attainment of the glory and life beyond, and the ultimate awakening in His likeness, all- depend upon the present phase of the resurrection, the present walking in newness of life, that the Church experiences in the present life. The inspired Apostle lays great emphasis in this connection when he says, "If ye then be risen with Christ," etc. In his further exposition of the life of the Spirit, this Apostle points out that this raising up, this making alive, this quickening of the Spirit, goes on and progresses in proportion as the old man or the old life is put to death, kept in subjection; one must die and give place to the other. Thus the Apostle speaks of his own experience as that of one who is "dying daily." He says, "I am crucified with Christ, nevertheless I live." He -refers to how the "outward man is perishing," and how the "inward man is being renewed day by day." Thus the two phases of the Christian's experience, clearly in evidence at the same time, are most surely set forth in the inspired Word.

How firmly too, the great Apostle brings out the truth upon this important subject again when he declares that we are buried with Christ by baptism into death, that is, by an immersion of our wills (by consecration) into the will of God; that - like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. The Apostle is surely associating, the "walking in newness of life," with the risen state or the resurrection life. In other words, it is because we have by a solemn covenant become joined to Christ in His sacrificial experience, His death, that we have been given to share in the spiritual existence by being begotten of the Spirit and thus figuratively raised from the dead, risen with Him to live and walk according to all the rules and requirements and in harmony with the various properties of the new life. This is the Apostle's thought as set forth: "If ye then [or since you are then] risen with Christ, seek those things which are above," etc. "Set your affection on things above, not 'on things on the earth. For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God." The poet catching the inspiration of these words, has written

"They rise to walk in heaven's light,
Forever free from sin,
With hearts made pure and garments white,
And Christ enthroned within."

A Spirit hath not Flesh

Our Lord illustrated in His own person the very lesson He had given His disciples on-the occasion of the visit of Nicodemus. He then said that those born of the Spirit could go and come like the wind, and that, none would know whence they came or whither they .went. How appropriate that he should illustrate this and thus give them their first lessons in "spiritual things, which, however, they would not be fully able to appreciate until after Pentecost, when the Holy Spirit would be poured out.

But it maybe asked, Did not Jesus contradict. the thought that He was a spirit when He used the words, A spirit hath not flesh and bones as ye see Me have? The two thoughts are quite in harmony they were, not seeing the spirit Jesus, they were merely seeing the flesh and bones

which the spirit Jesus assumed for the purpose of conversing with them, just as the angels assumed flesh-and-bone bodies when they made certain communications as recorded in the Old Testament Scriptures. He did not say, "A spirit hath not flesh and bones as ye see I am," but "as ye see Me have." The spirit, Jesus, manifested Himself through the flesh and bones and clothing. He saw that if they could but realize that they were looking- at flesh and bones, their fear would depart, and as they would be thus calmed, Jesus would be the better able to explain to them the fact of His resurrection and to give them the initiatory lessons connected with their future work as His representatives in the world when He should be gone. This was the object of His various manifestations during those forty days, about eleven in all, and very brief in every case.

"In the Arms of His Tenderness"

Concerning our Lord's last or farewell manifestation to His disciples, another has commented in the following interesting manner "The time had now come when His earthly presence. should be taken away from them forever, until He returned in glory to judge the world. He met them in Jerusalem, and as He led them with Him towards Bethany, He bade them wait in the Holy City until they had received the promise of the Spirit. He checked their eager inquiry about the times and seasons, and bade them be His witnesses in all the world:. These last farewells must have been uttered in some of the wild secluded upland country that surrounds the little village; and when they were over, He lifted up His hands and blessed them, and, even as He blessed them, was parted from them, and, as He passed , from before their yearning eyes 'a cloud received Him out of their sight.'

"Between us and His' visible presence-between us and that glorified Redeemer, who now sitteth, at the right hand of God-that cloud still rolls. But the eye of faith can pierce it; the incense of true prayer can rise above it; through it the dew, of blessing can descend. And if, He is gone away, yet He has given us in His Holy Spirit a nearer sense of His presence, a closer infolding in the arms of His tenderness, than we' could have enjoyed even if we had lived with 'Him of old in the home of Nazareth, or sailed with Him in the little boat over the crystal waters of Gennesareth. We may be as near to Him at all times-and more than all when we kneel down to pray-as the beloved disciple was when he laid his head upon His breast. The Word of God is very nigh us, even in our mouths and in our hearts. . . The secret of ;the Lord is with them that, fear , Him, and He will 'show them His covenant. To all who 'will listen. He still speaks. He promised to be with us always; even to the end of the world, and we we have not found His-promise fail. It was but for thirty-three short years of a short lifetime that He lived on earth; it was but for three broken and troubled years that He preached the Gospel of the Kingdom; but forever, even until all the Aeons have been closed, and the earth itself, with the heavens that now are, have passed away, shall every one of His true and faithful children find peace and hope and forgiveness in His name and that name shall be called Emmanuel, which is, being interpreted, 'God with us.'"