Zechariah - Commentaries by Unknown Author

Christian Friend: Volume 14, Zechariah 9:9

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Everyone has read this beautiful scripture, and noted its striking fulfillment in the gospels, but not all have remarked the characteristic differences in its citation in Matthew and John. Turning first to Matthew, we read, “Tell ye the daughter of Sion, Behold, thy King cometh unto thee, meek, and sitting upon an ass, and a colt the foal of an ass.” (Chapter 21:5) Passing by the expressive change from “Rejoice greatly” to “Tell ye the daughter of Sion,” we ask the reader to notice the omission of the words, “just, and having salvation.” Why are they not quoted? Because they would not apply to the Saviour’s then circumstances. He was going to certain and known rejection, and thus while it was ever true that He had salvation for them that put their trust in Him, He was not at that time going to bring salvation to the daughter of Zion. Nor did He present Himself to her then as the “just,” or righteous One; for had He at that time entered her gates in righteousness (as He will do when He establishes the kingdom), it would have been for her destruction. The Holy Spirit therefore led the evangelist to omit these words, and to retain “meek” or “lowly,” because it was descriptive of the spirit (although it is His abiding character) in which He, was about to present Himself for the last time, before the cross, to His beloved people. Taking now the citation, as it appears in John, it runs, “Fear not, daughter of Sion: behold, thy King cometh, sitting on an ass’s colt.” (Chapter 12:15) Here, in addition to the omissions of Matthew, the word “meek,” or “lowly,” is also wanting. The reason of this is to be found in the character of John’s Gospel. He exhibits Jesus as the Son of God, and thus, consistently with this presentation of our “blessed Lord, he does not use the word “meek.” What perfect wisdom is displayed in these differences in the scriptures! And differences so profound, that the devout reader cannot fail to discern their divine origin. But a remark may be added on the fulfillment of Zechariah’s prediction. One part of it has been accomplished, Zion’s King did come, lowly, and sitting upon an ass; the rest will be fulfilled when He returns to Zion in glory. Then He will be seen as “just, and having salvation,” and then, too, the daughter of Zion will “rejoice greatly,” and the daughter of Jerusalem will “shout.” The whole church period therefore must be interposed between these two parts of the prophecy. Both would have been fulfilled at His first coming had He been received by the Jewish nation as their Messiah; and this teaches that His lowliness or meekness is expressive of moral character, and therefore abiding; not a feature merely of His earthly sojourn, when He was a Man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief, but a trait of His perfect nature as Man; and hence He is as much the meek or lowly One, now that He sits at the right hand of God in the glory, as when down here He had not where to lay His head. Blessed Lord, how the knowledge of this endears Thee to the hearts of Thine own while—waiting for Thy return!

E. D.

Christian Treasury: Volume 8, Who Hath Despised the Day of Small Things?

J. Armet

Zech. 4:10

ZEC 4:10

The World's Great Things

In the world this is the day of great things. In matters of warfare men were once satisfied to number their armies in thousands, but now thousands are despised—nations must have their millions. In matters of finance, where once fortunes were rated in columns of five figures, now some have fortunes of ten figures or eleven figures, to single inheritances. The fabled Croesus would be only a small capitalist in today's rating. In rural life where once the patient husbandman tilled his dozen acres, now great machines upturn miles of earth that yield millions of bushels of grain from single farms. In matters of education, universities, colleges, seminaries and lesser institutes multiply without end, and multitudes pursue their eager search for knowledge and degrees. Metropolises thrive where cities once stood; great cities have replaced villages. Bands of steel rails and super highways encircle the continents, and pulsations of power throb in every industrial center. In short—the world has ceased to care for the small or the insignificant.

If this were all, the Christian need not be concerned, for why should he care for the poor world's boastings or accomplishments? He knows its end—that it is doomed to judgment. He realizes, too, that he is not of it-that he belongs to another world.

But this is not all. The world is not alone in its boasting. Professing Christians have become infected with this same vaunting spirit, with the sad result that they glory in their shame. (Phil. 3:19.) The resulting condition is that no Christian activity is recognized as possessing any merit unless it can be flourished before the world as worthy of comparison with the world's great achievements. So the lust for great memberships, "Five-year Programs," "Men and Millions" movements, and "Evangelization of the World in this Generation" are phrases mouthed with pride by professed Christians on every side. Evangelists who cannot number their converts by hundreds and thousands are not wanted. Evangelism has become capitalized, and numbers are made the measure of success in God's work.

The Christian should not use the world's ways to do God's work. Will he then be dismayed that he can do so little? God forbid! Apply the sharp sword of God's Word to these inflated bubbles of man's pride and see how much abides the test. What do I read in God's Word of all these modern schemes in connection with the work of God? The Word speaks of a narrow way and the few there be that find it, and of a little flock to whom the Father gives the kingdom. It is those who have a little strength who meet the Lord's commendation (Rev. 3:8). "Well, thou good servant: because thou hast been faithful in a very little, have thou authority over ten cities." Luke 19:17. Wood, hay and stubble appear huge

before the fire (1 Cor. 3:12), while gold, silver and precious stones seem small. God's reward is after, not before the fire. There is no reward for ashes.

If I take, for example, the prophets, the Lord and the apostles, what do I learn of their activity for God? I see Jonathan and his armor-bearer, with God, accomplishing more in one night than Israel with their hosts in forty days of human endeavor (1 Sam. 14:1-16), and David with God's help using his sling to defeat Goliath. The Lord Himself was content to linger at Sychar's well that He might quench the soul-thirst of one poor outcast woman, or to sacrifice His hours of sleep to enlighten one honest Pharisee. He was content to spend a day with a despised tax collector, or to be satisfied at the close of His life's ministry to have a mere one hundred and twenty waiting for His promise at Jerusalem (Acts 1:15).

Philip could leave his work in Samaria to minister Christ to a lone man in the desert. Peter could walk a matter of 25 miles to preach the gospel to one family (Acts 10). The great Apostle Paul could minister to a handful of women at the seaside, or declare the way of salvation to a solitary sinner at midnight. At the close of Paul's life, many of the little assemblies which were the result of his life's work could be comfortably housed in private homes, and yet he never apologized for his lack of numbers. (Rom. 16:5; 1 Cor. 16:19; Col. 4:15; Philem. 1:2.)

Now as Christians, in the light of Scripture, shall you and I despise the day of small things? No! Let us obey the word of Jeremiah, when he said, "Seekest thou great things for thyself? seek them not." Jer. 45:5. God counts it no little thing to be faithful to His Word, and to do His will in a day when His Word is deliberately ignored and flatly disobeyed for the sake of great numbers and religious show.

Count it well worth your while to speak of Jesus to that fellow classmate or your co-worker. Give a little gospel tract to your grocery clerk, the salesman at the door, your seat-mate on the bus. Prize highly your little class in the Sunday school. It is better to lead one soul as a lost sinner to the feet of Jesus to receive salvation than to deceive a thousand into an empty profession. How much better it is to have our blessed Lord's "well done" for a little done right than His censure and the world's applause for great things which His Word unsparingly condemns. (Rev. 3:15-18.)

Young Christian: Volume 13, 1923, Who Hath Despised the Day of Small Things?

We see in Nehemiah a heart that habitually turned to God, that sought its strength in Him, and thus surmounted the greatest obstacles. The time in which Nehemiah labored for the good of his people was not one of those brilliant phases which awaken the energy of faith, and even the energy of man, imparting to it their own luster. It was a period which required the perseverance that springs from a deep interest in the people of God, because they are His people; a perseverance which, for this very reason, pursues its object in spite of the contempt excited by the work, apparently so insignificant, but which is not the less the work of God; and which pursues it in spite of the hatred and opposition of enemies, and the faintheartedness of fellow-laborers (ch. 4: 8, 10, 11); a perseverance which, giving itself up entirely to the work, baffles all the intrigues of the enemy, and avoids every snare, God taking care of those who trust in Him. It is also a beautiful feature in Nehemiah’s character, that in spite of his high office, he had all the detail of service so much at heart, and all that concerned the upright walk of God’s people... This history shows us, first of all, how, when God acts, faith stamps its own character on all who surround it. The Jews, who had so long left Jerusalem desolate, are quite disposed to recommence the work. Judah, however, is discouraged by the difficulties. This brings out the perseverance which characterizes true faith when the work is of God, be it ever so poor in appearance. The whole heart is in it, because it is of God. Encouraged by Nehemiah’s energy, the people are ready to work and fight at the same time. For faith always identifies God and His people in the heart. And this becomes a spring of devotedness in all concerned.

Let us remark, that in times of difficulty, faith does not show itself in the magnificence of the result, but in love for God’s work, however little it may be, and in the perseverance with which it is carried on through all the difficulties belonging to this state of weakness; for that with which faith is occupied is the city of God and the work of God, and these have always the same value, whatever may be the circumstances in which they are found.

Christian Treasury: Volume 1, Prayer and Dependance

What made Elijah the mighty man he was? It was prayer, preceded by deep exercise concerning the condition of things around him. He walked in conscious dependance upon God. This surely is available to believers at any time. Sometimes we excuse ourselves for lack of success by saying, it is a "day of small things." Zech. 4:10. Perhaps we should say. "It is a day of small men."

Christian Friend: Volume 14, Zechariah 3:7-9

Verse 7 puts Joshua, as the representative of the people, under responsibility for the time being. If faithful, he should have a place in the presence of Jehovah of hosts. Verse 8 treats him as a type of Christ, having the nation of priests associated with himself in the blessing that shall be accomplished in the last days. The foundation-stone that was laid before the eyes of Joshua was but a feeble image of that true stone, the immovable foundation of all the blessing of Israel, of all the government of God in the earth. Jehovah Himself stamps it with its true character. It should represent the thoughts of Jehovah Himself in His government. It should have, or rather it should be, the signet of God; and the iniquity of the earth should be definitely taken away by the absolute, efficacious, and positive act of God. In this stone shall be seen also the perfect intelligency of God. The seven eyes shall be there. I would add a few words on this expression. In 2 Chronicles 16 we find the eyes of Jehovah represented as running to and fro throughout the whole earth, to show Himself strong in behalf of those whose heart is perfect towards Him. This is the faithfulness of God in taking cognizance of all things in His ways of government. In Zechariah the eyes are found upon the stone that is laid in Zion. It is there that the seat of that government is placed, which sees everything and everywhere. In verse 10 of the next chapter these eyes, which behold all things, which run through the whole earth, are said to rejoice when they see the plummet in the

hands of Zerubbabel; that is to say, the house of Jehovah’s habitation entirely finished. In this case, they are not presented as established in the seat of government upon earth but in their character of universal and active oversight; and in this providential activity never resting until Jehovah’s counsels of grace towards Jerusalem are accomplished, and then they shall rejoice. The active intelligence of Providence finds its full delight there in the accomplishment of the unchangeable purpose of the will of God. Finally, these eyes are again seen, in Revelation 5, in the Lamb exalted to the right hand of God, who is about to take possession of His inheritance of the earth.

Here it is the seven spirits of God sent forth into all the earth; for the government is in the hands of the Lamb, although He has not yet exercised it in the earth, of which He is about to be put in possession.

J. N. D.

Bible Witness and Review: Volume 1, Mount of Olives Cleft, The

Zech. 14:5.-It is evident, I think, that Azal is the name of a place, joined, as its origin indicates, or near, to the Mount of Olives. As it never occurs elsewhere in the Bible as a proper name, save of a person, it is not surprising that commentators have differed as to its exact locality, some placing it at the eastern, others, as Henderson, at the western extremity, very close to one of the gates on the east side of Jerusalem.

The meaning I believe to be that Jehovah, standing in that day on the mount (which is most precisely described, as if to cut off the idea of mere "beautiful poetical imagery") shall cleave it in twain from west to east, half receding towards the north, and half towards the south; and that, if He fights with the nations which shall be then gathered against Jerusalem to battle, the Jews are to flee to the valley of His mountains (so called because thus wonderfully cloven), for the valley reaches to Azal, whether it be considered as the terminus a quo or ad quem. The earthquake referred to is the same signal one from which Amos dates his prophecy. The Vulgate, it may be observed, takes as an appellative, and gives us "usque ad proximum;" the Septuagint agrees with the authorized and most other versions as to this, but apparently follows the erroneous reading (which is actually that of four of De Rossi's MSS. not to speak of other authorities), instead of i.e. the Septuagint gives ,...(the valley shall be stopped up, etc.) in verse 5, which is evidently contrary to the best readings, and to the plain force of the context. It is scarcely needful to say that this prophecy has never been fulfilled. Even supposing that the Roman army under Titus could be meant, as Dr. Henderson affirms, by " all the nations," it seems extraordinary indeed that so sensible a person could see the rest of verse 2 accomplished there. I should have supposed that the impression kit on the mind by the accounts of Josephus or any one else was rather that the city was taken, and that if half the people went into captivity, the rest were cut off from the city.

But if there could be reasonable doubt as to that verse, can it be pretended that at that time (and it is all closely linked in the prophecy) Jehovah fought with those nations, and that His feet stood in that day on Olivet, and that the mount was split in the midst? It is a weak and impotent conclusion that the flight to Pella, long before the city was taken by the Romans, is what is here so sublimely but withal most graphically predicted. When we take the latter part of the chapter into the account, the hypothesis is beyond measure harsh and contrary to facts.

It is only needful to add that the sense seems to require us to close one paragraph with "the days of Uzziah, King of Judah," and to begin a new one with "And Jehovah my God shall come [and] all the holy ones with thee." The prophet suddenly addresses the Lord, and then proceeds with that day from a point of view which differs altogether from the preceding section, because it introduces His relationship permanently established with the whole earth, consequent on His vengeance upon the nations.

Questions and Answers on Scripture: From the Bible Treasury, Zechariah 14:6-7

Question: What Is the Meaning of Zech. 14:6, 7?

Answer: First, there will not be the mixture of light and darkness, as now, but a special character as fixed of the Lord for the great change of dispensation, “the day of the Lord.” Next, there is not to be the ordinary succession of night and day; for when the time of evening arrives, light shall prevail instead of darkness.

Scripture Queries and Answers, Scripture Queries and Answers: Zechariah 14:6-7; Matthew 16:22-23

Q. What Is the Meaning of Zech. 14:6, 7?

A. First, there will not be the mixture of light and darkness, as now, but a special character as fixed of the Lord for the great change of dispensation, "the day of the Lord." Next, there is not to be the ordinary succession of night and day; for when the time of evening arrives, light shall prevail instead of darkness.

Q. Matt. 16:22, 23.—Did Christ really call Peter Satan? or did He speak to Peter, but answer Satan? Yours, &c.,

A. It is plain, I think, that the Lord so called Peter; not saying, "Get thee hence," as He did to the enemy personally (Matt. 4:10), but "Get thee behind me." This last in Luke 4:8 is an interpolation equally opposed to external and to internal evidence; for there the clause is necessarily omitted, and has been clearly the mere work of scribes, designedly or not.—It is most instructive to observe how the Lord treats the flesh in a saint assuming in kindness to claim superior grace over the Spirit. We may and ought to treat it as Satan's work, as the Lord did in Peter.

Correspondence, Correspondence: Laodicea; Zech. 13:6; Peace; Christendom; Grace; Heb. 12:24

Ques. Is all the professing Church Laodicea now?

Ans. No. Rev. 2:25, 28 shows a remnant in Thyatira who are waiting for the coming of the Lord. He has not come yet.

Rev. 3:3 tells that the Church in Sardis will be treated as the world-the Lord coming as a thief to them.

Rev. 3:11 shows a remnant looking for the coming of the Lord, keeping His word, and not denying His name. Overcomers are there also.

Rev. 3:20 has overcomers even in Laodicea who sup with Christ and He with them.

The truth that "there is one body and one Spirit even as ye are called in one hope of your calling," continues till the Lord comes. Our responsibility and privilege is to walk worthy of that vocation with all lowliness and meekness, and the Lord's care of the Church, and provision for its needs, will not cease till the perfect man is reached. (Eph. 4:4-16).

Ques. Who is referred to in Zech. 13:6?

Ans. The speaker in Zech. 13:6 represents the Messiah. He, truly, was "wounded in the house of His friends."

Ques. How can I find peace?

Ans. What you need is a hearty acceptance of a full Christ, and a thorough surrender of yourself to Him. This we believe to be the true secret of solid peace and joyful liberty-Christ for the heart and the heart for Christ. May all perplexed inquirers know this!

Ques. What is Christendom? Does the Bible say anything about it?

Ans. The word is unknown in Scripture. It is the "domain" or country of those who are "christened," or who in any way outwardly profess the name of Christ. It is the corruption of Christianity, and is compared in 2 Tim. 2 to a great house in which, however, true vessels of mercy are found to God's glory. The word opposed to it is "Heathendom." Judgment being always in proportion to light received, it follows that this will be the scene of the heaviest of God's coming judgments (2 Thess. Chapters 1, 2).

Ques. What is the difference between "the exceeding riches of His grace," Eph. 2:7, and the "glory of His grace." Eph. 1:6?

Ans. When God's grace is spoken of as meeting our need, it is called riches; when it is spoken of as satisfying His own heart and eternal counsels, it is called glory.

Ques. What is the New Covenant? (Heb. 12:24.)

Ans. A covenant is a principle of relationship with God on the earth; conditions established by God, under which man is to live with Him. The word may, perhaps, be used figuratively or by accommodation. It is applied to details of the relationship of God with Israel: but strictly speaking, there are but two covenants, the old and the new. The old was established at Sinai. The new covenant is made also with the two houses of Israel. The gospel is not a covenant, but the revelation of the salvation of God. It proclaims the great salvation. We enjoy indeed all the essential privileges of the new covenant, its foundation being of God; but we do so in spirit, not according to the letter. (We share its blessings on the ground of the shed blood of Christ.) The new covenant will be established formally with Israel in the Millennium.

Christian Treasury: Volume 8, How Low the Lord Went

The thought in Phil. 2 is how low the Lord went. In Zech. 13:5, "Man acquired Me [as bondman] from My youth" (JND). The moment sin came into the world, the heart of God set Him to work. The promise was made and God by His Spirit has been working ever since, and will until the eternal state is brought about and every trace of sin removed. The affections of His heart set Him to work, and what should set the evangelist to work is the same—affection and love for lost, perishing souls. That, too, is what should set the pastor or teacher to work, love to Christ. That is expressed through caring for His people.

"Man acquired Me as bondman from My youth" meant taking a bondman's form, and taking His place in the likeness of men. It was a voluntary act. "Himself took our infirmities, and bare our sicknesses." It was His love that motivated Him. A translation of Psa. 40 which I like reads: "The good pleasure of Thy will, O God, is My delight." That is, the good pleasure of the Father's will was the delight of the heart of Christ, and so in His pathway that we meditate on here, it is love that took Him down to the shame of the cross. He loved the vilest thing on earth—you and me! Men's hearts were deceitful and thoroughly wicked and expressed themselves in the act that took place at Calvary. His grace toward us should break our hearts. What a Savior!

God is seeking to win our hearts from earth to heaven. Satan got man's ear in the Garden of Eden. And because God has been seeking to get the ear of man that his heart might be won, and that you and I might know all that is in the heart of God, Christ went down to the shame of the cross. It is not a question of bearing our sins here, but of love going to the shame of the cross—a voluntary act.

The Remembrancer: 1904, Character and Attitude of Those Who Know the Word of the Lord, The

It is with the moral teaching of this passage rather than with its dispensational and primary application, I am now dealing. With regard to the latter, it may be well to say that the subject evidently is the history of Israel in connection with Christ. Jehovah takes up the case of His desolate people and flock. There was no compassion in their own shepherds towards them it is very blessed to see that, while the nation is

handed over to reap the fruit of its own ways and sins, Jehovah, in the infinite compassion of His heart, cares for the poor and and oppressed of His people; but the nation as such are left to themselves. Then it is we find that the poor of the flock are they who recognize the fulfillment of the prophetic word in those ways of Jehovah. So much for the literal application of the passage.

Now the moral bearing of this is of the deepest moment for our souls in these days,. for there are now morally, as then in the history of Israel, " the poor of the flock." How blessed to think of this divine characteristic! It carries one's thoughts at once to Matt. 5 the very first mark of that which meets the mind of God in a world where all has departed from Him, is poverty of spirit-that which is in no sense indigenous to man or the earth; that which so far from being promoted, is suppressed and hindered by all that obtains amongst men and in the age. Poverty of spirit is only found in those who are broken, those who are down in the dust before the Lord, as their rightful place. Alas! how little of it is to be seen, how much of the opposite; self-exaltation and self-assertion, a determination to maintain self at all costs; lowliness of mind and humility of mind, are not virtues of the present moment or age; on the contrary, high-mindedness and pride, alas! prevail to a sad extent. How blessed to dwell upon that which is kindred to the thoughts of God, that which He takes pleasure in, and that which has ever met His mind from the very first. But further, this spirit has, as it were, its own surroundings and atmosphere it grows and flourishes far away from that which is found amongst men. It is impossible to maintain poverty of spirit if men and the world are mingled with. “All that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but of the world "—these are the principles and objects governing in the world, and none else beside. It is a solemn question for conscience and heart, how far apart from such a sphere do we walk? May the Lord exercise each of us before Himself as to this.

But not only do we find here the poor of the flock, "but we also find their attitude" that waited upon me." This is ever the attitude of the soul where poverty of spirit is the characteristic; confiding dependence and expectation mark them at all times, whether the remnant in Israel, or the few who to-day in loyalty of heart cleave to the Lord: hated, reviled, slandered, and despised, they have ever been, and will be, yet He knows them as trusting in Himself and waiting on Him.

But not only is there in this attitude a very marked dependence on, and expectation from, the Lord Himself, but there is an active exercise of heart implied in the words "waited upon me." How unlike the busy restlessness of the moment we are in, and the scene we are passing through! The moral greatness of one who waits on God simply is beyond all admiration! How blessed to be brought to this simply, so as to say, " thou art the God of my salvation; on thee do I wait all the day; " or again, " this is our God, we have waited for him; " or again, "yea, in the way of thy judgments, O Lord; have we waited for thee."

It was this which marked the Lord Jesus in all His blessed perfection as a man on earth: how blessed to hear Him say, as in Psa. 40:1-He takes the place of patience without failure-" I waited patiently for Jehovah." It is exactly opposite to what man is as man, with his will and all that belongs to it. Observe it is "for Jehovah" that is, until He came in: His own will never moved; Christ would have no other deliverance than Jehovah's. That which was found in the blessed One in His own perfection, is by grace wrought in the poor of the flock, and in feebleness and imperfection still is exhibited in some small measure by them. Oh, may it be ours more and more to be known simply as a poor and an afflicted people who wait on the Lord and trust in Him! Then, lastly, observe how the Lord says, " the poor of the flock that waited upon me, knew that it was the word of the Lord." This shows very blessedly the connection between the state of soul according to God, and the discernment of His mind through His word: and may we not ask is it not ever so? The wise and prudent on the one hand and the unseparated on the other, never discern His will; it is hidden from the former (very solemn reflection this); it is revealed to babes. As to the other class, those not separated and consecrated to God, it is written, " the knowledge of the holy is understanding; and further, " do not drink wine nor strong drink when ye go into the tabernacle of the congregation... that ye may put difference between holy and unholy, and between unclean and clean " (Lev. 10:9,10).

May the Lord apply His own word to all that needs its piercing light at this moment, so that there may be, by its divine action, formed in our souls that capacity and ability of His Spirit, to know what is the word of the Lord in its application to all the difficulties and exercises of the way at this present moment,

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Girdle of Truth: Volume 5, Rain in the Time of the Latter Rain

" Ask ye of the Lord rain in the time of the latter rain; so the Lord shall make bright clouds, and give them showers of rain."-Zech. 10:1.

Mere speculations as to the probable extent and course of the present work of the Lord in gathering souls to Christ would be fruitless and vain; but inquiries from the Word of God, as to whether there are Scriptural grounds to guide our expectations in this respect, must be naturally awakened in every thoughtful mind.

That the present dispensation will end in judgment and not in universal, or millennial blessing, is assumed to be incontrovertibly settled by the Word of God. Still there is room for the inquiry whether there is anything in Scripture to bar the expectation of a general revival -a brief, rapid, wide-extended and final gathering of souls to Christ by the testimony of His grace before the Church is taken out of this scene, and judgments on the world set in.

One thing must be borne in mind, that, until the point is reached in which the words " take hold," " He that is unjust, let him be unjust still; and he that is filthy let him be filthy still; and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still; and he that is holy, let him be holy still," it is " the accepted time," it is " the day of salvation." As long as ever it can be called " to-day," we are to hear His voice. Moreover, when the Church's affections are represented as turned with the greatest earnestness toward Christ and she is answering most truly to her relationship to Him, and " the Spirit and the bride," in anticipation of His return, are saying, " Come," the invitation of the gospel, in its widest sense, is expressed in the words, " Let him that is athirst, come; and whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely."

And in the application of the parable of the ten virgins in Matt. 25, there seems to be a positive declaration that at last there will be a universal awakening: "then all those virgins arose and trimmed their lamps."

So that there does not seem to be in the word any bar to the expectation of a work of God, in connection with the triumphant testimony of His grace, to any extent the Lord may please; or to any display, at the close of the dispensation, of the energy of the Holy Ghost in drawing souls to Christ that shall answer in character and degree to that which was witnessed at the beginning: and thus a practical exemplification be given, in God's ways, of the principle, "the last shall be first and the first last."

To Christians who are looking for a spiritual reign, or a millennium brought in by the energy of the Spirit, and not by previous judgments, of course such reasoning as this can only be viewed as supererogatory; for the question has already been pre-judged on the basis of Old-Testament prediction. To others it may not be without its profit in directing their thoughts; though, if we think of what He has already accomplished in Sweden, and in America, and Ireland, and various parts of the continent, besides our own country, it must be confessed that God has, in His grace, already almost taken it out of the region

of expectation and made it matter of fact.

God is sovereign in His actings; but then He is acting in the present age in the supremacy of His grace. How much therefore may we not count upon in farther mercy even where His grace has wrought so much; and in places that have not been visited thus at all how much may we not expect from the love of His heart Not that it is expected there will be a permanent state of things issuing from this work; or even a long-continued work. Outward events, to those who have studied the prophetic word, are such as to indicate a speedy close, and now the moral signs are in correspondence. As to the day of labor, it may be said, " The night cometh when no man can work;" but as to the position of the believer, it may with emphasis, be added, " the night is far spent and the day is at hand; let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armor of light."

I may not be able to connect myself with all that has accompanied this work of the Lord, which has been so markedly begun, and which our souls should be stirred up most earnestly to pray may be carried on; but in the work itself every soul that is attached to the Lord Jesus must sincerely rejoice. The means, it is true, that are used by some to produce an immediate effect in connection with the preaching of the word-perhaps used in faith by those whom the Lord has owned in this work-I might not be able to adopt, though earnestly praying to the Lord for the result. Want of faith might possibly hinder me, if the dread of imitation and excitement did not; while from the efforts of others I might be obliged to stand aloof altogether, from the manifest indications of the flesh and of a mind not subject to God. But even here, in the result we ought to be able to rejoice as Paul rejoiced that Christ was preached, though some preached Him of " envy and contention."

That God is doing a wonderful work in this day in the rapid conversion of souls to Himself, none who have at all witnessed His power in this respect will be disposed to doubt. And it seems to be of immense importance that the hearts of all His people should be awakened to it-that by prayer and hearty desire it may be helped forward. It is not asked nor sought that the truth received from the study of the word should be given up, or that the conclusions which have been come to from the quiet study of the Scriptures should be weakened.

But if God is doing a work, who are those that ought to be interested in it, and actively associated with it? " Shall a trumpet be blown in the city, and the people not be afraid? Surely the Lord God will do nothing; but he revealeth his secret unto his servants the prophets." (Amos 3:6, 7.)

It is but little matter to any who have been brought into contact with this work how it is received by others, i.e., whether the report of it be received with credence or unbelief. It- so brings its own credentials with it, that as soon might there be a question about the sun's light when it is shining all around, as a question raised in the hearts of such, whether the Lord is doing a wonderful work on souls or not.

Christians, especially, who have the coming of the Lord as their hope, of all others, should be prepared to expect and to welcome this work; because the Lord to them (if I might so speak) assigns the reason of His delay and of the prolongation of their hope. They are to " account that the long-suffering of the Lord is salvation."

So that, while this sudden and unlooked-for work (blessed in itself) is going on and gathering souls for Christ's appearing, it declares emphatically that His coming is at hand; because the very cause of the delay is being removed by Him who has taught us that " the Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness."

Moreover, there is a special need of prayer, that the enemy may not profit by imitations of this work, and so cast discredit upon it; and that souls may have an adequate care, through the Lord's grace, that are thus suddenly brought " out of darkness into his marvelous light." God's counsels of grace will surely be accomplished; but then He loves to associate the desires of His people with His own work; as He says of Israel, " Yet for all these things will I be inquired of by the house of Israel to do them for them." And as in the passage before us, " Ask ye of the Lord rain in the time of the latter rain, so the Lord shall make bright clouds, and give them showers of rain, to every one grass in the field."

While doing all honor to those whose preaching has been owned of the Lord in the gathering of souls to Christ, it would be folly to suppose that nothing more than this is needed. It would, in truth, be like ignoring the use of the epistles of the New Testament-which it will be remembered were all written for the use of persons already brought by the gospel home to Christ. There is, and will be, the immensely-increased need of teaching and exhorting and pastoral care. For however lightly we may think of mere official pastorship, nothing can be more important than, for Christ's sake, to care for the sheep of Christ. In this view, how earnestly should each one pray that, in all humility of mind, he may be used as an instrument to warn, or teach, or comfort, or guard, those souls whom God is gathering for Himself out of the midst of this evil world I Not that there is the least thought of building up a permanent state of things; or that there will be time for the development of the ordinary phases of revival, of decline, and of ultimate indifference; but rather the bright and blessed expectation of a people being prepared to meet the Lord Jesus Christ at His coming.

" While the bridegroom tarried, they all slumbered and slept. And at midnight there was a cry made, Behold, the bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet him. Then all those virgins arose, and trimmed their lamps. And the foolish said unto the wise, Give us of your oil; for our lamps are gone out. But the wise answered, saying, Not so; lest there be not enough for us and you: but go ye rather to them that sell, and buy for yourselves. And while they went to buy, the bridegroom came; and they that were ready went in with him to the marriage: and the door was shut'"

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