

sent a letter to the Scripture Gift Mission, and included in it a message to sailors, one verse being taken from the Old Testament, and one from the New: "Be strong and of a good courage; be not afraid, neither be thou dismayed, for the Lord thy God is with thee whithersoever thou goest." "Honour all men. Love the brotherhood. Serve God. Honour the King." We may well thank God that such a man is in command of the British Naval forces at this time.

### Spanish and Portuguese Aid Society

We observe with great satisfaction that the work of this admirable Society continues to prosper. The year has been one of steady progress. In Spain, the Reformers have been able successfully to appeal to the State for protection in the enjoyment of the rights given them by law, "and are no longer as a body of women and men outside the law." This is a welcome change. In Portugal the persecution clauses of the Special Law have not been put in force against the Reformers; and the evangelists who visit towns and villages have had no legal obstacles placed in their path. All this gives ground for genuine hope and strong encouragement. Both in England and in Ireland the Society has warm friends, and one of the latest items of news is that the able and eloquent Bishop of Derry, Dr. Chadwick, has accepted the office of President of the Irish branch. All who love the progress of the pure Gospel in Spain and Portugal will be glad to know of these things and to help forward the work of this energetic and valuable organization.

### "A Voice From the Pew"

Under this heading, an article appears in a current magazine in which the clergy are invited to make more use than they do of their laymen. Among the ways in which the laymen's ability might be utilized, the art of elocution is mentioned; and the writer considers that laymen, as a rule, are better readers of the lessons than clergymen, their strength of elocution being stronger and saner. The writer goes on to say that most clergymen to whom he has listened would be the better for a course of elocution at the hands of some competent layman, because the man in the pew is more favourably situated for judging effects than anyone else. And then the article closes by saying that "if clergymen would only seek the opinion and advice of those of their congregation competent and willing to give it, the efficiency of the Church would be enhanced to an appreciable extent." This is plain speaking, but no one can say that it is untrue or unnecessary. The elocution of the clergy is often sadly to seek; and if they could only realize the charm and helpfulness of well-read lessons, well-delivered sermons, and clearly enunciated prayers, they would certainly strive their utmost to make themselves proficient.

### The Coming of Our Lord

Of all the parts of the New Testament which treat of the Second Coming of our Lord Jesus Christ there is none that deals with it more explicitly and with more fullness of detail than I. Thessalonians iv. 13, 18. In speaking of the Second Coming of our Lord, that side of it is not meant which Charles Wesley celebrates in his majestic hymn, "Lo! He Comes With Clouds Descending." That He will thus come at the appointed hour we do not doubt. And this passage in its earlier verses expressly alludes to it. That is what may be called the second part of His coming, but there is an anterior part of which the saints at Thessalonica had heard but little, possibly nothing at

all. They were not ignorant of the fact that the Saviour would return. That great truth was an integral portion of the gospel which they had received and wherein they stood. And in receiving it they had turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God and to wait for His Son from heaven, even Jesus our Deliverer from coming wrath. All this is stated in so many words (I. Thess. 1:10).

But this prospect was not so clear to their minds as it may be to ours, and it gave rise to questions which they felt themselves incompetent to answer. What about those who fall asleep meanwhile? Would they not be great losers? How could they share in the glory of His Kingdom if they were not on earth when He came? For we can hardly suppose that as yet they knew the truth of the resurrection of the dead. It is more than probable that they did not. That Christ was risen they knew very well, but that others should be raised even as He, was another matter. And so the Apostle writes to set their mind at rest. He lets them know that "if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so (we also believe that), them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with Him." And then follows a new revelation—something they had never heard before. And what he is about to tell them is invested with all the authority of "the word of the Lord." This in itself should place us in the position of reverent and attentive hearers anxious to profit to the utmost by the communication he is now to make. First of all, he would have them know that we who are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall in no wise take precedence of those who fall asleep. No advantage will accrue to us. Blessed though it be to remain till the Lord returns, it will confer nothing upon us. Indeed, "the dead in Christ shall rise first." It will be theirs to feel the first touch of that divine power which will conform both them and us to the image of our Lord (Phil. iii. 20, 21). It is the Lord Himself who shall come for His saints. When the purposes of God begin to ripen for the restoration of Israel to the land of their fathers, it is the angels who shall be sent forth to gather His elect from the four winds of heaven (Matt. xxiv. 31). Those celestial beings shall be His servants to set in motion everything that will be needed to accomplish that sure and great result. But in our case no angels are in view. None but the Lord is seen. And it is into the air He descends. That will be the meeting-place between Him and His heavenly saints. Then His glorious voice shall be heard that calls the dead in Christ from their graves. What an answer there will be from every part of this wide earth where the dead in Christ now lie! The body sown in weakness shall be raised in power, sown in dishonour it shall be raised in glory, sown in a natural body it shall be raised a spiritual body (I. Cor. xv. 42-44).

To the man of the world all this may seem like an idle dream, the child of an unbridled imagination. "Impossible! How could such things be?" Similar questions were asked by the Sadducean school of old. And the Lord pointed out to them the source of all error, doubt, and unbelief—they knew neither the Scriptures nor the power of God (Matt. xxii. 29). Now the Scriptures cannot be broken. Every word shall stand. And as for the power of God, it can do all things. Amid these mysteries of the Christian faith the humble believer walks with steady step and unreeling brain. He knows that his Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ, is able to do everything, and on His sure word he rests. And if it be "the dead in Christ" who shall be raised, so all who are "in Christ" shall be caught up when the Lord comes. Not one of them shall be left behind. As to the resurrection, it is said, "Christ the first fruits; afterward they that are Christ's at His coming" (I. Cor. xv. 23). So, in I. Thessalonians iv. "the dead in

Christ shall rise first." There is in neither passage the slightest hint that only some of these shall be raised. And as to the living it is said, "We shall be changed." "We . . . shall be caught up." Beyond doubt, the "we" of both passages is broad enough to embrace every saint who is alive and remains unto the coming of the Lord.

But it is, of course, impossible to tell when this great event will take place. The day is fixed and written down in the Counsel-Book of the Eternal, but no man on earth knows it. It may be to-day or to-morrow or the day after. None can say. Therefore we should ever watch. And so we shall if Christ be deeply loved. For this watching and waiting for Him is much more a question of the heart than of the head. Clear views have their value, but they are worthless and cold as a winter day if they stand alone. Two children may know that their mother—long absent—is coming home to-morrow. One is as sure about that as the other, but one of them intensely longs for the hours to pass because she intensely loves. And the mother, too, in whose affections both children have their place, she longs for the meeting-time. "And the Spirit and the Bride say, Come. . . . Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus" (Rev. xxii. 17, 20).

### UPWARD.

"These are they which follow the Lamb whithersoever He goeth" (Rev. xiv. 4).

Upward, ever upward!  
Right toward the throne!  
Backward never looking  
Till the prize is won!  
Christ our Lord and Captain,  
Beckons us along,  
Bids us fight and conquer;  
Then with angel throng,  
When the toil is over,  
Reign for evermore  
With the saints and martyrs  
On the blissful shore.

Upward, ever upward!  
Right toward the prize!  
Jesus Christ our Saviour,  
Reigns beyond the skies!  
He is sweetly calling:  
"Christian, come to me,  
In the Heavenly city,  
Find felicity!  
Soon the toil is over,  
Soon the rest ye gain;  
Christian, fight and conquer,  
Then with Me ye reign."

Upward, ever upward!  
Never be dismayed!  
God reigns all around you,  
Be ye not afraid!  
God is our defender,  
Jesus is our Guide,  
And His Holy Spirit  
Ever will abide  
With us in our warfare,  
As we march along,  
Till we live in glory,  
With the Heavenly throng.

Upward! ever upward!  
Right toward the Throne!  
Victory is assured us  
By the Three in One;  
By the Eternal Father,  
By the Eternal Son,  
By the Holy Spirit  
Till the crown is won!  
Then throughout the ages,  
In that world of rest,  
We will sing His praises  
With the angels blest.

Jno. T. Attwooll.