

AN EXALTED HEAD AND A FITLY COMPACTED BODY

Preached at Gower Street Chapel, London, on Lord's Day Evening, August 3rd, 1856

"Which is the head, even Christ. From whom the whole body fitly joined together, and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love." Ephesians 4:15, 16

The Church of Christ has an eternal, substantial, indefectible union with the Son of God, her glorious covenant Head. This union is not only the source of all her salvation, but is the wellspring of all her hope, of all her strength, and of all her joy. But, in order to become all this to any individual soul in vital manifestation, it must be personally and experimentally felt, realised and known under the teachings and influences of the blessed Spirit. The Church's union with Christ is, indeed, blessed as a doctrine, as a vital truth, as a firm bulwark against error and self-righteousness; but the power and sweetness of it can only be known by a living experience of it in the soul, as revealed there by the work and witness of the Spirit of God Himself.

We were attempting to show this morning what it was to grow up into Christ in all things out of that childish state, during which we are tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine.

This evening we shall endeavour, with God's blessing, to carry on the subject from the point where we then left off, and to show from the words before us,

I. How the Lord Jesus Christ is *the Head of the Church*.

II. How the whole body is united to Him, and at the same time *fitly joined together in itself*.

III. How it is *compacted together by that which every joint supplieth*, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part.

IV. How the result is that there is *an increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love*.

I. That the Lord Jesus Christ should have a people, in whom He should be eternally glorified, was the original promise made by the Father to the Son. "Ask of Me, and I shall give Thee the heathen for Thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for Thy possession" (Psa. 2:8). This was "the joy that was set before Him, for which He endured the cross, despising the shame" (Heb. 12:2). This was "the purchased possession" (Eph. 1:14); "the travail of His soul" (Isa. 53:11); and the reward of His humiliation and sufferings (Phil. 2:9, 10). This people form the members of His mystical body, all of which were written in His book, the book of life, when as yet, as regards their actual existence, there was none of them (Psa. 139:16). All these were given to Him in eternity, when He was constituted their covenant Head in the everlasting covenant, ordered in all things and sure. They thus became, in prospect of His incarnation, "members of His body, of His flesh, and of His bones." How touchingly did the blessed Redeemer remind His Father of these covenant transactions, when He said in His memorable prayer, "I pray for them. I pray not for the world, but for them which Thou hast given Me; for they are Thine. And all Mine are Thine, and Thine are Mine, and I am glorified in them." Being thus given to Christ, and constituted members of His mystical body, they can no more perish than Christ Himself. He is their Head, and as He is possessed of all

power, full of all love, filled with all wisdom, and replete with all mercy, grace, and truth, how can He, how will He, suffer any of His members to fall out of His body, and be lost to Him as well as to themselves? Will any man willingly suffer his eye, or his hand, or his foot, or even the tip of his little finger, to be taken out or cut off? If any member of our body perish, if we lose an arm or a leg, it is because we have not power to prevent it. But all power belongs to Christ, in heaven and in earth; and therefore no one member of His mystical body can perish for want of power in Him to save it. But, however truly blessed this doctrine is, it is only when we are quickened and made alive unto God by a spiritual birth that we savingly and experimentally know and realise it; and we are, for the most part, led into it thus. We are first made to feel our need of Christ as a Saviour from the wrath to come, from the fear of death, the curse of the law, and the accusations of a guilty conscience. When enabled, by the blessed Spirit's operations, to receive Him into our heart, by faith, as the Christ of God, and to realise in some measure an interest in Him, we are then taught to feel our need of continual supplies of grace and strength out of His fulness. For we have to learn something of the depths of the Fall, of the evils of our heart, of the temptations of Satan, of the strength of sin, of our own weakness and worthlessness; and as every fresh discovery of our helplessness and wretchedness makes a way for looking to and hanging upon Him, we become more and more dependent on Him as of God made unto us wisdom, righteousness, sanctification and redemption.

There is a striking and beautiful, though necessarily imperfect, analogy between the natural and spiritual body in their relation each to its head. What part thinks for the whole of the body, provides for all its wants, guides all its movements, foresees all its dangers, obtains for it food, rest,

and raiment, preserves it from its enemies, and is, so to speak, responsible for its well-being? Its head. Where are our eyes, our ears, our smell, our taste, our speech? Where the main seat of life and intelligence, and of well-nigh everything that distinguishes us from the brutes? Is it not the head? So with the Church and Christ. He sees for her, hears for her, has tasted for her the bitterness of God's wrath, pleads for her at the right hand of the Father, guides her and keeps her, is the seat of all her wisdom, and the spring of all her life. And as without the head the natural body would not be complete, so without the body the natural head would have neither place, name, nor influence. Each is necessary to the other; each an integral part of the other. As then the natural head is needful to the life of the natural body, so is the spiritual body needful to the glory of its spiritual Head. So that the "Head" itself "cannot say to the feet," the least and lowest of its members, "I have no need of you."

II. But I pass on to show how the whole body is *united* to the Head, and at the same time *fitly joined together in itself*. "From whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth."

The body of Christ is at present scattered, and, if I may so speak, fragmentary. Of the members of His mystical body some are now before the throne, "spirits of just men made perfect." Others are still in the wilderness; others are yet in the world, dead in trespasses and sins, uncalled by grace, destitute of the Spirit; others at present are unborn, still hidden in the womb of time. But earth is the stage whereon all the members are from time to time brought into a vital, manifestive union with their living Head.

When I was a boy at school, in London, Waterloo Bridge was building, and I and my playmates used to go sometimes to

what was then called, "The Stone Field," on the other side of the water, where the stones that now make up Waterloo Bridge were being squared and chiselled. Every vestige of that field, I have no doubt, is gone, and the place covered with buildings; but there stands Waterloo Bridge, and those stones that I used to play upon as a boy now form part of that beautiful structure which Canova, the great Italian sculptor, said it was worth coming to London only to see. Take the idea into spiritual things. The body of Christ is compared in Scripture to a building. "And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief corner stone; in whom all the building, fitly framed together, groweth into an holy temple in the Lord." Of this building believers are "living stones," and many of them are at present in "the Stone Field," where they are being hammered and hacked, squared and chiselled by the hand of the great Architect. During this state, like the stones of Solomon's temple, which were hewn and squared at a distance, that "neither hammer nor axe, nor any tool of iron might be heard in the house while it was in building," so are these living stones prepared for their future glory. The mallet and the chisel are at work upon them now day by day, that in due time they may fill their designed position in the spiritual building. I remember well that all the stones which were strewn over the field were marked and numbered, and these figures no doubt denoted their intended position. Every stone so marked was in due time individually transferred to, and now occupies, the exact position that the architect designed for it. So every living stone was marked and numbered in eternity, is hewed and squared in time, and will, in future glory, be placed by the hand of the divine Architect in that place of the spiritual building originally designed for it.

But, to revert to the figure before us, we cannot suppose that the members of Christ's mystical body place themselves in it,

or that one thrusts itself in here and another in there, as if by accident, or by some act of free-will, independent of divine arrangements. What a maimed or superfluous, what a hideous, mis-shapen and monstrous body would that be where there was no pre-arrangement or harmonious fitting in of members. How is it in natural creation? Did any creature make itself what it is? Did we make our own body? If beauty and harmony are so visibly and undeniably stamped upon the natural body, the food of worms, and whose foundation is in the dust, can we think that less skill and wisdom, beauty, harmony and precision are stamped upon that glorious body of which Christ is the Head, and each member of which is to shine as the stars for ever and ever? As, then, every limb in my natural body occupies the exact place which God appointed, and performs the offices that He assigned to it, so in the mystical body of Christ every member occupies the place that the Lord designed for it, and sustains the functions which infinite wisdom predetermined. The Apostle, therefore, beautifully says, "From whom the whole body, fitly joined together." Even upon earth, in our present dislocated and imperfect condition, we see at times how beautifully the Lord has put the members of the mystical body together. We see how different members have their different gifts, various ministers their various abilities, each doing a work which they only can do. In a gospel church some are strong, others weak; some leaders, others willing to be led; some possessed of great gifts in prayer and conversation, others hardly able to say a word to or for God; some able and willing to give, others from necessity willing to receive; some in liberty, others in bondage; some active and zealous, others feeble in health or depressed in spirit; some abounding in every good word and work, others mourning every day their barrenness and unfruitfulness. But still all are in their right place, all helping one another, all contributing something to the well-being of the body. Put it to the test.

Assuming that all the members of a gospel church are living members of Christ, can you spare any one of them? Are they not missed when their seat is empty at public worship, when absent from the ordinance, and especially when removed by death? Is not every humble, gracious, God-fearing member of a gospel church missed when absent from his place in life, and lamented when removed from the church below by death? Are they not then "fitly joined together"? And as we would not change our own arm for another man's, though perhaps stronger than our own, so we would not change the members of our own church for the members of other churches. We know and love them, and they know and love us. As in the natural body, we are used to them, and they to us; and if not so comely or so showy as others, they are still parts of ourselves. There was an express command given by God to Moses respecting the person of the high priest under the law (Lev. 21:17-21). He was to have no blemish; to be neither blind nor lame; neither broken handed nor broken-footed; neither crooked-backed nor a dwarf; to have nothing deficient, and nothing superfluous. Any defective or any supernumerary member incapacitated him, *ipso facto*, from being a high priest. So not only is the great High Priest over the house of God Himself "without blemish and without spot" (1 Peter 1:19); but His mystical body, the Church, has nothing deficient or superfluous in it. It is a harmonious body, complete in every part, "a glorious Church, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing, but holy and without blemish" (Eph. 5:27). Planned by infinite wisdom, and constructed by infinite power, it is "fitly joined together," harmony and beauty being stamped on the whole.

III. But the apostle beautifully adds, "And compacted by that which every joint supplieth." He still pursues the comparison of the human body; for as in that every joint supplies strength and motion to the whole, so in the mystical body of

Christ every spiritual joint supplies its allotted portion of strength and activity to the rest. This fitting in of every joint is, or should be, exemplified in a gospel church, where love and union reign. The Lord the Spirit gives to each member that measure of grace which is sufficient not only for his own salvation and consolation, but that which contributes something to the welfare of the whole. Thus, some contribute their prayers, having little else to bestow, for the good of their brethren; others, whom the Lord has blessed with a measure of this world's good, of their substance to those poor members to whom their liberality is often a timely help; others supply the church with a good example, setting before their eyes a godly life, a self-denying, upright, consistent walk and conduct; others are free to speak, possess a pleasing gift in conversation and prayer, and out of the fulness of a believing heart can testify what God has done for their souls in humble, simple, yet savoury language. Others are patterns of humility, holding forth a broken heart and a contrite spirit; others manifest much tenderness of conscience, great circumspection of conduct, and exercise of much godly fear. Some are possessed of a great spirit of love and affection; others of much zeal and boldness for the truth; others of a sound judgment and keen discernment of spirits; others manifest much patience under suffering, or meekness under persecution, or great spirituality of mind. Some have a deep acquaintance with trials and temptations, and much knowledge of the wiles of Satan, and the deceitfulness and depravity of the human heart. Thus, in one way or another, every spiritual joint supplies something to the well-being of the body. However poor or weak a member may feel itself to be in a church, still it is as much an integral part of the body as the strongest. My little finger is as much an integral part of my body as my hand or arm; to part with it would give me pain, and I suffer if the least injury is done to it. So the weakest and feeblest member of the body of

Christ is as much a member, has as much fitness in the body, is as much honoured by the Spirit for what he does, under His gracious influences, as the strongest in faith, hope, and love. The whole body is "compacted by that which every joint supplieth." Every joint, whether large or small, adds something to the welfare of the whole body; so that "whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it; or one member be honoured, all the members rejoice with it" (1 Cor. 12:26). The body is thus "compacted," or, as it were, welded together into one united mass of firmness and strength, the indwelling Spirit working effectually in every joint and limb, according to the measure of grace bestowed upon it.

IV. But I pass on to show how, the whole body, being thus "fitly joined together, and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, *maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love.*" The whole body is to grow together. How blessed to see a gospel church grow in grace and in the knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ; to see the pastor, the deacons and the various members all advancing more and more in the life of God, growing out of the childish state of which we spoke this morning, when they are "tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine." It is blessed to know and realise something of this spiritual growth in ourselves; to have larger views of the Lord Jesus Christ; more believing apprehensions of His Person and work; to feel more of the influences and operations of the Spirit of God; to get more weaned from the world; to find sin more subdued, and the evils of our wicked nature more overcome. And, as it is a blessed thing to be growing in the things of God, so without it there is nothing but barrenness, bondage and death; for there is no standing still in the life of God. Not to grow is to decline; not to advance is to backslide.

Now, the members of a church help each other, or should do so, in this growth; for the body grows by that which every joint supplieth. Many think very lightly of the privilege of being a member of a gospel church. Do not ye be so minded. It is a very great privilege and blessing to be united in church fellowship with the saints of God; to sit down with them at the Lord's table; to have an interest in their prayers; to feel a spirit of affection toward them, and they to us; to sympathise with each other in sorrow and joy; and to be helped forward in our burdens and troubles by the affectionate kindness of those who are knit to us in the same mystical body. In bearing persecution, in contending for the truth, in struggles with sickness and poverty, much help is thus afforded. From this intimate union of the members, church censures are felt so deeply by those who lie under them, and have any tenderness of conscience. It was so with the Corinthian, who was in hazard of being "swallowed up with over much sorrow." Church censures, therefore, should not be administered except upon very good grounds, for they are most painful to those who are the subjects of them. But the very pain inflicted, and the suffering produced by separation from a gospel church, show the privilege and blessedness of belonging to one. If to-morrow morning an operation were necessary to remove my little finger, I should feel by the pain which the cutting off gave me that it was a part of my body. So the pain of separation is felt in proportion to the value that is put upon the privilege of being a member of a gospel church.

But when I speak of the privileges of a gospel church, I would not drop one word to disparage or pain those who are not members of gospel churches. I have had some dear friends who never could see baptism, who never were members of any church; one especially, who is now bathing his ransomed soul in eternal bliss. I am not, then, one of

those who say, "I cannot do with you unless you are members of a church." No such thing. I love many out of the church, some in my own congregation, as much as those who are in. Still, I cannot overlook the solemn truth that a gospel church is of the Lord's institution, and that it is a privilege to belong to one. When the apostle is speaking here of the body "being fitly joined together, and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part," he means, no doubt, a gospel church, as the visible representation of the mystical body of Christ. Now, there is a making increase of the body by the individual growth of every member; for every such member has a certain measure of grace and experience bestowed on him; and this is God's measure, not his. It may in some cases be a very small measure; still it is God's gift, and is to be prized as such. A crumb of mercy, a drop of love, a grain of grace, from God is most blessed. Why? Because, be the measure ever so small, it is a pledge of His eternal favour. Sometimes the sky is overcast and cloudy, but suddenly there breaks out a solitary ray of sunshine, and we hail it with gladness; for it is as much a proof that the sun is still in the sky, as though the whole orb burst forth with all the effulgence we this day have witnessed. So it is in grace. One ray of God's favour shining upon the soul, one mark of interest in the Son of His love, one promise applied with power, one drop of atoning blood falling upon the conscience, one sight of the Redeemer in His sufferings or in His exaltation, one witness of the Spirit to our adoption into the family of God, one token for good even less than these, is to be hailed, prized and valued, because the least as well as the greatest shows the source from which it comes. If, then, you have but a grain, a drop, a crumb, the feeblest mark of being a child of God, you are as much interested in the finished work of Christ, and are as sure of heaven at last, as if God had blessed your soul even to overwhelming, as if He had

favoured you with such manifestations that you could scarcely live under them. You are as safe, though not so sound; as secure, but not so happy, as the saints in heavenly bliss. We prize the little finger as a member of the body as much as the arm or leg. So we say the least measure of grace, the least token for good, the least work of the Spirit upon the heart, if it be but the first pang of conviction, the first cry or sigh for mercy, is as much from God as the most overwhelming manifestation of Christ to the soul. When the poor publican went up to the temple under the burden of sin and guilt, the Holy Ghost came upon him as the Spirit of grace and supplication, and he, in the distress of his mind, poured forth one solitary prayer, "God be merciful to me a sinner." What next do we read? "This man went down to his house justified." There and then justification was sealed on his heart. He was manifestly accepted in the Beloved, and went down to his house with a message of peace and mercy in his conscience. So some of you may only just have strength to utter the publican's cry, only just have faith to use the publican's prayer, only able to beg of God to have mercy upon your soul. But if the Holy Ghost is the author of that pang of conviction, the source of that pleading cry, you are as much justified in the sight of God as the publican was when he went down to his house with the blood of Christ in his conscience and the robe of Christ upon his soul. You may not feel it, nor do you feel it; but in the sight of God it is so. We have only the measure of grace that the Lord gives. This, to my mind, is a most sweet reflection, for it sets the whole family of God upon a level. Here are some, we will say, highly favoured. Who gave them these favours? Shall he who hath gathered much boast over him who hath gathered little, or he who hath gathered little envy him who hath gathered much? No. He who hath gathered little hath no lack, and he who hath gathered much hath nothing over. He is what he is by the grace of God. So with the servants of God. You hear

various servants of God in this pulpit. Each has his gift, his capability of opening up the Word of God, of speaking of the soul's experience, of handling the truth "as a workman who needeth not to be ashamed." You must esteem them according to the measure of grace bestowed on them, not setting one above another from carnal considerations. Each does his work, each fills his own place; and if God bless him to your souls, give God the praise. So with members of your church. Some enjoy sweet liberty, while others are in doubt and fear. Some are tempted and tried, exercised and distressed beyond measure, while others are not so deeply acquainted with the evils of their heart, enjoy more peace of mind, and are less exposed to conflict, less thrust into the fore-front of the battle. Now, but for the restraint of grace, the strong will cut off the weak, the weak will judge the strong. The tempted one will think, "That man has no grace, otherwise he would be tempted and tried as I am." The one who is not tempted says, "That man has been doing something wrong, indulging in some sin, and therefore God has left him." But when we remember that every child of God, as well as every servant of the Most High, is only just what God makes him, and has only what God gives him, neither less nor more, this sets all the family of God upon a level. I have seen and felt this many years, and it has been a good lesson to me. For I have been made to see that it is God's grace that makes a man what he is. I have had advantages, so called, which other men may not have had—education, study, and much reading—but that does not give me any real superiority over those servants of God who have not been similarly privileged. I can only minister to you according to the ability that God may give me; and they do the same. God may bless me, and He may bless them. Whom He blesses you are to honour. This, as I have said, sets all the family of God upon a level. I have felt it for many years, for it was one of the first lessons written upon my

heart. I love grace wherever I find it, for I see such beauty and blessedness in it. When we can see this, there is no despising any of the children of God, no setting of one above another. What is this man? What the Lord has made him. What is this minister, this writer, this preacher? What the Lord has made him. And as the Lord has furnished him with gifts and abilities, he is responsible to Him for their use. You have an establishment with clerks and servants; each man has his post; one does one part of the work, and another the other; the clerk does not do the work of the servant, nor the servant the work of the clerk. But the porter that sweeps the office, or the boy that takes down the shutters, is as much in his place as the head clerk. So in the Church of Christ, in the great establishment of grace, in God's house here below. God has His servants and His clerks, each filling his appointed place, each doing his Master's work, each having his Master's glory at heart, and his Master's testimony in his conscience, if he serve Him faithfully. So is it also with the members of the mystical body of Christ. By their mutual co-operation there is an increase of the body to the edifying of itself in love. But how contrary to all this is a spirit of contention and strife! Should I not act as a madman were I to beat my head with my fist, or dash my two hands against each other till they bled, or if I wounded or maimed one member by another? So, what an unseemly sight to see two members of Christ's mystical body fighting with each other, like two drunken men in a fair! To see two servants of the same Master, who preach the same gospel, beating each other, and trying to push the other down, that the conqueror may stand upon the prostrate body of his rival, is a more unseemly sight to a spiritual eye than any of those pugilistic contests that have ever disgraced our country. Laying aside all such strife and contention, we should rather seek to sympathise with and comfort each other, bear one another's burdens, weep with those that weep, and rejoice with those

that rejoice, helping each other forward by our prayers, our example, our affection, and our tenderness. Where this is the case, where the members of the mystical body of Christ are thus supplying each other's wants, "according to the effectual working in the measure of every part," then the whole body maketh increase of itself, "to the edifying or building up of itself in love." To revert to my figure. Here is an establishment in which all the clerks are quarrelling, hardly speaking to each other, no man knowing what his office is, no co-operation between employer and employed. How can it flourish? It is a house divided against itself. Bankruptcy and ruin must ensue. A divided church, a quarrelsome people, a contentious minister, what must their end be? In the mystical body of Christ, in the house of God, there must be union, communion, love, affection, sympathy, and tenderness. Then all moves on harmoniously, and the whole body grows up into a holy temple of the Lord. Nothing so hinders growth in grace as strife and contention; nothing so fills the soul with bondage; and nothing sooner brings a church to beggary and ruin; an object of grief to those who fear and love God, and of scorn and contempt to the world.

Instead of thus pulling itself down, and scattering itself to the winds, the Church of Christ is to edify itself, that is, to build itself up in love. Not that we can do anything for our own edification or that of others; for we only have that which God gives us, and are only what God makes us. But the body is spoken of here as a living body, and therefore as such builds itself up by the aid of its members. The prayers and supplications, the Christian conversation, the godly example, the liberal aid, the affectionate sympathy, and the varied experience of the different members, all tend to the edifying of the body, and building it up on its most holy faith; and this "in love"; for the more love we have for God's truth, servants, word, and people, the more we manifest a growth

in grace. Love is the cement of the spiritual building, the life-blood of the mystical body. The more we love truth, the more we shall be established in the truth; the more we love the saints of God, the more shall we do for their spiritual welfare, and they for ours; the more we shall bear their burdens and walk with them in tenderness and affection. Thus the mystical body of Christ edifies itself by the exercise of that mutual love and affection of which God is the author. As by strife it pulls itself down, so by love it builds itself up. It is a beautiful sight, though unhappily a rare one, to see the body of Christ thus edifying itself in the exercise of mutual love and affection, and growing up into a holy temple of the Lord.

But, ever bear in mind that the members can only do this as they derive supplies of grace from their exalted Covenant Head. As my body derives supplies out of my natural head, and is maintained in existence by it, so the mystical body of Christ derives all its supplies out of the fulness of its spiritual Head, the Lord Jesus Christ. Every living member feels its dependence on Him—a growing, increasing dependence. "Without Me," says Jesus, "ye can do nothing." "No, nothing!" feels and answers the soul. "Abide in Me, and I in you; as the branch cannot bear fruit except it abide in the vine, no more can ye except ye abide in Me." Our trials and temptations, sorrows and afflictions, wants and woes, all teach us the same lesson. All say, "Look to and hang upon the Lord Jesus." Nor will He disappoint any that truly do so. He watches over every one of His living members by night and by day; He is ever supplying their need, ever waiting to do them good, as He Himself says: "In that day sing ye unto her, a vineyard of red wine. I the Lord do keep it; I will water it every moment; lest any hurt it, I will keep it night and day" (Isa. 27:2, 3). He will take care of you that fear His Name. He will bless you and surround you with His mercy on every side. He will take you through all the snares and

storms of life. He will not suffer a hair of your head to perish. He will keep you as the apple of His eye, and will land you safe in the realms of heavenly bliss. If any of you that love His Name were absent, a member would be absent from His body, and He would be so far a defective Christ, nor could He say to His Father at the last day, "Behold, I and the children which God hath given Me;" "Of them which Thou gavest Me have I lost none." And if any should be present who do not belong to His mystical body, then would there be a member superfluous, and He would be a blemished High Priest. All the election of grace will be there. And when He shall come in the glory of His power, to be glorified in His saints, and to be admired in all them that believe, then will His mystical body be made perfect in eternal bliss and blessedness; and He, the glorious Head of the Church, and they the glorified members, will outshine the sun in his meridian height, and fill heaven with a blaze of eternal glory. Nor will glory alone be their portion, but holiness and happiness and joy inexpressible, where there are rivers of pleasure at God's right hand for evermore. This is reserved for you, ye suffering saints and children of God, for you that fear His Name, and believe in the Son of His love. As in Egypt, "not a hoof shall be left behind." The sleeping dust of His departed saints will be raised, and those who are "alive at His coming shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air, and so shall they ever be with the Lord. Therefore comfort one another with these words." Amen.