

THE HOLY CITY, JERUSALEM (4)

—H. L. Heijkoop

Revelation 21:9-22:5

Now we come to the connection of the Holy City with the earth. It is no longer the earth under Satan's rule, for Satan has been cast into the abyss (20:1-3). Neither is it any longer the reign of the Lord Jesus as we experience it today — the kingdom of heaven in its ambiguous state, as we find it in Matthew 13. The Lord is ever the Almighty to whom everything is subjected, but today He exercises His authority in a hidden, moral way. For now He is the rejected King reigning from heaven, and the kingdom consists only of those who formally acknowledge His right to reign — be it true-heartedly or in hypocrisy.

But *then* every knee will bow before Him, and every tongue will confess that He is Lord. Every morning judgment will be executed over all who have openly rejected His authority. "He that practiceth deceit shall not dwell within My house; he that speaketh falsehoods shall not subsist in My sight. *Every morning* will I destroy all the wicked of the land: to cut off all workers of iniquity from the city of Jehovah" (Ps. 101:7-8). In this way the earth will be full of the knowledge of the Lord (Isa. 12).

As has been said, Satan will be cast into the abyss and will no longer be able to deceive men. The Lord will reign in justice and righteousness; peace and prosperity will reign on earth. The kingdom of the Son of man (the earthly part of the kingdom of heaven in power) will then be present.

We see in Revelation 21:24 the way in which blessing comes to the people on earth: "The nations shall walk by its [the city's] light." They will see in the Assembly God's thoughts, including what their walk ought to be and what blessings will be theirs. We who belong to the Assembly will be channels, through which the blessing of God will come over the earth during the reign of the Son of man.

We see this in a slightly different connection in Luke 19. The rejected Lord gave each of His servants the same amount of money to trade with until His return. The servant who had been so diligent in his business that he had earned ten times that amount received a blessing: "Well [done], thou good bondman; because thou hast been faithful in that which is least, be thou in authority over ten cities." The one who gained five times what he had been given received authority over five cities. In the Millennium, each may share in the Lord's reign over the earth, according to his faithfulness in His service during our time. Reward for what has been done for the Lord on earth will be given on earth during the Millennium — but all that we receive in the house of the Father is grace alone, pure grace!

"The kings of the earth bring their glory to it" (v. 24). Acknowledging that the heavens and the heavenly kingdom are the source of all their blessings, they bring the glory of their dominion. The Lord Jesus is the actual Source of all the good that will be on earth, for it is all the result of His wonderful work on the cross (Col. 1:19-21). But we, the Assembly, have been united with Him; consequently He has made us the channels through which His blessings flow to the earth. The nations will see that blessings come to them through the Assembly, so their rulers will bring their glory to her.

Notice how they do not bring their glory into the city; they cannot enter it, but they bring it to her in recognition of the blessings which come through the glorified Assembly. Already today great blessings come, even over unbelievers, through the Assembly, though unbelievers do not acknowledge this, and many even claim that Christians are a hindrance to prosperity. Then, however, they will acknowledge it!

"And its gates shall not be shut at all by day, for night shall not be there" (v. 25). The night speaks of darkness, which is never of God. "God is light, and in Him is no darkness at all" (1 Jn. 1:5). Darkness speaks of the results of sin. In the heavenly city, however, there will be no darkness, so that there will be an uninterrupted, peaceful exchange through the ever-open gates. For the city is the dwelling of those who reign with Christ over the earth.

It is now night in this world. In John 9:5 the Lord Jesus said, "As long as I am in the world, I am [the] light of the world." But the world rejected Him. When Judas went out to deliver the Lord to His enemies, it was night, according to God's Word (Jn. 13:30). In Psalm 134:1 we find our present place and task in the world, now that it has rejected our Lord, the Light of

the world. "Behold, bless Jehovah, all ye servants of Jehovah, who by night [lit., "in the nights" — i.e., all nights] stand in the house of Jehovah." In the realm of peace there will no longer be moral night in the world.

There does not need to be night in our hearts anymore, either. According to Ephesians 5:8, we "were once darkness, but now light in [the] Lord." And Peter writes in 2 Peter 1:19 that we have the prophetic word, which shines as a lamp in a dark place, "until [the] day dawn and [the] morning star arise in your hearts." This isn't a future thing; if we realize in our hearts who the Lord Jesus is, and what He will soon bring, then the day has already dawned in our hearts. And when we have come to know the glorious truth, that the Lord Jesus will take us to Himself before the darkest hours come over the earth, bringing us into the house of the Father, the Morning Star has risen in our hearts, and there is no more night there.

But in the glory there will be no more night. There will only be the perfect light of eternity. All reminders of sin, all memories of the curse, all that is not in harmony with God who is light and in whom is no darkness at all will have been done away with. There will be only God's light in the Holy City, Jerusalem, and no night at all. On earth there will still be nights (Isa. 60:11) — at least I believe so, for although the Sun of righteousness shall have risen, there will yet be sin (Ps. 101; Isa. 66:24; Ezek. 47:11).

"And they shall bring the glory and the honour of the nations to it" (v. 26). The most glorious things of the earth will be brought. Notice once more that it will not be brought *into* her. The nations will not have access to the Holy City, just as their kings will not. Not just the kings — they who have insight into governmental matters of reigning on earth under the blessed rule of the Lord Jesus — but also the nations themselves will see and be convinced that their blessing, all that they will receive on earth during that time, comes to them through the glorified Assembly. She will be the channel through which the Lord Jesus will bless the earth and exercise His rule over it.

"And nothing common, nor that maketh an abomination and a lie, shall at all enter into it; but those only who [are] written in the book of life of the Lamb (v. 27). Nothing that is not in agreement with the holiness of God, nothing that is the least bit defiled, and not a single sin in whatever form will be admitted to the Holy City. The smallest uncleanness cannot exist in the light of divine glory. Only those who have been written in the book of the Lamb may enter. Wouldn't this include the glorified believers from before the cross, as well as those believers who will be martyred after the rapture? Wouldn't they too enter the city to enjoy the blessings which are characteristic of it? According to Revelation 13:8, the believers that come out of the Great Tribulation are also written in the book of life of the Lamb that was slain, "*from the foundation of the world.*" This is in contrast with us, who are chosen from before the foundation of the world (Eph. 1:4). They are, just as the believers out of the Old Testament, glorified when the first resurrection takes place. Revelation 20:4 says that they will live and reign with the Christ for a thousand years, and we have learned from 21:9-10 that the city is the Assembly. Although the Old Testament believers and they who have died after the rapture of the Assembly will not belong to those who form the city, it is reasonable to think that they will nevertheless be present as glorified saints in the city. They will see the glory of the Assembly, and enjoy all the blessings found in the city.

"And He showed me a river of water of life, bright as crystal, going out of the throne of God and of the Lamb" (22:1). In this and the following verses we see what role the heavenly Jerusalem will play in connection with the earth during the Millennium. We will be the channel through which the blessings flow to the earth, for the throne of God and the Lamb, and the river of the water of life, are in the city. There will be a river of living water on earth as well, having its origin at the altar in God's temple in the earthly Jerusalem (Ezek. 47). It will flow out and heal the Dead Sea. On the river's banks shall grow the tree of life; its fruit shall be for food, and its leaves for medicine.

But in Revelation 22 we have a "river of the water of life" which does not proceed from the earthly, but from the heavenly Jerusalem, from the throne of God and the Lamb, which shall be in the midst of the glorified Assembly. Nor do we read here that the river flows out of the city; all the refreshing blessings are for the city itself. A river of water of life signifies a fullness of life and blessing (Ps. 36:8-11), and these blessings will have their effect in the Assembly's service on earth. It reminds us of the Garden of Eden (Gen. 2:9-14). There the river's prime purpose was to water the Garden, but then the blessing flowed out in all directions.

"In the midst of its street, and of the river, on this side and on that side, [the] tree of life, producing twelve fruits, in each month yielding its fruit; and the leaves of the tree for healing of the nations" (v. 2). The fruits are for us, every month, throughout the whole year. There are twelve, signifying perfect administration in government. We know who the tree of life is: the Lord Jesus, the Source of eternal life, the Son of the living God, from whom issues all life. All the fruits of that life will be for those who belong to the city. Here the perfection in government and rule is accentuated. It speaks of the ability we will receive to rule with the Lord Jesus over the earth.

But the leaves of the tree were for healing of the nations. Through the leaves, which reach to the earth through the heavenly Jerusalem, healing will come to the nations. There will be healing of those who have gone through the

judgments; of those who have suffered under the first beast of Revelation 13 (the last Roman Emperor) or the second (the antichrist — the false King of the Jews); and of all wounds which have been or still will be inflicted.

"And no curse shall be any more; and the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it" (v. 3). The serpent, through whom sin entered man's world, was cursed by God, as was the ground (Gen. 3:14, 17). And when Cain completed the work of the serpent, he was cursed as well (Gen. 4:11). Then too, "As many as are on the principle of works of law are under curse" (Gal. 3:10). But in the heavenly Jerusalem, there is no curse with its miserable consequences (or, for that matter in the earthly Jerusalem and the land of Israel, and possibly the entire earth — Zech. 14:11 and Mal. 4:6, according to some translations).

"And His servants shall serve Him, and they shall see His face; and His name [is] on their foreheads" (vv. 3-4). It is remarkable that the singular pronoun "His" is used here, though it refers to God and the Lamb. This is similar to Genesis 1:1, where the unity of God is presented in the singular form of the verb "created," though the word for "God" in Hebrew is there a multiple form, signifying three or more. And in this last chapter of the Bible, the unity of God and the Lamb is proclaimed once more.

We will serve God eternally. The purpose of creation will then be fulfilled. The Lord created us for Himself, that we might serve Him. Thus every man will only be completely satisfied when he serves Him completely, for in doing so, all his capacities can be used for the purpose for which they were given. That will be our lot in eternity. We may fulfill this purpose now, but in weakness, and with diminishing fervour. In that day it will be out of pure love, without fatigue and the opposition of our evil flesh.

Just think... we will see His face! It thrills us every time we read 1 John 3:2: "For we shall see Him as He is"! And this will have the perfect result — as it is now to some degree — described in 2 Corinthians 3:18: "But we all, looking on the glory of the Lord, with unveiled face, are transformed according to the same image from glory to glory, even as by [the] Lord [the] Spirit." His name will be upon our foreheads! All our features will reveal His moral glory!

"And night shall not be any more, and no need of a lamp, and light of [the] sun; for [the] Lord God shall shine upon them" (v. 5). This then is the position of the Assembly in the Millennium, in connection with the Kingdom of the heavens. She will be the channel of the blessings which the Lord will distribute in that kingdom. That kingdom will encompass not only the entire earth but the whole universe!

On earth, the earthly city, Jerusalem, will be the channel of blessing. She will be the earthly centre of the whole world, the place from which the whole world will be governed. But the earthly Jerusalem will receive its blessing from the heavenly Jerusalem, for there is the throne of God and the Lamb. From there too comes the blessing which will then in turn flow from the earthly Jerusalem over the entire world. Thus will all people on earth share in the wonderful blessings which have been described here. For the Man Christ Jesus, who is also the Eternal God, will then, in His reign and in His blessings, reveal the glory of God.

"And they will reign to the ages of ages." Although we know from 1 Corinthians 15:21-28 that the Lord will give up the kingdom at the end of the Millennium to God the Father, so that God may be all and in all, we see here nevertheless that we will rule eternally. We have been united with the Lord Jesus. And although the highest dominion will then be in the hands of the triune God — Father, Son, and Holy Spirit — and no longer in the hands of the *Man* Christ Jesus, yet it seems evident that we will reign with Him eternally, even if it be in a different form. I do not know of another Scripture where this is covered in more detail; the special place the Assembly will have, even in eternity, is clearly expressed in the first verses of Revelation 21. When we are on the new earth, the Assembly will still be God's house, but called the "tent" or "tabernacle of God." This is a Scriptural expression for something temporal. This would signify that we will not dwell permanently on the earth. And this is because our future, permanent dwelling is the eternal House of the Father.

The End

OUTLINES FOR BIBLE TEACHING (10)

19. JOSEPH'S BROTHERS — Genesis 42, 43

Outline

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| 1. The journey to Egypt | Gen. 42:1-17 |
| 2. Fear and remorse | Gen. 42:18-25 |
| 3. The return home | Gen. 42:26-38 |
| 4. The second journey | Gen. 43:1-15 |
| 5. The kind reception by Joseph | Gen. 43:16-34 |

Explanation

1. By means of the famine God reestablished the connection between Joseph and the house of Jacob.
2. The brothers received a righteous chastening so they might realize their guilt. Joseph knew their attitude had changed, by their confession of guilt and their love for each other. He asked them to bring Benjamin, so that he might see what they would do.
3. On the way home they had to acknowledge that God was dealing with them by means of the money found in one of the bags. Jacob's grief for Joseph was rekindled by Simeon's arrest and Joseph's demand that Benjamin be brought to Egypt.
4. At first Jacob refused to send Benjamin, but finally placed himself entirely in God's hands, trusting His mercies and help. Judah's self-sacrifice for Benjamin was beautiful.
5. Joseph showed partiality to Benjamin to test his brothers.

Lesson

The sorrowing brothers are a type of the Jews during the coming Great Tribulation, when the judgments will come over the remnant of Israel (Zech. 12:10-14; Isa. 1:27; 4:3-4; cf. Mt. 24). Common distress knit the brothers' hearts together (Ps. 133:1). This will also be so for Israel (Isa. 11:12-13).

Jacob's sorrow about his children caused him to remember his evil ways and the sorrow he had caused his parents (Num. 32:23).

Joseph burned with love for his guilt-laden brothers, and didn't think of revenge (Rom. 12:14). God's government is a serious matter and it always repays evil, sometimes many years later. To love God when one is young is a great blessing.

20. JOSEPH MAKES HIMSELF KNOWN — Genesis 44, 45:1-24

Outline

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| 1. The testing of the brothers | Gen. 44:1-17 |
| 2. Judah's intercession for Benjamin | Gen. 44:18-34 |
| 3. Joseph makes himself known | Gen. 45:1-24 |

Explanation

1. Joseph prepared the final test. To deepen the brothers' repentance, and to find out if they would abandon their brother, he threatened to keep Benjamin in Egypt (Gen. 42:21-22). Their rending of their garments showed how great their sorrow was.

2. Judah's words revealed in a touching way the faithful devotion to their brother and love for their father.

3. Joseph revealed himself to them and poured his heart out; he drew their attention away from their guilt to the wonderful ways of God (Rom. 11:33). The kiss sealed the reconciliation, and they spoke to Joseph with confidence (1 Pet. 3:9).

Lesson

Just as Joseph revealed himself to his brothers, so the Lord Jesus will one day reveal Himself to Israel after her conversion (Isa. 25:9). So today He reveals Himself to everyone who repents of his sins and forsakes his former ways (Prov. 28:13; Jn. 6:37).

To be cont'd

TO BE CHRISTIAN, EVERY DAY (5)

—K. Rouw

Deuteronomy 22:1-12

Sowing and Harvesting

9. "Thou shalt not sow thy vineyard with [seed of] two sorts, lest the whole of thy seed which thou hast sown, and the produce of thy vineyard, be forfeited" ("defiled" — KJV).

Isn't it remarkable that the verse dealing with parapets around a flat roof was so clearly applicable to us in a literal sense, whereas this verse is obviously not? At least I wouldn't suspect that you had any scruples against sowing two kinds of seed in your garden. I think it is tremendous that God accredits us with such spiritual understanding that we, guided by the Holy Spirit, should be able to discern which portion of Scripture has in addition to its spiritual application a literal one, and which has not. Meanwhile, we shouldn't forget that both instructions "have been written for our admonition" (1 Cor. 10:11).

But maybe you don't have a vineyard; you have a field. Leviticus 19:19 says the same thing about fields.

God had a vineyard (Isa. 5). He craved for the enjoyment of it. He had done everything possible to His vineyard. His vineyard was an entire nation. Your vineyard might consist of a wife and children, a youth club or classroom, or maybe it has a much larger scope. It doesn't matter: here we are warned against the possible defilement of its entire yield. Just imagine, all our labour could be in vain, it could be that we have worked for Satan and corruption. What a horrible thought!

Or, following the NEW TRANSLATION, the yield could be seen as forfeited to the sanctuary, given up for God Himself to dispose of. Since the result had nothing to do with your work, you will not receive any wages for it. If we work in a wrong manner, God remains free and able to act sovereignly; at times He does so in incomprehensible, undeserved, and elective grace — Romans 9 is full of this. But that is God's side of the matter.

It is our responsibility not to use two kinds of seed. It is clear that the Bible knows only two kinds of spiritual seed: good seed and bad seed (Mt. 13; 1 Pet. 1). The good seed is the Word of God, and ultimately Christ Himself is the Sower, sowing the good seed; but in His grace He wants to use us to do the sowing as His servants. We are permitted to be the distributors of the glad tidings, the Word of God; we may speak of His Person and His thoughts. We may present Him as He is, "the Way, the Truth, and the Life," to small and great, to unbelievers and believers. We may speak of His full glory: His holiness, His love, His sufferings, His power and resurrection, the judgment that has been given Him, His present sanctification in holy glory, and His marvelous future. To present all these things is sowing the good seed.

But the enemy is ever present; during the night in which we live, wherever he can he sows (too often and too much) the bad seed. This enemy has his servants: movie theatres, rock bands, all kinds of them. But these are really not the most dangerous ones; they are obvious enough. What is so serious is that the enemy loves to use those of us who sow the good seed. That is an ideal arrangement for him; this is what our verse speaks of. "Go ahead, sow the good seed," says the enemy, "so long as it is mixed from time to time with my bad seed." It happens more often than we think!

A Christian teacher with conviction, a true believer, loved to bring the gospel each time he told Bible stories. But during the break he taught some of the boys to play cards. Perhaps he was not aware of the connection between the origin of those cards and demonic powers, but he was still sowing two kinds of seed.

More frequently, however, things are more subtle. A Christian family may be reading the Bible and Bible-story books, and the children may go to Sunday school; yet even in such a family there is bad seed sown right in the living room into the hearts of the children. Father and mother may see to it that the worst of things are kept outside the door; nevertheless, worldliness frequently enters with seemingly innocent things.

To sow one kind of seed is to maintain separation and consecration. We find the two kinds of seed in Galatians 6:8. One can sow to the Spirit, and one can sow to the flesh; frequently we do both. We speak a good word, we are a witness, and then suddenly something comes along that renders our testimony null and void. It might be some display of "me": "And then I said... and then I did..." Or it might be a joke or an exaggerated story we tell. Isn't everything we say or do a grain of seed that will bring its own harvest?

In Galatians 6:7-10, the Apostle actually goes a step further, for he starts with: "Be not deceived: God is not mocked." We will reap our own harvest and thus as to our responsibility, we will cause our own corruption if we continue to work in the flesh. We will reap eternal life from the Spirit, however, if we will not lose heart in doing good.

The Epistle to the Galatians speaks mainly of two kinds of preaching. Even in preaching we can sow two kinds of seed, a thing that happens all too often. The gospel is preached (the good seed), and at the same time the hearers are told to keep the law "out of thankfulness." This puts the hearers under the law, and therefore under the curse. Isn't it sowing to the flesh when we seek to improve ourselves to a religious acceptability before God? The Galatians sought to do so by returning to the keeping of the law. It is nothing but two kinds of seed in the vineyard: insecurity of faith, with doubt and darkness as its fruits.

Another way of mixing up sowing to the flesh with sowing to the Spirit is prompted by the desire to improve not the individual as we have just considered, but the world. Frequently, efforts on the material and cultural level to build a better, more livable world through politics — "Christian politics," to be sure are mixed with the glorious, pure gospel. Nevertheless, it is the sowing of two kinds of seed, no doubt with the best intentions, but ultimately one is labouring on the same level as the world, bogged down in earthly "causes." This kind of thing is demonstrated in the remarks of a certain professor of theology who said, "In the final analysis, socialism has the same goals as Christianity; as Christians we have an obligation to remain at least a step ahead of them."

Such mixing of seed has smothered the spiritual growth of many Christians. Even if they know the rich gospel of forgiveness of sin (not a superficial one by a God who is only Love, but through the blood of the cross), they are largely ignorant of the richer message of the high position Christ has given to us who believe during the day of grace. Few of them have the certainty of a cleansed conscience, or know anything of entering into the holiest, bringing spiritual sacrifices, and crying "Abba, Father" — the significance of sonship. Even more important, there is precious little knowledge of the glory of the Person of Christ. The distinction between the old covenant with its earthly promises on the one hand, and the heavenly position of the Bride connected with her glorified Lord in heaven on the other remains unappreciated. Many work for a future on earth because they no longer see the glorious future of the Lord Jesus.

Then there are others who, in their confusion, connect the heavenly Bride with the Lord's coming as Messiah for the Jewish nation — to whom He demonstrated the blessings of the future *earthly* kingdom of peace, by means of healings and miracles. Today we are to be here as strangers, united with a rejected Saviour.

This confusion leads to the strange notion that we must make the earth more livable, to the idea that the powers of the age to come belong to the present time, and to a horizontal Christianity with a social gospel.

We should realize how through all this the true Biblical message for this time is obscured. It results from the sowing of two kinds of seed. This has spoiled much in God's vineyard, damaging His great work on earth. No matter whether it is small or large in scale, it remains just as important. It can ruin our families or make our lives fruitless. What a serious warning the Lord has incorporated in these few words!

To be cont'd

VERILY, VERILY (10)

—J. van Dijk

In this case the words "Verily, verily," are perhaps not as significant for us as they were for the disciples. The Lord spoke them just before His suffering and they related to this great and imminent event.

"Verily, verily, I say to you, that ye shall weep and lament, ye, but the world shall rejoice; and ye will be grieved, but your grief shall be turned to joy."

These words must not have sounded very encouraging to the disciples, yet the Lord spoke them full of love for His own. Knowing what was near and realizing that the disciples would grieve beyond compare because they wouldn't understand what was taking place, the Lord assured them that it was all in God's plan, that He knew what was about to happen, and that the end would be joyful for the disciples. The realization of this must have given them a measure of comfort in their sadness when it engulfed them just a few hours later. That they didn't grasp the full significance of the Lord's remark, just as they had failed to do so often, is evident from Luke 24. But even then there shone a glimmer of hope through their sorrow: "It is now, today, the third day since these things took place" (v. 21). It is as if there is some hope that, perhaps, with time things may change.

The Lord knew that His disciples, poor as they were in expressing it, and little as they realized the fullness of His Person, loved Him dearly. He knew they would weep and lament. And He stressed it by emphatically telling them that they in particular would do so. He brought out the contrast between them and the world. While they wept, the world would rejoice. What a contrast! How would they feel that difference in a little while. It would not be long and they would be in their homes with doors and windows locked, in fear of intruders. They knew they were different. No one did need to tell them then that they were not of this world, the contrast was all too evident.

The Lord then added the words that their grief would be turned to joy. In John 20:20 we read how this became a reality: "The disciples rejoiced therefore, having seen the Lord." From that time on they could and should be joyful. Paul tells us to rejoice in the Lord; we have good reason to do so for "We *do* know that all things work together for good to those who love God" (Rom. 8:28). We are even admonished to rejoice if we fall into various temptations (Jas. 1:2). And as we share in the sufferings of Christ, we should rejoice for the Spirit of glory and the Spirit of God rests upon us (1 Pet. 4:13, 14). Yes, we should rejoice in the Lord always (Phil. 4:4). And as if Paul anticipated a "Yes, but..." from us, he adds, "And again I will say, Rejoice."

The time of weeping for the disciples did not last long, three days (as the Jews count them) to be exact. Then they saw their Lord and rejoiced. From then on there was, at least outwardly, no longer that particular distinction between the world and the Christian. Both are rejoicing! Only by taking a closer look can one observe that the one rejoices because the Lord is dead, the other because the Lord is alive. Although the reason for the joy is so distinct, outwardly there is no longer a difference. Is this one of the reasons why many Christians lose sight of the great distinction between them and those who belong to this world? Of course, we cannot answer that for each other, but it might not be bad if we all took a little time to reflect on that question.

The second time the words "Verily, verily" occur in John 16, they are of an entirely different nature. They contain a blessed promise, a rather astounding one at that. Just imagine:

"In that day ye shall demand nothing of Me: verily, verily, I say to you, Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in My name, He will give you." If this is not a promise that warms our heart, what will? The depth of it comes to us when we consider such a thing in daily life. Who of us would say to another, "Look, you just ask my father in my name for anything you want and he will give it to you." I am sure that has not happened too often throughout the ages. And then to think that the One who speaks these words is the Son of God and the father is God the Father. If we could only read them as if we read them for the first time, no doubt they would speak much fresher to us. They tell a lot about our relationship to our Saviour: what a trust He places in us that we will not ask things that are at cross-purposes to His cause!

It may be helpful to look at these words as if they have been spoken to us by a good friend. Would we immediately ask for all kinds of things of which we would not be sure that our friend would ask for them himself? Wouldn't we take these words as a token of deepest friendship, one that we would not like to mar at any cost? Before requesting anything, - we would, I believe, make sure that we were not going out of bounds. We would, no doubt, take time to find out what our good friend's will and wishes were, before we would avail ourselves of such a great privilege.

So, I believe, it should be with us in our relationship with our Lord. He gave us His Word which we may read and contemplate and through which, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, may learn to know His will. Then, having been as it were in His presence, we may approach and ask our God and Father for those things we have need of. If we come in this way, we need not fear, God is true to His promises and He will do it. That is good, but serious at the same time, for God's Word tells us that we don't know what we should pray for (Rom. 8:26), for not everything is fitting. And what if we pray

amiss? The Spirit prays with us and knows what we really long to ask, and so He intercedes for us. That is a precious safeguard, for which we do well to give thanks, for we sure need it!

Perhaps there are shortcomings with us that cause God in His love to withhold something we asked of Him. This, however, does not change the fact that the Lord in giving this promise showed how much He loves us and how much we mean to Him, for such promises one would only give to those who are as near as the members of our immediate family. And that is just it: we are now the children of God.

John, who recorded these words, wrote later of this great privilege. In his first epistle (ch. 5:14) he said: "And this is the boldness which we have towards Him, that if we ask Him anything according to His will He hears us. And if we know that He hears us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions which we have asked of Him." What a Lord, what a privilege! Simple people like us are allowed to ask anything of God and may know that we will receive that which we requested! It is but one of the many Christian blessings, but what a privilege it is!

To be cont'd

STUDY CORNER (9)

Here we are again after one month absence. Although the actual study corner is closed, we promised we would tell you from which publication the questions were taken. The booklet is:

"A Quiz on the Assembly," by Fred W. C. Wurst. This booklet was published in 1945 by Loizeau Brothers of New York. They kindly gave us permission to use it in our magazine.

Before we started our corner we had sought to ascertain that this booklet was no longer in print and had been out of print for some time, for we did not like to give some who might recognize the questions an unfair advantage over others. Imagine our surprise when half-way through our studies we noticed that another publisher had republished the booklet. We just trust that all have used Christian fairness in seeking to answer the questions; even in matters like these, we can practice good and refrain from evil.

Now that we have fulfilled our promise to Loizeau Brothers, we like to thank them for their permission and with that close the Study Corner for good. May the Lord bless you all. ~~All who have answered the questions will hear from us directly, just have patience while we check out the results.~~

John van Dijk

UNFOLDINGS OF GLORY

O Lord! Thy glory we behold,
Though not with mortal eyes:
That glory, on the Father's throne,
No human sight descries!

But though the world can see no more
Him it cast out with scorn,
The eye of fresh-born faith can soar
Above, where He is gone.

'Tis not for human eye to see,
Nor human ear to hear,
Nor heart conceive what it may be,
Or bring the prospect near;

But God, in love has freely given
His Spirit, who reveals
All He's prepared, for those in heaven

Whom here on earth He seals.

'Tis thence, now Christ is gone on high,
Redemption's work complete,
The Spirit brings His glory nigh,
To those who for Him wait.

Blest gift! As sons we look above,
And see the Saviour there;
And, fruit of God's now well-known love,
We shall His glory share!

God has been glorified in Man;
Man sits at God's right hand;
Obedient in the race He ran,
Can now all power command!

In lowliness on earth, as Son,
The Father He made known;
And now, in heaven, His work all done,
He sits upon the throne!

And we our great Forerunner see,
In His own glory there;
Yet not ashamed — with such as we,
As first born all to share.

For we, as sons, through grace are own'd,
And "Abba, Father" cry;
Heirs too, so rich did grace abound,
Joint-heirs with Him on high!

The Father's love, the source of all,
Sweeter than all it gives,
Shines on us now without recall
And lasts while Jesus lives.

The new creation's stainless joy
Gleams through the present gloom,
That world of bliss without alloy,
The saints' eternal home!

J. N. Darby

THOUGHTS ON KINGDOMS

Daniel 2:44. — And in the days of these kings shall the God of the heavens set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed; and the sovereignty thereof shall not be left to another people: it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, but itself shall stand forever.

Daniel 7:13-14. — I saw in the night visions, and behold there came with the clouds of heaven [One] like a son of man, and He came up even to the Ancient of days, and they brought Him near before Him. And there was given Him dominion and glory, and a kingdom, that all peoples, nations and languages should serve Him: His dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and His kingdom [that] which shall not be destroyed.

Acts 1:9, 11. — And a cloud received Him out of their sight. This Jesus who has been taken up from you into heaven, shall thus come in the manner in which ye have beheld Him going into heaven.

Revelation 1:7. — Behold, He comes with the clouds, and every eye shall see Him.

Revelation 19:6, 11, 16. — Hallelujah, for the Lord our God the Almighty has taken to Himself kingly power. And I saw the heaven opened, and behold, a white horse, and One sitting on it, [called] Faithful and True, and He judges and makes war in righteousness. and He has upon His garment, and upon His thigh, a name written, King of kings, and Lord of Lords.

Revelation 20:4, 7,10, 11, 12, 14. — And I saw thrones... and they lived and reigned with the Christ a thousand years. And when the thousand years have been completed, Satan shall be loosed from his prison... and the devil... was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone. And I saw a great white throne... and the dead were judged... and death and hades were cast into the lake of fire.

1 Corinthians 15:24. — Then the end, when He gives up the kingdom to Him [who is] God and Father; when He shall have annulled all rule and all authority and power. For He must reign until He put all enemies under His feet. [The] last enemy [that] is annulled [is] death. For He has put all things in subjection under His feet... then the Son also Himself shall be placed in subjection to Him who put all things in subjection to Him, that God might be all in all.