

"A Song of My Beloved"

(No. 3185)

A SERMON PUBLISHED ON THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 17, 1910.

DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,

AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

"My Beloved is mine, and I am His: He feeds among the lilies. Until the day breaks and the shadows flee away, turn, my Beloved, and be You like a roe or a young hart upon the mountains of Bether." Song of Solomon 2:16,17.

[Other Sermons by Mr. Spurgeon, upon parts of the same passage, are #1190, Volume 20—A SONG AMONG THE LILIES; #2442, Volume 41—"MY BELOVED IS MINE" and #2477, Volume 42—DARKNESS BEFORE THE DAWN.]

IT has been well said that if there is a happy verse in the Bible, it is this one—"My Beloved is mine, and I am His: He feeds among the lilies." So peaceful, so full of assurance, so bursting with happiness and contentment is it, that it might well have been written by the same hand which penned the 23rd Psalm—"The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want. He makes me to lie down in green pastures: He leads me beside the still waters." The verse savors of Him who, just before He went to Gethsemane, said to His disciples, "Peace I leave with you, My peace I give unto you: not as the world gives, give I unto you...In the world you shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world." Let us ring the silver bell of this verse again, for its notes are exquisitely sweet! "My Beloved is mine, and I am His: He feeds among the lilies."

Yet there is a shadow in the latter part of the text. The prospect is exceedingly fair and lovely—earth cannot show its superior—but it is not entirely a sunlit landscape! There is a cloud in the sky which casts a shadow over the scene. It does not dim it—everything is clear and stands out sharply and brightly—"My Beloved is mine, and I am His." That is clear enough, yet I say again that it is not altogether sunlight—there are shadows—"Until the day breaks and the shadows flee away." There is also a mention of the "mountains of Bether"—the mountains of division—and to have anything like division is bitterness. I see here a paschal lamb, but I see bitter herbs with it. I see the lily, but I think I see it still among the thorns. I see the fair and lovely landscape of assured confidence, but a shadow, just a slight shadow, takes away some of its glory. And he who sees it has to still look for something yet beyond—"till the day breaks and the shadows flee away."

The text seems to me to indicate just this state of mind. Perhaps some of you may at this time exemplify it. You do not doubt your salvation—you know that Christ is yours. You are certain of that, albeit you may not be at present enjoying the light of your Savior's Countenance. You know that He is yours, but you are not feeding upon that precious fact. You realize your vital interest in Christ, so much so that you have no shadow of a doubt

that you are His and He is yours—but still, His left hand is not under your head, nor does His right hand embrace you. A shade of sadness is cast over your heart, possibly by affliction, certainly by the temporary absence of your Lord. So even while exclaiming, "My Beloved is mine, and I am His," you are forced to fall on your knees and pray, "Until the day breaks and the shadows flee away, turn, my Beloved, and be You like a roe or a young hart upon the mountains of division."

We may occupy the time profitably if God the Holy Spirit shall enable us in speaking upon these matters. We have here, first, a soul enjoying personal interest in the Lord Jesus Christ or, personal interest assured. We have, next, a soul taking the deepest interest in Christ and longing to know where He is, the deepest interest evinced. And then we have a soul anxiously desiring present communion with Christ or, visible fellowship, conscious communion sought after.

I. We have here, first, PERSONAL INTEREST IN THE LORD JESUS CHRIST ASSURED.

I do not mean to try to preach tonight. I should like my text to preach. And the way in which I should like it to preach would be to see how far we can get hold of it. How we can take it word by word and drink it in! Come to each

word as to a well and sit down on the brink and drink a refreshing draught! Come to each word as to a palm tree and eat of the fruit thereof!

The text begins with the words, "my Beloved." Come, Soul, can you venture to call Christ your Beloved? Certainly He should be beloved by you, for what has He not done for you? Favors rich and rare have been the gifts of His hands— gifts purchased by His own most precious blood! If you do not love Him, my Heart, you are a most ungrateful thing, indeed! You are deceitful, rotten, loathsome above all things and desperately wicked, O my Heart, if Jesus, being your Savior, you do not love Him! He ought to be loved by the most of you here, for you profess to have been redeemed by His blood and adopted into the family of God through Him. You professed, when you were baptized, to be dead with Him— and when you come to this Communion Table, tonight, you will profess that He is your meat and your drink, your life, your soul's stay and comfort! So, if you do not love Him, what shall I say to you? I will let you say it to yourselves—

"A very wretch, Lord! I should prove,

Had I no love for Thee—

Rather than not my Savior love,

Oh may I cease to be!"

"My Beloved." He ought to be so and He has been so. There was a time when you and I did not love Him, but that time is over. We recollect the happy moment when first, by faith, we saw His face and heard Him say, "I have loved you with an everlasting love." Oh, the happiness of the day of conversion! You have not forgotten it. How alive and zealous

some of you were then! In those first months when you were brought into the house of mercy and were washed and clothed, and had all your needs supplied out of the fullness that is treasured up in Christ Jesus, you did, indeed, love Him! You were not hypocrites, were you? And you used to sing with such force of voice as well as of heart—

"Jesus, I love Your charming name,

"Tis music to my ear—

Gladly would I sound it out so loud

That earth and Heaven should hear!" Yes, we did love Him, but we cannot stop at that—we do love Him! With all our faults, imperfections and frailties, the Lord, who knows all things, knows that we do love Him. Sometimes, Brothers and Sisters, it is not easy to know whether we love Christ, or not. I have heard many remarks about the hymn containing that line—

"Do I love the Lord, or no?"

but I believe that every honest Christian sometimes asks that question and I think one good way of getting it answered is to go and hear a faithful minister. Last Sabbath morning, I sat and listened to a very simple-minded preacher in a Wes-leyan Chapel. He was a most unsound Wesleyan, but a thoroughly sound Calvinistic Brother. And when he began to preach about the love of Jesus Christ, the tears streamed down my cheeks. I could not help letting them fall upon the sanded floor as I sat there—and I thought to myself, "Well, now, I do love the Savior." I had thought that perhaps I did not, but when I heard of Him and the preacher began to play upon my heartstrings, the music came! When I did but have Christ set before me, that woke up my soul if, indeed, it had been asleep before. When I heard of Him, though only in broken accents, I could not but feel that I did love Him and love Him better than life itself! I trust that it is true of many here that Christ is our "Beloved."

But the text says, not only, "Beloved," but, "my Beloved is mine," as if the spouse took Him all to herself. It is the nature of love, you know, to monopolize. There is a remarkable passage in the third chapter of the prophecy of Hosea, which I need not quote except in outline, where the Prophet is bid to take one who had been unclean and unchaste, and to say to her, "You shall be for me, so will I also be for you." This was meant to be typical of what Christ does unto His Church. Our love goes gadding abroad unto 20 objects until Christ comes! And then He says, "You silly thing, now you shall fly abroad no more. Come, you dove, I will give you a new heart and my wounds shall be your dovecot, and you shall never wander away again. I will be altogether yours and you shall be altogether Mine—there shall be a monopoly between us. I will be married to you and you shall be married to Me. There shall be communion between us. I will be yours, you wandering sinner, as your Husband, and you shall be Mine."

Every heart that has been subdued by Sovereign Grace takes Jesus Christ to be the chief Object of its love. We love our children, we love all our dear ones—God forbid that we

should ever fail to love them—but, over and above them all, we must love our Lord. There is not one among us, I think, who would make it a matter of question which we would

sooner part with—it would be a melancholy experience to have to follow the partner of one's bosom to the grave—but if it were a choice between wife and Savior, we could not deliberate for a moment! And as for the children of our love, whom we hope to see springing up to manhood and womanhood, it would be a sorry blow to us to have them laid low, but it would not take us a second to decide whether we should lose our Isaacs or lose our Jesus! No, we should not feel that they were lost if God took them from us, but we could not afford to think for a single instant of losing Him who is our everlasting All-in-All. The Christian, then, makes Christ his Beloved beyond all besides! Let other people love what they will, but as for him, he loves his Savior! He stands at the foot of the Cross and says, "This once-ac-cursed tree is now the blessed bulwark of my confidence." He looks up to the Savior and He says, "Many see no beauty in Him that they should desire Him, but to me He is the chief among ten thousand, and the altogether lovely." Let the scholar take his classics, let the warrior take his weapons of war, let the lover take his tender words and his amatory lyrics, but as for the Christian, he takes the Savior! He takes the Lord Jesus to be to his Alpha and Omega, the beginning, the end, the midst, the All-in-All—and in Him he finds his soul's solace!

Some people have thought that there is a tautology in the text when it says, "My Beloved is mine." Why, of course, if He is my Beloved, He is mine—what need is there to say that? Well, those who are acquainted with the Christian's experience know that all Believers are subject to many doubts and fears, and that they feel that they cannot make their assurance too sure, so they like to double their expressions of assurance when they can, so each of them says, "My Beloved is mine." There is no tautology—the speaker is only giving two strokes of the hammer to drive the nail home! It is put so that there can be no mistake about it, so that the spouse means what she is saying, and intends others to also understand it! "My Beloved is mine."

But I think it may mean more than that because we may love a thing, and yet it may not be our own. A man may call money his Beloved, yet he may never get it. He may pursue it, but not be able to reach it. The lover of learning may court the love he covets in all the academies of the world, yet he may not be able to win the attainment of his desires. Men may love, and on their dying beds may have to confess that their Beloved is not theirs—but every Christian has that upon which his heart is set—h! has Christ! He loves Him and possesses Him, too.

Besides, dear Friends, you know that there is a time when men are not able to say that their Beloved is theirs. He who has been most wealthy or most wise can take neither his wealth nor his wisdom with him to the tomb. And when the sinner who died and was buried, wakes up in another world, Croesus will be as poor as Lazarus—and the wisest man without

Christ will find himself devoid of all wisdom when he wakes up in the day of Resurrection! They may stretch out their hands, but they will only clutch emptiness and have to cry, "Our Beloved is not ours!" But when we shall wake up in the image of Christ and shall see Him—whether we shall fall asleep or whether we shall be changed, in either case we shall be present with Him—then shall each Believer say, "Yes, He is mine, still mine! I have Him, truly have Him! 'My Beloved is mine.'" I am inclined to think that if a man can truly say this, he can say the grandest thing that ever man said, "My Beloved is mine." "Look," says the rich man, "do you see far away beyond those stately oaks, yonder? Do you see as far as that church spire? Well, as far as you can see, that is all mine!" "Ah," says Death, as he lays his bony hand upon the man, "Six feet of earth, that is yours." "Look," says the scholar, as he points to the volumes on his shelves, "I have searched through all these and all the learning that is there is mine." "Ah," says Death, again, as he smites him with his cold hand, "who can tell the difference between the skull of the learned and the skull of the ignorant when the worm has emptied them both?" But the Christian, when he can point upwards and say, "I love my Savior," has a possession which is surely his forever! Death may come, and will come, even to him, but all that Death can do is open the door to admit the Christian into still fuller enjoyment of that which was already his. "My Beloved is mine." So although I may have but little, I will be satisfied with it! And though I may be so poor that the world will pass me by and never notice me, yet I will live quite content in the most humble possible obscurity because, "my Beloved is mine," and He is more than all the world to me! "Whom have I in Heaven but You? And there is none upon earth that I desire beside You."

Now I want to stop and see whether we have really got as far as this. How many of us have said, "My Beloved is mine"? I am afraid there may be some poor Christian here who says, "Ah, I cannot say that." Now, my dear Hearer, I will ask you a question—Do you cling to Christ? Is He your only hope? If so, then He is yours! When the tide goes down, have you ever seen the limpets clinging to the rocks, or holding fast, perhaps, to the pier? Now, is that what your faith does with Christ? Do you cling to Him? Is He all your trust? Do you rest on Him? Well then, if you do, you do not need any other mark or sign—that one is quite enough—if you are clinging to Christ, then Christ is yours! She who did but touch the hem of His garment received the virtue which came out of Him. If you can cling to Him and, putting away every other confidence and renouncing all other trust, can say, "Yes, if I perish, I will cling to Christ alone," then do not let a single doubt come in to take away the comfort of your soul, for your Beloved is yours!

Or perhaps, to put it another way, I may ask you—Do you love Jesus? Does His name wake up the echoes of your heart? See the little child in its mother's arms—you want to take it for a little while, but no, it will not come away from its mother. And if you still want to take it, it puts its little arms around its mother's neck and clings there. You could pull it away, perhaps, but you have not the heart to do so. It clings to its mother and that is the

evidence to you that she is its mother. Do you cling to Christ in that way? And though you feel that the devil would pull you away from Christ if he could, do you still cling to Him as best you can? Do you remember what John Bunyan said about the prisoner whom Mr. Greatheart rescued from Giant Slay-Good's clutches? Mr. Feeble-Mind said, "When he had got me into his den, since I went not with him willingly, I believed I would come out alive again." Is that the case with you? Are you willing to have Christ if you can have Him? Are you unwilling to give Him up? Then you shall never give Him up! He is yours! Do not think that Christ needs a high degree of faith to establish a union between Himself and a sinner, for a grain of mustard seed of faith is sufficient for salvation, though certainly not for the highest degree of comfort. If you can but trust Christ and love Christ, then let not Satan stop you from saying, in the words of the text, "My Beloved is mine."

Well, we have got so far, but we must remember the next words, "I am His." Now this is true of every Christian. I am His by Christ having made me His. I am His by choice—He elected me. I am His by His Father's gift—God gave me to Him. I am His by purchase—He bought me with His blood. I am His by power, for His Spirit has won me. I am His by my own dedication, for I have vowed myself unto Him. I am His by profession, for I have joined with His people. I am His now by my own deliberate choice of Him, moved by His Grace to choose Him! Every Christian here knows that this is true—Christ is yours and you are Christ's. You are the sheep of His pasture. You are the partners of His love. You are members of His body. You are branches of His stem. You belong to Him!

But there are some persons who get at a more practical meaning of this sentence, "I am His," than others do. You know that in the Church of Rome they have certain orders of men and women who devote themselves to various benevolent, charitable, or superstitious work—and who come to be especially considered the servants of the Lord Jesus. Now, we have never admired this form of brotherhoods and sisterhoods, but the spirit of the thing is just that which ought to enter into the heart of every Christian man and woman. You members of Christian Churches, if you are what you ought to be, are wholly consecrated to the Savior. "Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father" should be practiced by the whole Church of Christ, not merely by certain "orders" and then to be called "religious"! Every Christian woman is "a sister of mercy." We hear of men who belong to the order of Passionists, but every believing man ought to be of the order of Passionists, moved by the passion of the Savior to consecrate himself to the Savior's work!

"I am His." I would like to have you take this for your motto, you professed Christians, if you can honestly do so. When you wake in the morning, breathe a short prayer while you are dressing, and before bowing the knee, feeling, "I am Christ's, and the first thing when I wake must be a word with Him and for Him." When you go abroad into the world, I want you to feel that you cannot trade as other men trade, that you cannot imitate their tricks and sharp practices because something whispers within your heart, "I am His! I am His! I

am different from other men! They may do what they will, for their judgment is yet to come, but I am different from them, for I am Christ's." I wish all Christians felt that the life they live is given to them that they may glorify Christ by it. Oh, if the wealth that is in the Christian Church were but devoted to God's cause, there would never be any lack of the means of sustaining missions, or of building Houses of Prayer in the dark localities of London! If some rich men gave to the cause of Christ as some poor men and women that I know of, do, there would never be any lack in the treasury! I have sometimes rejoiced over some of you. I have had to bless God that I have seen in this Church, Apostolic piety. I have known men and women who, out of their little, have given almost all that they had and whose one objective in life has been to spend and be spent for Christ—and I have rejoiced over them. But there are others of you who have not given a tithe, no, not a fiftieth part of what you have, to the cause of Christ. Yet, perhaps, you stand up and sing—

"I love my God with zeal so great That I could give Him all."

Stop that! Do not sing lies, for you know very well that you would not give Him all and do not give Him all! And you also know very well that you would think it the most absurd thing in all the world if you were to give Him all, or even to dream of doing so! Oh, for more consecration! We are, most of us, up to our ankles in our religion—very few of us are up to our knees. But oh, for the man that swims in it, who has got off the earth altogether and now swims in consecration, living wholly unto Him who loved him and gave Himself for him!

I am afraid I shall have to stop here and ask the question, without getting any answer to it—How far can we get toward this second sentence, "My Beloved is mine, and I am His"? Do you feel as if you could not say that? Do you feel that you cannot say it? Then let this be your prayer, "Lord, if I have not yet done all that I can do. If there is anything left which I might have done for You, and which I have not done, give me Grace that I may do all I can for You and give all I can to You!" There ought not to be an unconsecrated hair on a Christian's head, nor an unconsecrated drop of blood in his veins. Christ gave Himself wholly for us—He deserves that we should give ourselves wholly to Him! Where reserve begins, there Satan's dominion begins, for what is not Christ's is the property of the flesh, and the property of the flesh is the property of Satan! Oh, may the spiritual consecration be so perfect in each one of us that if we live, we may live unto Christ—or if we die, it may still be unto Him! I hope, though we may have to make many grave confessions, that we can still say, "My Beloved is mine, and I am His." If He stood here at this moment. If we could just clear a space and all of a sudden He should come and stand in our midst, with His wounds still visible, it would be so sweet to be able to then say, "My Beloved is mine, and I am His." But I am afraid that in His Presence we would have to say, "Jesus, forgive us. We are Yours, but we have not acted as if we were. We have stolen from You what was Your

purchase and what You have the right to keep. From this day may we bear in our body the marks of the Lord Jesus and may we be wholly Yours!"

II. I cannot say much upon the second part of the subject, for our time is already nearly gone. THE SOUL, BEING ASSURED OF ITS PERSONAL INTEREST IN CHRIST, LONGS TO KNOW WHERE HE IS.

"Where is He?" asks the soul, and the answer comes from the text, "He feeds among the lilies." The worldling cares not where Christ is, but that is the Christian's one subject of thought—

"Where He is gone I gladly would know

That I might seek and find Him, too." Jesus is gone, then, among the lilies—among those snow-white saints who bloom in the garden of Heaven—those golden lilies that are round about the Throne of God! He is there in—

"Jerusalem the golden

With milk and honey blest"— and it makes us long to be there that we may feed with Him among the lilies. But, still, there are many of His lilies here below, those virgin souls who—

"Wherever the Lamb does lead,

From His footsteps never depart." If we would find Christ, we must get into communion with His people. We must come to the ordinances with His saints, for though He does not feed on the lilies, He feeds among them—and there, perhaps, we may meet with Him. You are here, tonight, dear Friends, many of you members of this Church, and some of you members of other Churches, and you have come to the place where Christ feeds His flock. Now that He feeds among the lilies, look for Him! At the Communion Table, do not merely partake of the elements, but look for Him! Look through the bread and the wine to His flesh and blood of which they are the symbols. Care not for my poor words, but for Him! And as to anything else of which you have been thinking, get beyond that unto Him. "He feeds among the lilies," so look for Him where His saints gather in His name!

If you would meet with Him, look, too, in the blessed lily beds of Scripture. Each Book of the Bible seems to be full of lilies, yet you must never be satisfied merely with Scripture, but must get to the Christ of Scripture, the Word of God, the sum and substance of the Revelation of the Most High! "He feeds among the lilies." That is where He is to be found. Lord Jesus come and feed us among the lilies tonight! Come and feed our hungry souls and we will bless Your holy name!

III. I must leave that part of the subject unfinished because I want to speak of THE SOUL, ASSURED OF CHRIST'S LOVE, DESIRING HIS CONSCIOUS PRESENCE. "Until the day breaks and the shadows flee away, turn, my Beloved, and be You like a roe or a young hart upon the mountains of Bethel."

You observe that the soul speaks here of the day breaking. All of us who love the Lord have to look for daybreak, but the sinner has a night to come. Sinner, this is your day! And when you die, that will be your long and awful night— unbroken by a single star of hope! But Christian, this is your night, the darkest period that you will ever have—but your day will break! Yes, the Lord will come in His Glory, or else you shall sleep in Him and then your day shall break. When the Resurrection trumpet shall sound, the Day of the Lord will be darkness and not light to the sinner, but to you it will be an everlasting daybreak! Perhaps at the present moment your life is wrapped in shadows. You are poor, and poverty casts a shadow. You have a sick one at home, or perhaps you are sickly in body—that is a shadow to you. And the reflection of your sin is another shadow, but when the day breaks the shadows will flee away! No poverty then! No sin then, which is better still! And—

"No groans to mingle with the songs Which warble from immortal tongues."

Brothers and Sisters, it is so sweet to know that our best things are ahead. O Sinner, you are leaving your best things behind and you are going to your worst things! But the Christian is going to his best things. His turn is coming. He will have the best of it before long, for the shadows will flee away! No longer shall he be vexed, and grieved, and troubled, but he shall be eternally in the light, for the shadows shall flee away!

While the shadows last, you perceive that the soul asks Jesus Christ to turn, as though He had withdrawn His face from her. She says, "Have you turned away from me, my Master? Then turn to me again. Have I grieved and vexed you by growing worldly, carnal, careless, reckless? Then turn to me, my Lord. Have You been angry with me? Oh, love me! Have You not said that Your anger may endure for a moment, but that Your love is everlasting? In a little wrath You have hidden Your face from me, but oh, now turn unto me!" You know that the proper state for a Christian to be in is not a state in which Christ turns away His smiling face, but the state in which Christ's love is beaming full in His face. I know that some of you think it is best for you to be in the shade but, Beloved, do not think so! You need not have shadows forever—you may have the Presence of Christ even now to rejoice in! And I would have you ambitious to get two heavens—a Heaven below and a Heaven above—Christ here and then Christ there! Christ here making you as glad as your heart can be and the Christ forever filling you with all the fullness of God. May we seek after that double blessing and may we get it!

Then the soul says, "Turn, my Beloved, and be You like a roe or a young hart upon the mountains of Bethel." Dr. Thomson, who wrote *The Land and the Book*, tells us that he thinks he knows the mountains of Bethel. It matters little whether he does or does not, but he has seen the roes and the harts skipping over the precipices. Certainly those wild creatures that are accustomed to craggy rocks will go where human footsteps would not dare to follow. And such is the love of Jesus Christ! Our love is easily turned aside. If we are badly treated, we soon forget those who seemed to be so fond of us. But Christ is like a roe or a young hart

and He skips over the mountains of our sins and all the dividing mountains of our unbelief and ingratitude which might keep Him away. Like a young hart, He skips over them as though they were nothing at all, and so hastens to have communion with us. There is the idea of fleetness here—the roe goes swiftly, almost like the lightning's flash, and so does the Savior come to the soul in need! He can lift you up from the lowest state of spiritual sorrow to the highest position of spiritual joy—may He do so! Oh, cry to Him! Cry to Him! There is nothing that means so much to a mother than the voice of her child, and there is nothing that means so much to Christ than the voice of His dear people, so come to Him! Say, "Savior, show Your love to me. Dear Savior, do not hide Yourself from Your own flesh. I love you. I cannot live without You. I am grieved to think that I should have driven You away. Come to me! Come to me! Return to me and make me glad in Your Presence." Cry thus to Him and He will come to you!

And you, poor Sinner, who have never comfortably seen His face—remember that there is life for a look at Him! God give you Grace, now, to trust Him—and may you see His face, here, so that you may see Him hereafter with everlasting joy!

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON: 2 THESSALONIANS 1.

[This exposition belongs to Sermon #3179, Volume 56—A COMPREHENSIVE BENEDICTION—but there was not sufficient space available for its insertion there.]

Verse 1. Paul, Silvanus and Timothy, to the church of the Thessalonians. Paul loved to associate his fellow workers with himself when writing to his Brothers and Sisters in Christ. Although he had a superior experience to theirs, he put Silvanus, and Timothy, his own son in the faith, with him as his fellow Evangelists in writing to "the church of the Thessalonians."

1. In God our Father. What a wonderful expression! The Church is in God as God is in the Church! What a blessed dwelling place for the people of God in all generations. "In God our Father."

I, 2. And the Lord Jesus Christ. Grace unto you, and peace, from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. This is the Apostle's usual salutation when he is writing to a Christian Church. When he is writing to a minister, it is, "Grace, mercy, and peace," for God's most prominent servants especially need great mercy on account of their heavy responsibilities and many shortcomings. But to the Church, Paul's greeting is, "Grace unto you, and peace, from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ."

3. We are bound to thank God always for you, brethren, as it is meet, because that your faith [See Sermons #205, Volume 4—A

LECTURE FOR LITTLE-FAITH; #1856, Volume 31—THE HISTORY OF LITTLE-FAITH and #1857, Volume 31—THE NECESSITY OF GROWING FAITH] grows exceedingly, and the charity of every one of you all toward each other abounds. What a kind of sacred network Christian love makes, intertwisting every believer in Christ with every other

Believer! "The love of every one of you all toward each other abounds." Oh, that this might really be the case in all the Churches of our Lord Jesus Christ!

4, 5. So that we ourselves glory in you in the churches of God for your patience and faith in all your persecutions and tribulations that you endure: which is a manifest token of the righteous judgment of God. One of the clearest proofs of the judgment to come is to be found in the present sufferings of the saints through persecutions and tribulations, for if they, for the very reason that they love God, have to suffer here, there must be a future state and time for rectifying all this that is now so wrong!

5-7. That you may be counted worthy of the Kingdom of God for which you suffer: seeing it is a righteous thing with God to recompense tribulation to them that trouble you; and to you who are troubled rest with us. For us who believe in Jesus there is a long Sabbath yet to come, to be spent with the Apostles and the other holy ones around the Throne of God and of the Lamb, even as Paul wrote to the Hebrews, "There remains, therefore, a rest to the people of

God."

7-11. When the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from Heaven with His mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the Presence of the Lord, and from the Glory of His power, when He shall come to be glorified in His saints, and to be admired in all them that believe (because our testimony among you was believed) in that day. Therefore we also pray always for you. The very people in whom Paul gloried, and over whom he rejoiced, were those for whom he continued to pray! And he did well, for the highest state of Grace needs preserving—and there is a possibility of going beyond the utmost height to which any have yet attained. Hence Paul says, "Therefore we also pray always for you"—

II, 12. That our God would count you worthy of this calling, and fulfill all the good pleasure of His goodness, and the work of faith with power: that the name of our Lord Jesus Christ may be glorified in you, and you in Him, according to the Grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ.