

R 11

about 1937 or '38, a Jewish family told of getting a letter from somebody in Germany, and in this letter which, of course, had passed through the censor's hands he said, "Oh," he said, "I wish you could see us, how happy we are. Everything is just going fine", and he said, "John is very happy and Mary is very happy and," they said, "Aunt Judith is very happy; in fact, Aunt Judith is the happiest one of all," and the censor^s let it through with no difficulty, but the people here knew that Aunt Judith had died a few years before, and so that immediately told them that the people on earth weren't happy and it was the means of conveying^{the}/information. Whether it was true or not I don't know but I was told the story at that time, but it is a way we often speak of going to a better world. At death they go to be with the Lord. They are better off than they are here, and so on. Now, surely there is a blessed relief for many when we go to be with the Lord, but that doesn't seem to be quite what impressed these Thessalonians. They thought the people were unfortunate who went because they who remained were going to have the glory of the experience of Christ's return and they feared that these others would be left out. I don't see how else you could interpret the passage than by considering that that is the thing which was worrying these Thessalonians and that is what Paul is trying to comfort them about and he says, "Comfort yourself with these words, comfort one another with these words, that you who remain are no better off religiously than those who are dead because they will share the blessing which you will have." Now that is quite different from the attitude that heaven is my home--I have a shortcoming here but as soon as this life is over everything is . The attitude here seems to be that there is a tremendous blessing that is taught in the New Testament to the believer when he goes to be with the Lord but the real blessing here comes at the return of Christ and the Spirits before that time are in some way in an inferior situation to the situation which they enjoy after they are clothed upon , and so he says, "We which remain will not come before, will not hinder, will not get a precedence over those