

During this time of wide expansion Christians had continued to expect the return of their Lord. Their religion was not simply a matter of ethics; they ~~did~~ did not merely go out and urge people to obey the golden rule or to do good. They were the bearers of good news, declaring the glad tidings that Jesus had paid the penalty for sin, and that all who should believe on Him would receive a new life in Christ. Yet this was not all of their message. Even as they looked back to something wonderful which had occurred, they also looked forward to something wonderful that was going to occur. All through the New Testament we find it clearly indicated that the Christian had both a backward and a forward look. Every time that the words of the apostle Paul ~~are read~~ ~~in~~ 1 Corinthians 11 are read in the Communion service we find this note brought out: "For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till he come."* Christians look back to the Lord's death as the foundation of their belief and of their life; they look forward to the time when He will come back to this earth again as the culmination of all their hopes and desires for fullness of joy and glory.

*1 Corinthians 11:26.

In the first epistle which Paul wrote, he described the faith of the Thessalonians as having these two aspects. He praised them because they had "turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God and to wait for his Sonⁿ from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, even Jesus, which delivered us from the wrath to come."* From the very beginning of the spread of the Gospel ~~into Europe~~ this note had ~~already~~ been stressed. It continued to enjoy prominence in the ~~later~~ ^{the various} writings of ~~all the~~ apostles. That Paul had no change of heart regarding the importance of the return of Christ in later years is clearly shown in ^{the last books he wrote. **} ~~his last writings.~~ ~~Titus 2:12-14~~ ^{emphasizes} ~~stresses~~ the ~~same combination of the~~ ~~past and future aspects of the work~~
 * 1 Thessalonians 1:9-10, Titus 2:13, * 1 Timothy 6:14-15, Titus 2:13, * 1 Peter 1:7-9.