

THE WITNESSES.

POSITION AND CONDITION.

AN ADDRESS BY A. J. HOLIDAY, IN GLASGOW.

Scriptures read: Ezra x. 44, and Nehe. xiii. 23-30.

MANY of us have learned much deeply important truth, bearing upon the circumstances of the days we live in, from these two books, some of whose closing words we have just read. We know how that after the seventy years' captivity, God brought a remnant of His people back from Babylon, to set up the Altar once more in the place that He had chosen, and then to build the house. We know, too, that after another seventy years or more, confusion, disorder, and weakness were again prevailing in Jerusalem, and God brought Nehemiah back from Babylon, to go on with the work which had been commenced nearly a century before. But the point to which I would draw special attention, for it seems to me to be a point of the deepest importance for us to remember, is this, that each of these books finishes with exactly the same character of work as that with which it began. The very thing which had, in the first instance, brought about the confusion and ruin, and had heaped such reproach on the name of the Lord, was there present amongst the remnant that had come back from Babylon. They were in the right place and were occupied about the right things, in a certain way. Yet see how sad was the condition of things, which the closing chapters of these two books show to have existed among them. Ezra finishes with wives of strange nations having to be put away; and Nehemiah closes with exactly the same thing. And remember, that it was this self-same disobedience, and the sharing in the evil and idolatrous

practices of the Gentile Nations with which they had mingled, which had necessitated God's giving up His people to captivity at the first. Without attempting here to enter into any details of the subject, I believe that a most instructive analogy may be drawn between the captivity of God's ancient people in Babylon, with their subsequent return to build the House of God; and the spiritual bondage in which many of God's people are now held under the traditions of men, together with God's gracious deliverance of some of them out of it.

God has been at various times reviving in the hearts of His people, a desire for something more in accordance with His Word than that with which they found themselves surrounded. Whether we look at the great Protestant Reformation, which spread through a considerable portion of Europe three centuries ago, or at the successive movements which have followed one another since then, and out of which the leading Protestant denominations have sprung, we see in each of them more or less of turning back to things of God, which had been neglected or wholly forgotten. But if we trace carefully the history of these various movements, we shall find that in every instance there has been a tendency to degenerate, and to go back to the very things against which they had made such earnest protest.

Now the important thing for us to remember is, that the root of every corruption which exists, or which has ever existed in the Church of God, is to be found in the natural heart of each one of us. If, through God's grace, we have been separated from the denominations around us, and gathered simply around the Lord Jesus, let us keep

in mind all the while, that that which wrought all the havoc, that which brought in the lawlessness, the setting up of human rule, the denying the Name of the Lord Jesus, is present in our hearts, and needs watching against, moment by moment, and day by day, or else it will assuredly once again work the same results. It took a considerable time before the germs of evil

in the early Church developed into what we see around us, but every form of organised disobedience to God's Word had its beginning in the unbelief and self-will and pride of men's hearts. And as these things are in our hearts, the tendency in each assembly will always be to go back to the very things from which, through grace, we have sought to separate ourselves. So that there is a twofold danger to be guarded against. First, the danger that we should grow self-satisfied with our position, and neglect the continual exercise of lowly self-judgment. Second, that the fear of the first should make us

regard less seriously the errors from which we have withdrawn; till, in measure we go back to them, and actually help to build again the things we had destroyed.

The devil would like us to separate these two matters of position and condition, so that some of us should be contending for the one and some for the other. But it is only as we learn to see that they both alike

belong to what we owe to the Lord Jesus, that we shall be able so to maintain them as to glorify Him, and be helpful to our fellow-saints.

We are often told that among many believers in sects, there is far more earnestness and zeal in seeking the salvation of the lost, than are to be found among many scripturally gathered assemblies of God's

children. If not actually argued in words, it is certainly suggested that, on this account, a steadfast maintenance of the scriptural position is of little value. But while we have always good reason to humble ourselves when we see fellow-saints, with much less knowledge of the will of God, more faithful in that which they do know, we must not allow ourselves for one moment to slacken our hold of the truth on this account. And perhaps it is those who have been from the first trained up in scriptural ways that are in the greatest danger in this matter. In my own

case, some five-and-twenty years ago now, God troubled my conscience as to my position in the so-called Church of England. After considerable exercise of soul and much prayer, I was delivered from that position. But all the exercise I passed through led to my getting such a discernment of what I was separating from, and of the complete contrast in being gathered to the name of

MOTTO for 1887,

"BE THOU FAITHFUL."

HEAR Fellow-Believers,—As by the grace of God we have reached another milestone on the road of Time, let us raise a note of praise to our covenant-keeping God, who has led us hitherto "by the skilfulness of His hands," and fed us "according to the integrity of His heart;" and, as the new year dawns upon us, let us hear the words of the Master, "*Be thou faithful.*" This exhortation is very much needed in this day. Faithfulness to Christ is much lost sight of, and expediency is resorted to instead. The desire to see much present result of labour for Christ, and to be popular, is liable to outweigh the more important privilege of *pleasing Him*. We must seek to serve in the light of the coming day, remembering that He is the judge of our service, and not men, and that the crown of life is the special reward He gives for faithfulness to Him. We shall assuredly oftentimes be made to feel that the reproach of Christ has not ceased, if we would follow Him wholly; but let us, like Moses of old, esteem this far greater riches than all besides. "*Be thou faithful.*"

Oh, let us seek to be true to Him, and not compromise with the world, nor be taken with the latitudinarian spirit of the day, which would make truth non-essential, and seek to build up a visible unity, while denying the fundamental doctrines of God's revealed word. Let us copy Him who as the perfect servant of Jehovah was "faithful to Him that appointed Him." Let us trace His footsteps, and seek to place our feet in the way He has marked out. Let us have the awakened ear, and the anointed hand and foot; and though the path may be a narrow one, shrink not from it, but gladly follow wherever He leads, and "*Be faithful.*"

the Lord Jesus, that nothing but the most flagrant backsliding could have led to my resuming the former position. But with regard to our children, who have never been connected with anything but a simple gathering of believers around the Lord Jesus, the case is very different. As long as they see only that which commends the truth they have been taught, there is little to fear. But if the ways of their parents, or of others in the assembly, should be such as to stumble them; and if, at the same time, they should be brought in contact with earnest Christians still in sects; they are much more likely to be turned aside than those who had thoroughly proved the whole thing before they took a stand at all.

For the sake of such, then, I would endeavour to give a word of loving counsel to parents. The first time I ever came in contact with believers gathered in simplicity to the Name of the Lord Jesus, was at a Bible reading to which I had been invited the evening before a "Good Friday," as it is called. I greatly enjoyed the meeting, and afterwards stayed the night with the friends who had invited me. The next morning they proposed to go with me to "Church," and the whole family went. There were two brothers, who had taken a prominent place, and been much used of God in connection with those gathered to the Name of the Lord Jesus. Their children were all converted and breaking bread at that time; but I grieve to say that I have lived to see nearly every member of those two large families turn their backs upon God's truth, and settle down in the "Established Church." At that time I said "How liberal!" but as I look back, and see the dishonour to God and the disastrous results flowing from what was done then, I can only say "How sad! how terribly mistaken!"

I am well aware that such action as I have referred to, is commonly the result of an intention to manifest love and to win others. But we are grievously mistaken when we suppose that real love will act in this way. "By this we know that we love

the children of God, when we love God, and keep His commandments" (1 John v. 2). If it is right to give any countenance to the things we have left, we ought never to have come out from them. If, on the other hand, faithfulness to Christ has brought us out, it is unfaithfulness to Him, and therefore the opposite of love to fellow-saints, for us in the smallest degree to go back to them. While I speak thus, I freely own that in the individual walk and state of soul of many beloved saints of God in sects, there is much that puts me to shame; yet that does not, in any way, lessen the force of what I am saying. Remember, that though they may be where they are, and yet maintain a good conscience, that would be impossible for us. Why so? do you ask. Because when once God has opened our eyes to see that their position is contrary to what His Word teaches us, we could only go back to it by violating, and perhaps at last, searing our conscience. We could not go back as we came out, for we should go back sinning against light and knowledge. We must not judge others by the measure of our light, and assume that they are acting in self-will, when, perhaps, they are only lacking enlightenment. But, on the other hand, we must not content ourselves with acting according to the measure of their light, as many are tempted to do. Their thought is "Much better Christians than I am can remain in these denominations, or can go back in part to them, and why should I refuse?" But that is a wholly false argument. I must not make the godliness of even a Daniel in Babylon the reason why I should remain there. Beyond all question Daniel's life in Babylon would put to utter shame the ways of many of those who had been led back to Jerusalem; but, none the less, it was a constant reproach upon the name of Jehovah that His people should be in the place of bondage; and those whose lives in Jerusalem were inconsistent, would only make matters far worse if they went back again to Babylon. Daniel, as an individual, might live a beautiful and godly life in

Babylon; but He could not, while there, join with the rest of God's people in carrying out the whole wondrous purposes of God. Those purposes were inseparable from His own divine arrangement of the Throne in the Holy Place, the centre of all His dealings alike of grace and righteousness.

I would remind you, also, that while there are many things that call for humiliation among the assemblies of believers scripturally gathered, we do not uphold these things, or teach them to others as part of the mind of God. Do you say that you have found pride, worldiness, self-seeking, and a score more of grievous things among such assemblies? Be it so; I dare not deny it. But are these things declared to be pleasing to God and made an essential part of the principle of our coming together? This is what is continually overlooked. The unscriptural practices in the various sects of Christendom are vital parts of their systems. They are upheld and taught and justified, and those who belong to the sect are therefore upholders of its evils. Another authority is made to override that of the Word of God, and that Word is made of none effect through men's traditions. It is not the persons we are separating from, but the false principles and the denial to the Lord Jesus of His place of absolute authority in His own House. I remember, now some years ago, one of those very young men that I spoke of as having gone back to the Church of England, asked me how things were going on in a certain gathering. I had to tell him of grievous troubles and even divisions. "And do you call that godly order?" he asked. "No, I do not;" was my reply, "but neither did Paul call the condition of things at Corinth godly order. Yet he never suggested that they should leave off simply gathering around the Lord, and adopt some human device instead, to keep up at least the outward appearance of order."

We have the Lord Jesus Christ for our assembly needs, just as we have Him for

our individual life. "It has pleased the Father that in Him should all fulness dwell;" and as long as we are receiving of that fulness, He will be enough for the individual wants of each saint, and for their collective needs, as gathered unto His Name. If we let Him go, we shall be sure to fail utterly; but let us not lay the blame upon God's provision, by turning back again to human schemes. Rather let us humble ourselves that we have so little made use of the infinite resources which abide in Christ for our utmost need.

THE FIRST EPISTLE TO THE THESSALONIANS.

CHAP. II. 1-8.

NOTES OF AN ADDRESS BY J. R. C.

WE are familiar with the history as given in Acts xvii of the apostle's entrance into Philippi and Thessalonica. We have referred to this in our first address, and, therefore, need not go into it again.

If anything in the way of opposition could have turned the apostle from the fixed purpose of his heart it would have been here. The ministry of this devoted servant of the Lord was most bitterly opposed by Satan in these places. But how blessed to see the result of his service in these precious Epistles to the Philippians and Thessalonians.

Let us always remember that there is nothing in man which will ever make him welcome the Gospel. Whether it be the religious mind of the Jew, the utterly ignorant and darkened mind of the heathen, or the philosophic mind of the Greek; whatever be the natural bent of the mind of man it is always opposed to the Gospel. It does not matter how clearly, simply, convincingly, and attractively the Gospel may be set forth, the natural man hates it.

Let us not be discouraged although our testimony be met with ridicule and persecution. Satan may oppose it with the smile

of ridicule or with open opposition, but either way, his object is to stop the testimony so that sinners may be kept from coming to Christ. These servants of the Lord were sustained by His grace in the midst of bitter and severe opposition—suffering, even nigh unto death. It reminds me of the character of the testimony of our brother, Fred Arnot, in Africa. How he has gone there alone in the midst of people who know nothing of God, nor His Son—perfectly unprotected as far as man is concerned. These people are proud to have, what they call, “a teacher” amongst them. But, whenever he begins to bear his testimony in the Gospel, and tells the king he needs to be converted—to be born again just as much as his poor slave that he calls “his dog,” then the king says, “You are not to say that.” The Gospel levels men, and puts the king on the same level as the beggar. He could not get the people to listen to the Gospel as long as he had presents to give them; and if he would not give them they would steal from him. But when he had given them all he had, then they would listen to him. What a contrast that is to all human ideas of power and influence in the Gospel. Some might say, “Go with human influence to the king.” But he found that all such influence was against the testimony of the Gospel, and he simply depended upon God alone. I thought it quite in keeping with our subject to mention these facts, and hope they may stir us up to a little of the same spirit of self-denial for Christ.

Verse 3. “For our exhortation was not of deceit, nor of uncleanness, nor in guile.” Notice here how the apostle lays stress upon the purity of his motives in going to them with the Gospel. The business of the ambassador for Christ is not to please men. It is little matter whether men are pleased or displeased if the One that sent them is pleased. We have to learn that guile and deceit all go for nothing in the work of the Gospel. A great many crafty ways that God cannot sanction may appear to be successful, but everything will be

judged in the light of God’s presence at the judgment-seat of Christ; when, as one has said, “each one shall be turned inside out.” All our motives will then be exposed in the searching holy light of the Divine presence. Only that will remain which is of God. Nothing but the work of faith, labour of love, and patience of hope shall have His approval. Therefore, I say, in all our service to the Lord let us test our motives, and see if we seek to please men or God—if we are doing it to please ourselves or the Lord.

Verse 4. “But as we were allowed of God to be put in trust with the Gospel, even so we speak; not as pleasing men, but God, which trieth our hearts.” I wish you to observe these words, “*allowed of God to be put in trust with the Gospel.*” The apostle Paul was a trustee. God had put him in trust with a precious treasure, and that was the Gospel. No doubt Paul and the other apostles of the Lord were put in trust in a special way and measure with the Gospel, and with the mysteries of God. But every one of us has in a certain sense and measure also been “put in trust with the Gospel.” The Gospel is called in 2 Cor. iv. 7 “a treasure.” The apostle says, “We have this treasure in earthen vessels.” If you and I had all that the world could give what would it be compared with the infinite blessing and preciousness of the Gospel of God’s grace? What would our life be without it? What a dark, hopeless, cheerless life ours would be if we did not know the Gospel! Do we, indeed, realise this, and do we so appreciate it? Remember what that Gospel cost God. It cost Him the giving up unto death of His well-beloved Son. God could never have brought us nigh to Himself, but in the way He brought the priest into His holy presence, and that was by the way of the altar; and the altar meant the shedding of blood, which tells us of God giving up His Son to death for us. We read in Micah vii. 18, that “He delighteth in mercy.” The Gospel tells us that God delights in mercy. He might delight Himself in

creation, but that cost Him little, but to show mercy to a sinful world cost Him the life of His beloved Son. God has, through the Gospel, brought us into fellowship with His own joy in displaying His mercy to guilty hell-deserving sinners. So the Gospel is indeed a precious treasure, precious to God and precious to us. Think of what the word Gospel means. It simply means glad news. Is it not a blessed word—God's good news. Good news to lost, condemned sinners of pardon, justification, and reconciliation to God through the blood of Jesus. It is called the Gospel of your salvation, as well as the Gospel of God's grace. Christ is the sum and substance of the Gospel. Philip went down to Samaria and preached "Christ," and the apostle said "We preach Christ crucified." It is the Gospel of Christ, for it speaks of Him and His mighty work. If it is the Gospel of God's grace, where do we see God's grace but in the person and work of Christ; and if it be the Gospel of the glory of God, where do we see God's glory but in the face of Jesus Christ. So that in every aspect of it it is indeed a precious treasure, and God has put the treasure for this poor starving, dying, ruined world—riches for its poverty, life for its death, a cure for all its sorrow, a balm for all its wounds—God has put this precious treasure into every earthen vessel that believes in Jesus. God has put it in us. Our mortal body contains the precious treasure of God's Gospel.

We have a beautiful illustration of being put in responsibility with this precious treasure of the Gospel in 2 Kings vii. In this Scripture we have four leprous men who were in possession of the knowledge of something that would make every heart in the city of Samaria glad, and save their lives. After they had satisfied themselves they began to think of others. They said one to another, "We do not well, this is a day of *good tidings*, and we hold our peace: if we tarry till the morning light some mischief will come upon us; now therefore come that we may tell the king's

household" (verse 9). Paul said, "Woe is me if I preach not the Gospel." God has given redeemed sinners this precious treasure. It will save others as it has saved me. Satan is seeking to blind their eyes to it, and many of us are sitting still indifferent to those that are perishing for lack of "the knowledge of salvation." I do trust that what I am saying to you and myself may have weight on our consciences as to our responsibility towards those who are perishing. Are we individually before God seeking to fulfill our responsibility in our testimony in the Gospel? The Lord help us to be more faithful than we have been.

Turn to another Scripture which shows us our responsibility in this matter of the Gospel (Prov. xxiv. 11, 12), "If thou forbear to deliver them that are drawn unto death, and those that are ready to be slain; if thou sayest, Behold we knew it not." Here is the excuse—the ready excuse, "O, I didn't know he was unsaved." It is very convenient for you not to know when you have no heart to speak to him about his soul. It may be that you have sat in the same pew in the Church with one, and you have never asked him if he was born again. Your fellow-workman, brother, and your fellow-servant, sister, you have not spoken to them about their souls.

God knows the excuse that comes up into our heart. "Doth not He that pondereth the heart consider it?" Only think of God knowing the very thoughts of your heart. "He that pondereth the heart considers it, . . . and shall He not render to every man according to his works?" There is a day coming when we shall have to give an account of how we have fulfilled our responsibility as the servants of Christ; when one that has borne his testimony in the midst of reproach, who has been accounted a fool for Christ, shall have a glorious reward; and when the cold, respectable one that would not utter a word for Christ shall have no approval—"no well-done"—no fruit in the day of Christ—saved as by fire. If we do not go on day-

by-day bearing testimony for God, seeking to be the means, in some way or other, of leading souls to Christ, then we are poor, barren, withered things, and God will take us away, and we shall have no reward at the judgment-seat.

Turn now to Dan. xii. 3. "They that be wise (*margin*, teachers) shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever." "They that be wise," that is they that teach, or that make wise. We have here two departments of God's work—the one is making wise those that are God's children, and the other is turning sinners to righteousness. Those who serve in each of these faithfully shall have their reward. May God use each one of us more or less in both. Mark the recompense promised, "They that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever." The Gospel is the revelation of God's righteousness, and it is intended to turn sinners to righteousness. If I see a man that professes to be converted, and he is not righteous, then I question the conversion of such a one. You see how the apostle Paul, the pattern evangelist, claimed from these converted a life of thorough righteousness.

Let us look at John vii. 37. "In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst let him come unto Me and drink." The Lord is speaking here of Himself as the fountain of living water. There is a fountain-head, a deep eternal well-spring, a smitten rock from whence flows the water of life, and if any man thirst let him come to that life-giving fountain and drink thereat, and he shall be eternally satisfied.

"He that believeth on Me, as the Scripture has said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water." Now, mark, each one that believes on the Lord Jesus is to be more than satisfied. He is to be a fountain of life to others. Out from the heart, from the core of the being of each believer, by the power of the Holy Spirit

in him, are to flow out life-giving streams to a dead and thirsty world. In connection with this, look at one word in the Gospel by Matthew (x. 7). "As ye go, preach, saying, The kingdom of Heaven is at hand. . . . freely ye have received, freely give."

Turn now to Rev. xxii. 17. "Let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will let him take the water of life freely." We sing—

"The water of life is flowing."

It is a delightful thing to sing these words, but where is this water of life flowing? God would have every one of us to be a fountain from which the water of life is springing up and overflowing continuously. God would have each one of us to be a channel through which the Gospel, by the power of the Holy Ghost, is flowing out to ears and hearts. Is it so with you and me? You and I are responsible whether that stream will be a trickling brook or a river of living waters. O, that God may empty us of self and fill us with the Spirit. Then, as those put in trust with the Gospel, we shall feel that it is our responsibility that no thirsty souls will come in contact with us without getting a draught of the water of life. How many a one we have come in contact with, and we have never told them about Christ. We have to own and confess it before God, and search our hearts as to what is the hindrance. Is it our pride? If so, may the Lord lead us to judge ourselves, and seek grace to overcome it. Is it our vanity and selfishness? May God deliver us from it all. What is the cure for this state of soul? Get filled with Christ. If there was more of Christ dwelling in our hearts; if we were more occupied with Christ, then our souls would be filled with the Gospel of God's grace, and the joy of God's salvation would so fill us that it would be a delight for us to speak to others of Christ, and His willingness and ability to save.

We are also responsible to maintain the purity of the doctrines of the Gospel, that

it be not mixed up with legalism or works, or with Satanic lies, such as denying that there is eternal punishment for Christ rejectors. These and like evil doctrines are sapping the foundations of the Gospel.

We have a special responsibility to tell the Gospel to others; but, whilst we do so, let us see that our lives don't deny our lip testimony. What is the use of telling God's love to others if I have no enjoyment of God's love in my own soul? What is the use of telling men of the Gospel, and of God's righteousness and grace, and seeking thereby to turn them to righteousness if they see me practising unrighteous acts? What is the use of preaching the Word of God to others if we ourselves are day-by-day disobeying that Word? Don't you see how we are responsible not only to preach or make known the Gospel to our fellow-men, but also to live out the doctrines of the Gospel. We need not expect men to believe our testimony if we are doing contrary to what we profess. See how little power Lot's testimony had in Sodom. They looked upon him as "*one that mocked.*" But how different the testimony of Abraham. His had weight with those who witnessed it.

There are many ways in which we may help in the Gospel. We may help the Lord's servants with our money, and we may also help them with our prayers. We may help by speaking to any one we may come in contact with. We have an example in the pattern Servant. How often do we find Him dealing personally with individuals! Such as the case of the woman of Samaria and others. If we observe how He dealt with individuals, how wisely, graciously, and faithfully He spoke to them, we shall see how He would have us act in similar circumstances. There are many ways in which we could serve in the Gospel. We can put a tract in a letter to an unconverted friend or relative. We can by the way-side hand a little Gospel book, or hand one into the cottage, looking up to the Lord to use it in blessing to the inmates. Let us be so feeding on the Word, getting it fresh from the Lord, that we may always have a

suited word to speak to a weary sinner or a troubled saint. We shall have no lack of opportunity for helping on the Gospel if we are enjoying and abiding in the Lord's presence.

HINTS ON OPEN-AIR PREACHING.

IT is one of the signal mercies of the times in which we live, that in almost every town and village of the kingdom there is liberty granted by "the powers that be" for the servants of the Lord to preach the gospel in the open-air. How long this unspeakable privilege may be continued we cannot tell, but while it lasts it should be occupied to the best advantage, and used in a manner worthy of its importance.

The Gospel of God should be declared fully and freely to those who gather around to listen. There is an open ear and a willingness to hear the truth at the present, such as has seldom existed at any period of the history of men, and this should be specially remembered by those who go forth to "the streets and lanes of the city" with the message of salvation. There are listeners to be found there, who do not usually frequent our halls and preaching-rooms, and who, it may be safely asserted, go nowhere else to hear the word.

There is a tendency—and it seems to be on the increase—in certain quarters to spend the greater portion of the time allotted to open-air work, in singing popular hymns and telling striking anecdotes to attract the people. This is all right, so far as it goes, but the work of open-air preaching should include something more substantial than this. "The word of the truth of the gospel" should be poured out from the preacher's lips. The Gospel of God in all its fulness should be earnestly and faithfully declared in the people's hearing. The Book of God should be opened, and its sacred pages allowed to speak for themselves. There is a certain amount of respect to be found for the Bible, even among those

who incline to be listless or troublesome, and we have of late particularly marked the quieting effect produced on many a tumultuous gathering, by the presence of THE OPEN BOOK in their midst.

There should be no attempt on the part of the preacher to evoke a smile by making jocular remarks, or by sarcastic references to persons of any class whatever. The man who stands up to preach God's Gospel, should speak as to dying men, and in view of eternity, and he should keep to his theme. If he denounces the hypocrisy, or exposes the self-righteousness of men, let it be done by the unanswerable argument of "thus saith the Lord"; and if it be necessary to warn men against the delusions and deceptions—now, alas, so widely spread abroad—of evil doctrine, let them be brought to the line and the plummet of God's Word.

Above all, let CHRIST be lifted up: Christ crucified; Christ glorified. This is the magnet by which the sinner is drawn; the power by which he is saved. And let results be looked for—conversions to God on the spot then and there.

It is to be feared that in too many cases the open-air meeting is looked upon as a kind of advertisement for the one to follow in-doors. But this is an exceedingly low estimate to put upon it. In one sense it is by far the most important of the two, and for the following reasons. Hundreds may there hear the Word who never frequent the indoor meetings; some who cannot, many who will not. The preacher should keep this class before him, and endeavour to compress into his address, be it ever so short, the truth that awakens and saves.

Another weakness is, the not uncommon practice of putting forward some young and inexperienced brother as the speaker in the open-air, and reserving the *gifted* preacher for the inside—for what reason we do not know, but we think the opposite order seems the most needful. If one can speak the gospel more pointedly or forcibly than another, surely that one should do so outside, where he has, in addition to preaching the Word, to gather and to keep the attention of his

congregation. People do not, as a rule, listen to empty, vague, and rambling discourses, without subject, point, or interest, nor does God bless them. The special gift of such preachers seems to be to disperse the crowd and ruin the meeting. Whoever has oversight of that department of the work should feel it to be his business, in faithfulness to God and the gospel, to see that such persons do not occupy a place which it is evident they have neither ability nor grace to fill. As to the fellowship and behaviour of saints in this important work, we may write again. J. R.

A NEW ASSEMBLY.

A LETTER TO AN ASSEMBLY RECENTLY GATHERED TO THE LORD'S NAME ALONE.

MY DEAR BROTHER IN CHRIST,—I need hardly say that the little company at D—is often, very often, in my thoughts. I wonder sometimes how you are getting on. No doubt you will have had your share of the trials as well as the joys of being on the Lord's side, but it is precious to know that the blessed One whom we seek to follow outside the camp knows where He is leading, and we only need to be near enough to hear His voice. In John x. 27, He says, "My sheep *hear my voice* . . . and they *follow me*." He does not drive or drag, but *draws* us to Himself. The *attractive* power of His mighty love is what we need to *know by heart*. Without it, any amount of form or order—even God's order without God's power—will not avail to keep us. We may easily be accurate, but it will be the accuracy of a cold marble statue, compared with the living man, having warmth and vigour circulating in every part.

The story of David in 1 Sam. xxii. is, in this respect, a beautiful type or picture of our present position. David, the rejected one, had taken up his abode in the cave of Adullam. The word Adullam means *resting-place*; verse 1 says they "*went down thither to him*." It was not the cave they cared for, but the personal attractions of the man who was in it, and *for his sake*

they could afford to *go down*, for it was *to him* they gathered. In like manner we can afford to *go down* in the estimation of the world, for even the gathering place may have no outward attractions to catch the natural eye, and may be as sparingly adorned as Adullam's cave was likely to be. But, never mind, if it be the true resting-place, having Jesus in the midst, we would not exchange it for the most gorgeous of the world's cathedrals without Him. The Cross of Christ is a great leveller of human pride, and it is wonderful how little we feel the loss of the world's smile when we are

“Drawn by love that knows no measure,
Outside the camp.”

Verse 2 tells us something about those who gathered to David in his resting-place, and I have no doubt, if their experiences had been recorded, they would have been found something like our own, as we sometimes sing—

“IN THY PRESENCE we are happy ;
IN THY PRESENCE we're secure ;
IN THY PRESENCE all afflictions
We can cheerfully endure.”

It says, further, that David became a captain over them, and thus the little picture is complete. Like them, we have *been drawn* to our divine David in the day of His rejection by the world, and we have found a sweet resting place at His feet. Like them, we would cast in our *present lot* with Him and give Him His rightful place as Captain and Lord of all. Like them, also, our *future lot* is bound up with Him, and it is just in the measure that these precious truths lay hold of our hearts, that we shall not only be content but glad to share His reproach, esteeming it, as Moses did, to be “greater riches than all the treasures of Egypt” (Heb. xi. 26). There came a day when the mighty deeds of this faithful band were *told out* at the instigation of David himself (see 2 Sam. xxiii.); but the deeds were done at a time when nobody else but David could estimate their true value.

I do not suppose they knew that such honour was in store for them, so that their motives were *present personal love* and

devotion to him, rather than the hope of future reward.

Our knowledge of what our David will do is much clearer than theirs, but is our devotion to Him as keen?

I sometimes think that we are in danger of being too much taken up with the crowning day and forgetting that the *present* is the *only time* for those acts of single-hearted devotion which will make up the glory of that day. Oh, that the love of Christ may constrain us, so that the quickly passing moments may be bearing on their wings many tokens of heart service to Him such as will be found to be gold when the day comes for declaring it. How unspeakably precious it is to know that in the midst of—shall we even say in spite of—all our heartfelt weakness and failures innumerable, the *faithfulness* of our God is pledged to us *three times over*, and that, too, in a manner that covers the whole ground from the Cross to the glory.

First, in 1 Cor. i. 9, we read, “*God is faithful by whom ye were called unto the fellowship of His Son,*” so that whatever that fellowship may involve, we have a faithful God behind.

Again, in 1 Cor. x. 13, “*God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted (or tried) above that ye are able.*” The *way of escape* spoken of in this verse appears to be just *finding all our resources in the living God*, for the tried one is not to use the way of escape in order to run away from the trial, but “*that ye may be able to bear it.*”

And yet again, in Heb. x. 23, “*Let us hold fast the confession of our hope*” (see revised version), for *He is faithful* that promised.” The thought here is not so much our holding the blessed hope doctrinally, as the *confession* of what our hope is; in other words, letting it be seen in life and walk *how much* we believe it practically.

I may hold the hope that a friend will come from a distance to see me, but I hold the *confession* of that hope when *I go to the station* to see if he turns up. The difference is very important. In these days many

hold the blessed hope, after a fashion, that is to say, *it is assented to as a doctrine*, but we shall only be able to hold the confession of it, in the measure that the *blessed hope itself holds us*. The Lord bless you all and keep you very close to Himself, always within sound of His voice—never out of sight of the Cross—doing His will from the heart.

I feel very keenly that this method of communicating my heart's desires towards you is very inadequate, but I earnestly hope the time may soon come when I shall have the long expected joy of meeting you face to face. Meanwhile, commending you to God and the word of His grace, believe me yours in the hope of the Gospel. G. S.

SUFFERING IN SILENCE.

I CAN conceive nothing more painful to Joseph than to be accused of crime of which he was consciously innocent, and visited with punishment undeserved; and yet under that accusation to conduct himself with the quiet, silent, beautiful reserve which he displayed on the occasion. I know not anything more difficult to bear than false accusations, except undeserved punishment; and it needs a great deal of grace to suffer and be silent, and that man will indeed have to be thankful to God who passes through the world without some mud being flung at him. But often when you cannot answer the accusation that is evil by a thorough reply, from want of opportunity, you can live it down; and I believe one of the most effective replies to calumny is living down evil. But it needs a great deal of grace, a great deal of patience, and no little magnanimity to do it. It is only a few heroes in the world, or martyr Christians in the church, who can bide their and their Father's time. Joseph did it. He said nothing: he was satisfied that there was a God who would right what was wrong and avenge his reproach, and bring forth his righteousness like the noon-day. He suffered and was silent—that vivid mark of the most exalted Christianity.

J. C.

NOTES ON THE PROVERBS.

PART IX.

PROVERB.

PARALLEL.

Chapter xii., verse 26. "The righteous is more excellent than his neighbour: but the way of the wicked seduceth them." The one is a guide, the other a snare; the one shows the right way to his neighbour, the other deceives and misleads himself and others.

Witness Joseph and Balaam.

Verse 27. "The slothful man roasteth not that which he took in hunting; but the precious substance of men is to the diligent." The one loses by his laziness, the other gains by his care. "Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip."—Heb. ii. 1.

Verse 28. "In the way of righteousness is life; and in the pathway thereof is no death." Enoch—Hebrews xi. 5. Compare John xi. 25, 26; John x. 27, 28; Jeremiah xxiii. 6; 2 Cor. v. 21.

"The righteousness of God, which is by faith of Jesus Christ," is that we now rejoice in; all other has now been set aside.

Chapter xiii., verse 1. "He is a wise son," &c. He shows his wisdom in attending to his father's correction; but he who slights correction is a scorner. Such was Pharaoh when he said, "Who is the Lord, that I should obey His voice?" &c.—Ex.

v. 2.

Verses 2, 3. Explained by chapter x., verses 11-19.

Verse 4. "The soul of the sluggard desireth, and hath nothing:" &c. God "is a rewarder of them that *diligently* seek him." Ask! Seek! Knock! are His commands.—See ch. xii. 27.

Verse 5. "A righteous man hateth lying:" See David's hatred thereof.—Ps. xxvi. 4; ci. 7; cxix. 29.

But a wicked man is loathsome, and cometh to shame." Gehazi.—2 Kings v. 27; Prov. xx. 27.

Verse 6. "Righteousness keepeth him that is upright," &c. "The just shall live by (his) faith."—Heb. x. 38.

But "The wages of sin is death."

Verse 7. "There is that maketh himself rich," &c. See R.V. — "pretendeth to be rich and has nothing"—"pretendeth to be poor, yet has plenty."—Both are miserable hypocrites.

Verse 8. "The ransom of a man's life are his riches:" &c. The riches of the rich are often a snare to rob them; the poor are not exposed to this, and are not troubled by begging, extortion, or abuse.

Verse 9. "The light of the righteous rejoiceth:" Ps. xviii. 28.—"For Thou wilt light my candle" (lamp), &c.

"The wicked shall be silent in darkness"—1 Sam. ii. 9.

Verse 10. "Only by pride cometh contention:" &c. By proudly holding to one's own opinion always cometh contention, but those who allow themselves to

be advised show their wisdom.—See Ahab's case—1 Kings xxii. 15, &c.

"God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the lowly."

Verse 11. "Wealth gotten by vanity shall diminish:" &c. Read Haggai i. 5-11, and compare 2 Cor. ix. 6-15.

Verse 12. "Hope deferred maketh the heart sick:" "Hope (that) maketh not ashamed."

"We are saved in hope."

"I shall be *satisfied* when I awake with Thy likeness."

Verses 13, 14. See chapter i., verse 24, &c. Heb. x. 28, 29.

Verse 15. "Good understanding giveth favour: but the way of transgressors is hard." Dealing truly and honestly in matters procures esteem: but cunning subtle ways only involve transgressors more deeply.

—See Daniel and his accusers; compare Joseph and the Prodigal Son—David and Saul.

Verse 16. "Every prudent man dealeth with knowledge:" &c. The prudent man acts with due thought—the fool hastily.

David would not listen to his men's advice and kill Saul. Saul had to confess to David, "I have played the fool."

Herod's rash oath.

Verse 17. "A wicked messenger falleth into mischief: but a faithful ambassador is health." "False apostles." "Ambassadors for Christ."—Read Jer. xxiii. 16-40.

Verse 20. "He that walketh with wise men shall be wise:

But a companion of fools shall be destroyed."

Verse 22. "A good man leaveth an inheritance," &c.

Verse 23. "Much food is in the tillage of the poor:" &c.

Verse 24. "He that spareth the rod," &c.

Elisha with Elijah.
Ruth with Naomi.

Lot's daughters.
Korah's company.
The proselytes of the Pharisees.—Matt. xxiii. 15.

His influence on his children for good is better than untold wealth; while the wealth of the sinner is often dispersed, and in God's providence made to supply the just, who will act as good stewards.

He carefully tills every scrap of ground. "Even the dogs eat of the children's crumbs." "Give me," said the woman of Canaan, "a dog's portion even."

—i.e., correction.—Corporeal punishment is not the only, and not always the best, chastening—see Heb. xii. 6-11.—Eli's lack of correction was cruelty.

David suffered severely from his not correcting Absalom and Adonijah.—Read 2 Sam. xiii. 39; xviii. 14; 1 Kings ii. 25.—Perhaps their personal beauty was a snare to him—2 Sam. xiv. 25; 1 Kings i. 6.

THE LORD'S SERVANTS.

ONE of our correspondents calls attention to the following words which appeared in the "Intelligence Corner," of December Northern Witness:—"Montreal, . . . How strange that none of the Lord's servants ever come here to sound out the Gospel or to build up the saints;" and asks, "Do these words really mean what they say? Or does the writer mean that only those who are in a certain recognised fellowship are the Lord's servants?"

The principle involved is important. The words referred to ought to have been in some way qualified. As they stand, they, at least, convey an erroneous impression, if, indeed, they do not proceed from an erroneous thought

Let it never be forgotten by us that God has a numerous people in the many sects of Christendom, outside those assemblies which we believe to be gathered in a Scriptural way.

Amongst such He has His own servants doing His work, used by Him to the conversion of sinners and to the edifying of saints.

Most earnestly would we contend that it is the highest privilege of those who serve the Lord in the Gospel, or in the edification of the saints, to abide by Scriptural lines. Too many have condescended for the sake of "open doors," or "popularity," or "reaching the masses," to enter into tacit agreement, not to speak what would "give offence," and otherwise to compromise the truth they profess to have learned of God.

Others there are who have never learned the mind of God with regard to many departments of practical service, e.g., baptism, ministry, fellowship, breaking of bread, &c., yet who up to the measure of their light do serve the Lord, and would willingly suffer or even lay down their lives for the Master they love. Be it far from us to hint that such are not the Lord's servants. To their own Master they stand or fall, and God is able to hold them up, and to use them, and will in due time recompense them.

Many a promise is written in sympathetic ink, which you cannot read till the fire of trouble brings out the characters.

Suggestive Topics.

LAST HOURS OF "HOLY MEN OF OLD."

1. Enoch or Rapture.—Gen. v. 24.
2. Jacob or Patience.—Gen. xlix. 18.
3. Moses or Loneliness.—Duet. xxxiv. 5, 6.
4. David or Faith.—2 Sam. xxiii. 5.
5. Stephen or Peacefulness.—Acts vii. 60.
6. St. Paul or Full Assurance.—2 Tim. **IV** 6, 8.

Revised Readings.

FROM VARIORUM BIBLE.

1 Cor. ix. 27.—"But I BRUISE (Alford, Bengel, De Wette, Meyer, &c.) my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have BEEN HERALD (Alford, Bengel, Meyer) to others, I myself should be REJECTED FROM THE PRIZE" (Alford, Bengel, De Wette, Meyer, Stanley, Wordsworth). **Chap. x. 1.**—"FOR (Sinaitic, Alexandrian, Vatican, Ephraimi, Claromontan, Lachmann, Tischendorff, Tregelles, Westcott-Hort) brethren, I would not that ye should be ignorant," &c.

Matt. xviii. 15.—"Moreover, if thy brother shall trespass (omit 'AGAINST THEE,' Sinaitic, Vatican, Alford, Lachmann, Tischendorff, Weiss, Westcott-Hort), go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone: if he shall hear thee thou hast gained thy brother."

CHRIST:

THE WAY, THE TRUTH, AND THE LIFE.

CONDUCT me, Saviour; Thou my guide shalt be
In ways divine;
Thou art the Way—towards paths that lead to Thee
My steps incline;
Stumble I must and wander if from Thee
I keep myself apart—let this ne'er be.

Instruct me, Saviour; teach Thou unto me
Thy truths divine;
Thou art the truth—bid every error flee
This heart of mine;
If Thou instruct'st me not I sure must err,
So, teach Thou me, will be my constant prayer.

Inspire me, Saviour; breathe my soul within
Thy life divine;
Thou art the life—let not corrupting sin
My heart entwine;
Thy Spirit's power most graciously impart,
And holy life make dwell within my heart.

Questions and Answers.

NOTE.—Those who endeavour to reply to questions, desire to impress upon readers their responsibility to "prove all things," and "hold fast that which is good" (1 Thess. v. 21). They make no pretension to infallibility, but give their judgment as those who have received mercy of the Lord to be faithful.—Many Questions are received but not replied to; some not being for general edification, whilst others are laid aside from want of sufficient light to deal with them.—It is requested that all communications be accompanied by the Name and Address of the sender.

QUESTION 250.—Why did Samuel offer "a sucking Lamb?" (1 Sam. vii. 9.) What aspect of the Lord Jesus is it a type of?

The passage seems naturally to connect itself with 2 Cor. xiii. 4, "For though He was crucified through weakness, yet He liveth by the power of God. For we also are weak in Him, but we shall live with Him by the power of God toward you." The "great shout" of 1 Sam. iv. 5 told out the unsubdued pride, the vain self-confidence of a guilty and ungodly people. But the adversity sent upon them had brought them low; and in chap. vii. 6, the fasting and pouring out of water upon the ground (compare 2 Sam. xiv. 14) indicate that they were being brought to a truer estimate of themselves and their condition before God. Most fitting was it, therefore, that the feebleness of the offering should be in accordance with the lowness of their condition and the weakness of their faith; and that thus the power of God, the thunders of the Almighty, should be connected with a lamb slain in utter weakness, and not with anything in which the flesh could boast.

QUESTION 251.—What is the meaning of 1 Cor. xi. 10, "Because of the angels?"

Doubtless the same angels referred to in chap. iv. 9, and in 1 Pet. i. 12, and the same also referred to, as "principalities and powers in heavenly places," in Eph. iii. 10. Christ and the Church, the mystery of Eph. v. 32, is thus shown to be a subject of intense interest to the angels:—His sufferings and glory foreshadowed and foretold, according to 1 Pet. i. 12:—The sufferings of those who follow His steps, as in 1 Cor. iv. 9, and the ordering and ministry of that assembly over which He presides as Lord and Head, in which His Spirit dwells, and where His heavenly endowments are exercised, as in Eph. iii. 10. The covering on the woman's head, as showing forth symbolically the subjection of the church to Christ, is a part of that divine ordering of the assembly in which the wisdom of God is seen. It is an instructive instance of the greatness of the issues that may be involved in the most apparently insignificant details of the will of God.

QUESTION 252.—Is it right for believers, who are gathered out to the Name of the Lord, to send their children to denominational Sunday Schools?

In replying to such a question as this all the circumstances would require to be taken into consideration. We should be disposed to inquire, first, if in the Sunday School the teachers and superintendent were really converted persons. We should also like to know if they were sound in the faith; for, on all hands, and amongst even the most evangelical, evil doctrines are being received and taught, the seeds of which might very readily be dropped into the receptive minds of the young. Other considerations might arise as to the associations young persons would thus be led into, and as to their being familiarised with practices and principles which their parents had renounced as unscriptural. Then the question arises, if there be no well-conducted Sunday classes in connection with the assembly, or within convenient distance, is there any necessity to send children to a Sunday School at all? Would it not be most profitable and wholesome exercise for the parents themselves to teach their own children, and perhaps gather in some others as well?

Correspondence.

LETTERS OF COMMENDATION.

To the Editor of *The Witness*.

DEAR BROTHER,—I desire to write a few lines in connection with the question of *letters of commendation*, in reference to your reply, page 176, to a question on the subject. For happy fellowship in Christ, we all recognise the fact that one seeking fellowship with the people of God should be known directly by some present, in whose spiritual intelligence there is confidence; or, indirectly, through some introduction, by letter or otherwise, from those who have known him; and no Christian ought to feel aggrieved, if hesitancy is felt in these days, in at once acknowledging him as a Christian, and giving him a place as such, in the fellowship of saints; for in this, as in many other things, we can say, with the apostle, "Doth not even nature itself teach you?"

But when, as in your reply to the question relative to letters of commendation, you seem to imply spiritual authority for demanding them, it seems to me that you are overstepping the line that Scripture gives us, and make that a "duty" which Scripture nowhere has made such. The only reference to letters of commendation that we have is that wherein the apostle, in writing to the Corinthians, 2 Eph. iii. 1, says, "Need we, as some others, epistles of commendation to you, or from you?" The question is here not one of simply accrediting a person as a Christian, but of recognising him as a minister of Christ; and, in all probability, those to whom he refers when he says "as some others," are those of whom he speaks with such sorrow of spirit in chap. xi., when he says, "But what I do, that will I do, that I may cut off occasion from them which desire occasion, that wherein they glory, they may be found even as

we; for such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ."

Our true safeguard, I am convinced, against false professors, deceitful workers, and heretical teachers, is not so much by letters of commendation, which are, alas! too often but very poor credentials (depending for their value on the spirituality of those who give them); but that anointing from the Holy One, spoken of by the apostle John, whereby the false and the anti-Christian is spiritually detected by the spiritually-minded.

Your reference to Acts ix. 26, is surely altogether beside the mark, for the reason why they did not receive Paul was not because he had no letter of commendation, but, because, as it is stated, that they "believed not that he was a disciple." The whole question of his reception, therefore, depended upon whether he was, or was not, a disciple; and this feature claims our special consideration in these days.

It is readily confessed that the days in which our lot is cast are those of especial danger, and need especial care; but God foresaw what the days would be, and speaks of them by the apostle in his Second Epistle to Timothy as the last days, which he emphatically denominates "perilous times"; and in this very chapter he claims for the Holy Scriptures an all-sufficiency "for teaching," "for reproof," "for correction" (*i.e.*, setting right that which has gone wrong), "for instruction in righteousness"; "that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works." I would draw especial attention for this claim made by the apostle for Holy Scripture in this epistle and in this connection, because I have noticed a tendency in some, so to regard the peculiarities of the days in which we are placed, as if something more than the simple following out of New Test. lines was necessary. Any such thought at once contravenes what Paul declares as true in regard to the sufficiency of divinely-inspired Scripture. The same remark is true in regard to the former dispensation, where, however different the outward circumstances of Israel in the days of Malachi were, from what they were at the beginning of the dispensation, the command to the faithful in those days of hollowness and worldliness, was simply, "Remember ye the law of Moses, my servant, which I commanded him in Horeb, for all Israel, with the statutes and judgments."

In conclusion, while fully acknowledging the value of letters of commendation, written by known and esteemed Christian men, let us be careful not to bring our fellow-saints under a yoke of bondage in this matter.—Yours ever in Christ, H. GROVES.

[Referring to the foregoing letter in reference to our reply to Question ccxxxviii. as to "letters of commendation," we may say that the above is only one of several communications received on the same subject. It is contended that letters of commendation were only required by and given to persons holding a prominent position, *e.g.*, teachers, such as Apollos, and that it was not a general rule for stran-

gers going from place to place to carry such. In support of this view it is contended that the "some" referred to in 2 Cor. iii. 1 are the "false apostles" alluded to elsewhere in the epistle, and who, in furtherance of their deceitful purposes, demanded "letters of commendation," having no higher credentials to appeal to. That this may be partly alluded to we do not deny, but it seems to us that, taken along with Rom. xvi. 1, 2, and Acts xviii. 27, there is little room for doubt that the reference is to a much more general practice. There is no evidence that Phœbe was recognised as acting in any public capacity, though called a "servant of the Church." Surely the same can be said of many believing women still, and why should it not be true of every Christian woman? We cannot suppose that those who "crept in unawares" (Jude 4), or those "unawares brought in" (Gal. ii. 4), came openly and honestly commended either by "brethren" or by an apostle. There is no instance, so far as we know, of letters from an assembly to an assembly commending Christians as such to fellowship. In the case of Apollos it is said, "the brethren wrote," but whether several brethren wrote separate letters, or whether one wrote on behalf of or in the name of all is not stated. What is clear is that, however it was done, it was an act in which there was brotherly fellowship. In the case of Phœbe the apostle Paul wrote as an individual. But we fail to see anything of apostolic authority in his simple and beautiful note, or anything that is not fitting for any Christian who is well known to those addressed, to write on behalf of one unknown to them. We do not contend that to carry a letter of commendation when going as a stranger to other parts is of the character of obedience to an apostolic command; but surely it will be admitted by all that it is in accordance with Scripture precedent and apostolic practice. When speaking of it in our "reply" as a "duty," we did so in the belief that the responsibility lies upon every individual who seeks fellowship in an assembly to show that he is a fit person to be received; either by giving opportunity for investigation, as in the case of recently converted persons, or by personally being known to and introduced by some present, or by letter of commendation. In either case the result to be desired is that heartily and with confidence the stranger may be received by all. Let it ever be remembered that a letter of commendation can only be taken for what it is worth. It may come from an individual and have such weight as to convey confidence to all, or it may come from "brethren," and altogether fail of its object. It is not an infallible protection against evil persons on the one hand, nor does it necessarily procure immediate reception on the other. But, nevertheless, it has its value, and we believe more so now than ever. No practice, however prudent or Scriptural, will avail apart from God Himself—the glory in the midst to attract—the wall of fire round about to protect. The evils resulting from the reception of persons without commenda-

tion are not by any means summed up in the word "impostor." There are such, but they are soon found out, and when discovered, can be summarily dealt with. Far greater mischief has been done by the reception uncommended of persons going from one meeting to another through personal animosity; by some who were inveterate causers of trouble and division wherever they went; by others who held evil doctrine and secretly propagated it, and even by immoral persons who fled from discipline. We do not speak of imaginary difficulties, but of facts well known to us and to many. Nor do we know of any stronger evidence of one being a fit person to be received than a letter of commendation, stating that the bearer is known to and in fellowship with those who are wont to assemble in accordance with the Word of the Lord.—ED.]

QUESTION 241.

"WHAT QUICKENING IS REFERRED TO IN ROMANS VIII. 11?"

DEAR MR. EDITOR,—With your permission I should like to add a word to the answer given on this subject. Many persons suppose that it refers to the resurrection of the body, but to that view there are serious objections. The most formidable of these is that the apostle refers to a quickening of "mortal" bodies, not "corruptible" bodies. The difference is striking—the first being a state of *liability to death*; the second that state of decay consequent upon it. Then, again, the passage seems to indicate that a great change is to be effected by the indwelling Spirit, and it would be difficult to apply this to saints who have departed to be with the Lord, and whose bodies of course have ceased to be temples of the Holy Spirit.

My own impression is (and I do not assert it, but suggest it), that the passage refers to the brightest of all heaven-inspired hopes, viz., the transition from mortality to immortality, which is to be the unique and blissful portion of *living saints* when the Lord shall come again. Not having died, they are changed from a state of susceptibility to death into a glorified state where death has lost its power.

The saints who are raised in "incorruption," while having the previous bliss of being "with the Lord" in spirit, and the equal joy of being glorified with Him for ever, cannot be said to enter the portals of His home in the same manner as those who do not taste death at all. This, rightly understood, would greatly enhance the sweetness of our "hope," for what could be more delightful than to be "changed in a moment" and escape the dreariness of death, which, after all, is an effect of sin.

"Oh, joy! oh, delight! should we go without dying!"

Mortal is a term applicable to living men on earth. To be made immortal is to be changed by Divine power apart from death into incapability of dying. Immortality is not "eternal life," for we have the latter now, while the other is conditional upon our being alive when Jesus comes.—A CONSTANT READER.

THE FIRST EPISTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS.

CHAP. XI. 17.

NOTES OF AN ADDRESS BY J. R. C.

THE apostle, in verse 2, had praised the Corinthians for keeping the ordinances (traditions) as he had delivered them unto them, but there were certain matters regarding which he had to reprove and correct them.

Verse 17. "Now in this that I declare unto you, I praise you not, that ye come together not for the better but for the worse." Their "coming together" had evidently neither been for their edification nor for the glory of God.

Verse 18. "For first of all when ye come together in the Church." This expression refers not to the building in which they met, but to the persons gathered. It might be read, "when ye come together as the Lord's called-out ones." The word translated Church is "Ekklesia," and literally signifies "the called-out." It is once applied to the congregation of Israel in the wilderness (Acts vii. 38)—Jehovah's people, who were called out of Egypt and gathered around Himself.

But especially is it applied to the Lord's gathered people of this present dispensation. They are individually "the called" (Rom. viii. 30). It is God who calls them (1 Peter i. 15), and they are called out from the world unto the fellowship of His Son Jesus Christ our Lord (1 Cor. i. 9). "Out of darkness into His marvellous light" (1 Peter ii. 9).

Verse 18. "I hear that there are divisions among you, and I partly believe it." This is just the opposite of what they are exhorted to in chap. i. 10.

It is not "agreeing to differ"—there is not such a thing in God's Word; but to be of one mind with Christ. To have the mind of Christ as to everything is the standard, and the nearer we all come to this the nearer shall we be to that oneness of mind which is pleasing to God.

The apostle says, "I partly believe it."

May we learn a lesson here of caution in the receiving of evil reports. To receive and repeat an evil report without being assured of the truth of it, is too often to propagate a lie. Such reports are often exaggerated and incorrect, and should be received at all times with only a partial belief.

Verse 19. "For there must be also heresies among you, that they that are approved may be made manifest among you."

Division, or schism, there had been already among the Corinthians (see chap. iii. 3, 4), but as yet the open separation called a heresy or sect had not taken place. But the apostle, whilst partly believing what he heard as to "divisions," and seeking by the truth to bring them back to oneness of mind in the Lord, can yet foresee the issue of the principles at work, the insubjection to the authority of Christ as Lord, and so prophetically he adds, "there must" not only be divisions, but "there must *also* be sects among you," for only in this way could those whom God approved be made manifest.

It is like when the Lord said, "It must needs be that offences come." Not that offences or stumblingblocks were to be desired, but, evil and undesirable as they are, in the appointment of God they must come. So as to sects, not that such rendings of the Church were to be desired; "that there should be *no schism* in the body" is the desire of the heart of God. But, nevertheless, foreseeing that the will of God would be departed from, His Word set aside, apostolic instructions treated with contempt by those* in power (3 John), and the authority of Christ denied, the sorrowful alternative of separation becomes a necessity in order to the manifestation of those who

* There is hardly room to doubt that John's Third Epistle refers to the state of affairs at Corinth at a period considerably later than Paul's Epistles. The Gaius of 3 John is probably the same as of Rom. xvi. 23 and 1 Cor. i. 14; and, if so, how fully the character of Diotrephes answers to the unnamed persons of 2 Cor. xi. 18-20, and how near was the time when division must needs ripen into heresy or sect.

are willing, at all costs, to abide by God and the Word of His Grace.

The burden of the schism in such a case does not lie upon those who are cleaving to God and His Word. Such have the approval of the Master—"Thou hast kept My Word and hast not denied My Name." Those who contend for the authority of Christ, and for the carrying out of His will, as revealed in the Scriptures, may, indeed, be branded by man as the most sectarian of all; they are "far too narrow" for the popular Christian. Nevertheless, be it ours to hold ourselves in real subjection to Christ our Lord, seeking that there be no spirit of sectarianism in our own hearts, but loving desire for all saints to be drawn closer to Christ, and into fuller understanding of, and obedience to, His will—then it matters little what people may say; we must cheerfully accept the brand, bow to the bitter reproach, and leave the issue to the judgment-seat of Christ.

Verse 20. "When ye come together, therefore, into one place, this is not to eat the Lord's Supper; for in eating, every one taketh before other his own supper, and one is hungry and another is drunken."

In these early simple days it was customary for the believers to come together for a love-feast or "agapé," to which each brought his own provisions. Some might come from long distances, and have no other opportunity of Christian fellowship. They were thus enabled to spend nearly a whole day together, and had much opportunity for mutual intercourse and edification. But two evils had developed out of this—first, the rich, who had abundance both to eat and drink, were putting to shame the poor, who, having with them scanty supply, were hungry whilst they saw the others eating and drinking to excess. Thus the Church of God was despised. Then, this feasting—this ordinary eating and drinking for bodily sustenance, had been mixed up with the partaking of the Lord's Supper, which was appointed by the Lord as a unique institution, differing essentially in every respect from an ordinary feast or agapé.

This coming together to satisfy the ordinary demands of nature was not to eat the Lord's Supper. Hence the rebuke—"Have ye not houses to eat and to drink in?"

The apostle next proceeds to state his authority for the appointment of the Lord's Supper, saying, "For I have received of the Lord."

Paul did not receive it like the other apostles on the night of the Passover supper before the Lord's crucifixion, neither did he receive it through them. If you turn to Gal. i., you will see how he received the gospel which he preached: "I certify you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached by me is not after man. For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ" (ver. 11, 12). Paul held his apostolic commission on a different footing altogether from the other apostles. They had been with the Lord in the days of His flesh, and had learned both the gospel and the appointment of the supper from His lips prior to His death. But Paul received his apostleship and his knowledge of the gospel which he preached, and the instructions of the Lord for the ordering of the Church, and the keeping of the supper, direct from the risen and ascended Christ. It was a special revelation from the glorified Lord for His Church on earth; hence the solemnity and importance of the words that follow.

"I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you." It was delivered unto those whom he had been instrumental in gathering out from the Gentiles unto the name of the Lord. I wish you to observe how very often the word "Lord" occurs in this Epistle. It is found about sixty-eight times—*i.e.*, more than double the number of times it occurs in the Epistle to the Romans or any other epistle as applied to Christ. There is a divine purpose in this. Paul, writing by the Spirit, thus insists upon the Lordship of Christ; for all the evil that then existed, and all the sectarianism that subsequently developed, sprang from the self-same root—the setting aside of the authority of the Lord Jesus, and allowing

man—in his supposed wisdom, his pride and self-will—to usurp His place. He is the Head whom God has appointed to preside over the “household of faith.” For man to alter, either through negligence or self-will, the appointments of the Lord of that household is an insult done to God. Any tampering with the ordinances of the Lord, as given in His Word, is a grievous sin in the sight of God, though it is not so regarded by many Christians at the present day.

In the Old Testament God showed His jealousy for the ordinances of His house by many solemn instances of judgment. Uzziah smitten with leprosy for going in to burn incense. The men of Bethshemesh smitten with a great slaughter for looking into the ark. Uzzah for putting forth his hand to steady it. Nadab and Abihu for offering strange fire before the Lord.

All these are instances of Jehovah's jealousy concerning the appointments of His own dwelling-place.

And although the Lord has appointed only two outward ordinances for this dispensation, and these of the very simplest possible character, does it not become us reverently to enquire how He would have them carried out, marking every expression of His will with a view to implicit obedience, and thus giving Him His rightful place as Lord?

In Rev. i. the Lord Jesus is seen in the midst of the golden candlesticks with flaming eyes—the searcher of hearts.

Where two or three are gathered together unto His name, there is He in the midst. Does He not look to see if every heart is true to Him, if each and all are willing to give Him the place He claims, and which is His right.

FRUIT-BEARING.

“AND these are they which are sown on a good ground; such as hear the word, and receive it, and bring forth fruit, some thirty-fold, some sixty, and some an hundred.”

Our Lord has elsewhere said in the gospels, that “Every tree is known by his own fruit;” and that “a good man out of the good treasure of his heart bringeth forth that which is good; and an evil man out of the evil treasure of his heart bringeth forth that which is evil.” Fruit borne there must be in the life and testimony of each one of us; and if in any we discover no traces of the fruit of the Spirit, we can but gravely question whether there be any spiritual life. None, we may say, are bringing forth fruit to perfection, but surely all who possess that life must in some measure, however feeble, be producing its fruit.

But it may be a question worth consideration, what is really meant by our Lord in the expression He uses here, viz., bringing forth fruit. Is it merely the doing of good deeds—that zeal in our toil in the Lord's vineyard which men may take cognizance of and praise? Do the gradations here spoken of refer to the number of souls converted through our instrumentality, as some have imagined? Surely that cannot be all that the Lord teaches. Before going further let us ask another question, which may help to elucidate the first. What has been God's purpose in saving us? The answer I take to be, that He might fulfil in redemption what failed to be effected in creation, that is, to surround Himself with those who should be the reproductions of Himself, and the perfect reflection of His own glory. Though when we speak at all of failure with respect to God it must be with reserve and explanation. We can never speak of failure with God in an absolute sense; it is not possible that He should fail. It was the instrument that failed—the vessel that could not contain the glory. God created man in His own likeness

SINCERITY in service,	-	Josh. xxiv. 14.
” in worship,	-	1 Cor. v. 8.
” in conduct,	-	2 Cor. i. 12.
” in testimony,	-	2 Cor. ii. 17.
” in love (to man),	-	2 Cor. viii. 8.
” in love (to Christ),	-	Eph. vi. 24.
” in doctrine,	-	Titus ii. 7.

and after His own image, but man fell from God by disobedience; he listened to the devil's lie, instead of to the word of God. But God was not thwarted, or taken by surprise. He at once proceeds to effect His purpose in that way which had been His thought before eternal times; and forthwith He continually points forward to Him that was to come, and through whose work that purpose was to be carried into effect. Both in the tabernacle (Ex. xxvi. 1-31) and in the temple (1 Kings vii. 29), where God manifested His presence, we find the foreshadowings of this in the cherubims (emblems of the divine attributes) inwrought upon the curtains and the walls. Both were typical of Christ, and in Christ the Divine Man, the second Man, the last Adam, we see the image of God perfectly shining out: "He that hath seen Me, hath seen the Father." "No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, that is in the bosom of the Father, He hath told Him out." But Christ, as Son of Man, was to be the first-born among many brethren. He who came into the world as the "only begotten" Son, became in resurrection "the first begotten from the dead." And now we by faith in Him become partakers in His death, and in resurrection receive the gift of His own life, life in union with Him, and a community of nature—the nature of God himself. In Colossians i. 12-22 we find the fulfilment of the word that our Lord spake in John xii., "Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone; but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit." Now connect this with our passage, and a moment's reflection will at once show us what is the Lord's meaning when He speaks of bearing fruit. What is it the Lord is represented as sowing here? Wheat. What is the fruit? *Wheat*. Who is *the* corn of wheat? Christ, "in whom dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily;" "who is the effulgence of His glory, and the express image of His person." What then is the fruit borne? It can only be the manifold reproduction of that which is sown. So the answer to our question seems to be that

fruit-bearing is the reproduction of the nature and likeness of God in us, the developing of that life which we get in Christ through death and resurrection. "Wherefore, my brethren, ye also are become dead to the law" (whereby God sought fruit in man, but found none), "by the body of Christ; that ye should be married to another, even to Him who is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God."

But turn for a moment to 1 John ii., and bear in mind that while in John's gospel we have the Divine life in the Son of God, we have in his epistles the Divine life in the *sons* of God. In verses 4 and 5 we read, "He that saith, I know Him, and keepeth not His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him. But whoso keepeth His word, in him verily is the love of God perfected: hereby we know that we are in Him." Here is the first blessing, and the first test—the reception of the revelation of God in His word. I no longer believe the devil's lie, either about God or about myself; I receive the revelation as God gives it in His word, and in His Son upon the cross and upon the throne, and render it "the obedience of faith." I may have it only in feeble measure, but I have received it and keep it, though Satan would rob me of it, and I know that I am in God.

But then a step further. If I know I am in God, and am abiding in Christ, I must of necessity be walking as He walked; for the Divine life cannot be different in its operations in me from what it was in Christ. So the apostle goes on, in verse 7, "Brethren, I write no new commandment unto you, but an old commandment, which ye had from the beginning. The old commandment is the word which ye have heard from the beginning," that is carrying our minds back to chapter i. 1, "That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the Word of life." That is the old commandment. In a sense, it is nothing new that God is revealing in the gospel. God always had Christ before Him as the perfect

expression of His mind. Under the old dispensation He wrote His will upon tables of stone, and gave it to man that he might keep it. But this was in vain through the weakness of the creature. But now Christ has come and *lived* before us, the living expression of the mind and will of God; and in all that He said and did, in the most minute details of daily life, He was the reflection of God. But go on: "Again, a new commandment I write unto you; which thing is true *in Him and in you.*" Now, in Christ dead and risen we have received this same life of God, and it will manifest itself just in the same manner as it did in Christ; it cannot be different. But in order to this there must be the maintained communication between the life and its source, and so our Lord tells us in John xv. 4, 5, "As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in Me. I am the Vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in Me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit; for without Me ye can do nothing." And mark how this communication is to be maintained. "If ye abide in Me, and *My words* abide in you;" and so in the epistle, "Whoso keepeth His word." As it was the reception of the word which gave life, so it is by the word that the life is developed; the wondrous and inseparable connection between the written word and the living Word. By feeding upon the written word I feed upon Christ; and the Lord said, "He that eateth Me even he shall live by Me."

And then, thirdly, in verses 9-11, there are the necessary issues of this, the living in an atmosphere of divine light, and the love of God flowing out from us to all who are God's. If I see the divine life in another, however overshadowed it be by human crookedness, I shall instinctively be drawn to that one, and love will be going out from me to that one even as it does from God Himself. It must be so, for the life is the same. Compare, too, with this, chapter iii. 22-24, iv. 20-21, and vi. 3; and do not the commandments spoken of here look back to the commandments of chapter ii.?—com-

mandments not written upon stone, but illumined with divine light and glory in the Person of the Son of God, who lived a Man upon earth, beset on all sides (from without) by human temptations, that He might show us how to walk and please God. And thus John can write, "Whatsoever we ask, we receive of Him, because we keep His commandments, and do these things that are pleasing in His sight." As God was perfectly well pleased in Christ, and fulfilled all His requests; so as He sees Christ in us, will He be well pleased in us, and grant us the desire of our hearts. Of Him He could say, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased;" and that still remains true, and He will be well pleased in us in as far as He sees the life of Christ in us.

"Herein is My Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit." Is it our desire and ambition thus to glorify God? In one only way is it possible. "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet no longer I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me." And "Himself for me" it must continue to be. And the more we know of Christ, the more His life is lived over again in us, the more we abide in Him. Thus shall we be going on from thirty-fold to sixty and to a hundred-fold fruit bearing; from being babes in Christ to be young men, and from young men to be fathers in Christ, of whom the apostle can say no more, than that they "have known Him that is from the beginning;" though, perhaps, we may from early morn till late at night be serving in shop or warehouse, or toiling in household duties, and find little opportunity for distinguishing ourselves in these activities which usually pass current as tokens of abundant fruit in God's service.

By and by God will see His purpose completely fulfilled, and Himself surrounded by the perfect reflection of all that He is. "And He shewed me that great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God, *having the glory of God.* And the city had no need of the sun, neither of

the moon to shine in it; for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof." And from it flowing out the pure river of water of life. The question now for each one of us is, How far we are helping on or hindering the purpose of God in ourselves.

NOTES ON THE PROVERBS.

PART X.

PROVERB.

PARALLEL.

Chapter xiv., verse 1. "Every wise man buildeth her house."

Prov. xxxi., 10-31.
Ruth was thus wise, Orpah was foolish.

Verse 2. "He that walketh in his uprightness feareth the Lord," &c.

The behaviour of a man shows whether he reverences or despises the commandments of the Lord.

Verse 4. "Where no oxen are, the crib is clean," &c.

An empty crib means an empty granary.

The cleansing of the crib will be cheerfully done when the increase of the labour is forthcoming, and care for the oxen may well be given in return for their labour.—1 Cor. ix. 7-11.

Verse 5. "A faithful witness will not lie," &c.

"Jesus Christ, the faithful Witness."—Rev. i. 5.

"Ye shall be witnesses unto Me."—Acts i. 8; 1 Cor. xv. 14, 15; Acts v. 32.

Verse 6. "A scorner seeketh wisdom, and findeth it not," &c.

Pilate scornfully asked, "What is truth?" but he never found it, though before his eyes.

The eunuch (Acts viii.) finds knowledge made easy because

his heart was set thereto.

Verse 7. "Go from the presence of a foolish man," &c.

Don't waste your time with a fool, for he can neither give thee wisdom, nor receive of thine.

Verse 9. "Fools make a mock at guilt," &c. (R.V.)

Lot's sons-in-law mocked at God's message about the destruction of Sodom, so did Dathan and Abiram mock.

But with the righteous is there the most sensitive dread of and sorrow for sin.—Ps. li.

Verse 10. "The heart knoweth its own bitterness," &c.

Human sympathy cannot reach to depths of sorrow, nor can the unkindness of men rob us of real joy. God understands all, and to Him we may open our hearts.

The Shunammite—2 Kings iv. 27-37.

Verse 12. "There is a way which seemeth right unto man; but the end thereof are the ways of death."

Cain.—Gen. iv.
Balaam.—Num. xxii.
Judas.—Acts i.
Demas.—2 Tim. iv. 10.
Haman.—Esther.
Matt. vii. 22-29.

Verse 13. "Even in laughter, the heart is (maybe) sorrowful," &c.

Nabal.—1 Sam. xxv. 36, 37.
Eccles. ii. 2.
Amos. vi. 3-7.
Holy joy brings no sorrow. Earthly joys fade away.

Verse 14. "The backslider in heart shall be filled with his own ways," &c.

How miserable was the prodigal (Luke xv.) till he returned. How happy was Daniel (even in the lions' den) in God's way.

Verse 15. "The simple believeth every word," &c.

Prov. i. 32, 33.
The old prophet.—
1 Kings xiii. 19.
Nehemiah vi. 2-4.
"No evil can surprise us if we watch. No evil can hurt us if we pray."

Verse 16. "A wise man feareth and departeth from evil," &c.

Joseph feared God and fled evil.—Gen. xxxix. 9-12.
He that blustereth and is confident of his own strength is a fool. Witness Peter's over-confidence and failure.

Verse 17. "He that is soon angry dealeth foolishly," &c.

Naaman.—2 Kings v. 11, 12.
Absalom, Haman, and Judas were men of wicked devices.

Verse 20, 21, 31. "The poor is hated even of his own neighbour," &c.

So selfish is man, he generally dislikes the presence of the poor and needy, as calling for his means; but he always courts the company of the rich—apart from the moral character of either. But he that despiseth or oppresseth the poor reproacheth his Maker, who permits and appoints poverty.

"Happy is the man that *considereth* the poor and needy." Such a one is blessed, and honoureth God.—Job xxix.

Dives.—Luke xvi.

Verse 23. "In all labour there is profit," &c.

Working without talking may make men rich; but talking without working is

sure to make men poor.—Ch. xxviii. 19.

Note the difference between workers and talkers in Matt. xxv. 34-46.

Verse 26. "In the fear of the Lord is strong confidence, and his children shall have a place of refuge."

David.—1 Sam. xxx. 6.
Hezekiah.—2 Chr. xxxii. 7, 8, 22.

Shadrach.—Dan. iii. 17-27.
Paul.—2 Tim. iv. 6-8.
Read Ps. xci. 9-16.
The more faith in Him the less care about circumstances.

The omnipotence of God is for the care of His children.

A. O. M.

Some Features of our Times.

THIS is an age of brilliant pretensions, but sad realities. Its professions and practices, its facts and theories, present a climax of contradictions.

There never was so much of the form of godliness, and never so little of the power.

Never were there so many professors of religion, and never so little of religion itself.

Never so many assurances of peace, and never so extensive and urgent preparations for war.

Never so many tokens of coming danger and calamity, and never such a feeling of security, expressed and implied, on the part of the people.

There never was a time when there were so many remedies for every disease, real or imaginary, which profess to be sure cures, absolutely infallible; and never a time when there existed so much disease, sickness, suffering, and death.

There never was a time when there was so much boasting of progress and advancement on the part of the race, and never a time when they gave more palpable evidence of fast descending into every depth of iniquity and sin.

KEY TO THE DISPENSATIONAL AND PROPHETICAL DIAGRAM.

BY F. H. NEWBERY.

GOD IS LIGHT." 1 John i. 5; "GOD IS LOVE. 1 John iv. 8; "GOD ALL IN ALL." 1 Cor. xv. 28; "None is good but One, *that is God*," Matt. xix. 17; Mark x. 18; Luke xviii. 19.

The three outer circles indicate the triune character, Father, Son, Spirit, of the infinite and Eternal *Elohim*. All the light, love, and goodness of *Elohim* centre in and radiate from the cross of Immanuel. Hence, the Cross is the centre of the diagram.

1. Creation. John i. 1-3; Gen. i. 1; Isa. xlv. 18 [where for "in vain" may be read "without form"].

2. Chaos. Gen. i. 2; Jer. iv. 23.

3. Formation. Gen. i. and ii.

4. Satan enters Eden. Gen. iii. Sin and death (Rom. v. 12) are the consequences; but while Jehovah-God curses the serpent and the ground, and expels man from the garden, He speaks of a Deliverer from the power of the serpent, and clothes Adam and Eve with coats of a skin.

5. Line of Cain. Gen. iv. 1-24. Driven out from the presence of Jehovah.

6. Line of Seth. Gen. v. Called "sons of God" (vi. 2).

7. Enoch. Gen. v. 18-24; Heb. xi. 5, 6; Jude 14, 15.

8. Unholy Alliances. Gen. vi. 1-12. Corruption of all flesh is the result.

9. Noah and his Family saved in the Ark, when the Old World perished by Water. Shown by the Ark across the line of Seth, with the line of judgment, Gen. v. 28-32; vi. 8 to viii. 19; Heb. xi. 7; 1 Peter iii. 18-21; 2 Peter iii. 1-7.

10. City and Tower of Babel. Gen. xi. 1-9. Results in confusion and division into NATIONS. Gen. x., and comp. Deut. xxxii. 8.

11. Call of Abram. Hitherto there has been only a single line; but from this a

portion of the diagram indicates the race of Abraham through Isaac. Acts vii. 2, 3; Heb. xi. 8; Gen. xiii. 1-5; Isa. li. 2.

12. Giving of the Law. Shown by the tables. Exod. xix, xx. Trial of Israel's and so of man's ability to stand before God on the ground of full obedience.

13. The Glory of Jehovah fills the Tabernacle. Exod. x. 4, 34, 35; comp. 1 Kings viii. 10, 11, and 2 Chron. v. 11-14.

14. Earthly Sovereignty. Shown by the crown and the broad line; first in the hands of Saul (1 Sam. viii., *et seq.*); afterwards committed to David and established in his house. 1 Sam. xiii. 14; xv. 27-29; xvi. 1-13; 2 Sam. vii. 12-16; 1 Chron. xvii. 10-14; Psalms lxxxix. 19-37; Jer. xxxiii. 20-26.

15. The Ten Tribes (Israel) separated from Judah. 1 Kings xi. 29-39; xii.; 2 Chron. x.

16. Elijah taken up to Heaven in the Whirlwind. 2 Kings ii. 1-18.

17. Israel (the Ten Tribes) taken captive to Assyria. 2 Kings x. 32, 33; xv. 29; xvii.

18. Israel dispersed among the Nations. 1 Kings xiv. 15; Jer. xxxi. 10; Ezek. xxxvi. 16-19; John vii. 35; James i. 1.

19. The Jews (*i.e.*, the Kingdom of Judah) taken captive to Babylon. 2 Kings xxiv., xxv.; 2 Chron. xxxiv.; Jer. lii. The remnant of the Jews go down into Egypt. Jer. xliii. 4-7.

20. The Glory of Jehovah leaves the earth. Ezek. viii. 3, 4; ix. 3; x. 4, 18, 19; xi. 22, 23.

21. Earthly Sovereignty in the hands of the Gentiles. Dan. ii., vii., viii., &c.

22. The Land keeping Sabbath seventy years. Lev. xxvi. 34, 35, 43; Jer. xxv. 12; xxix. 10; 2 Chron. xxxvi. 21, 21.

23, 23a. The Head of Gold—the Lion with Eagle's wings — representing the Babylonian Empire in two aspects. Dan. ii. 31, 32, 36-38; vii. 4, 17.

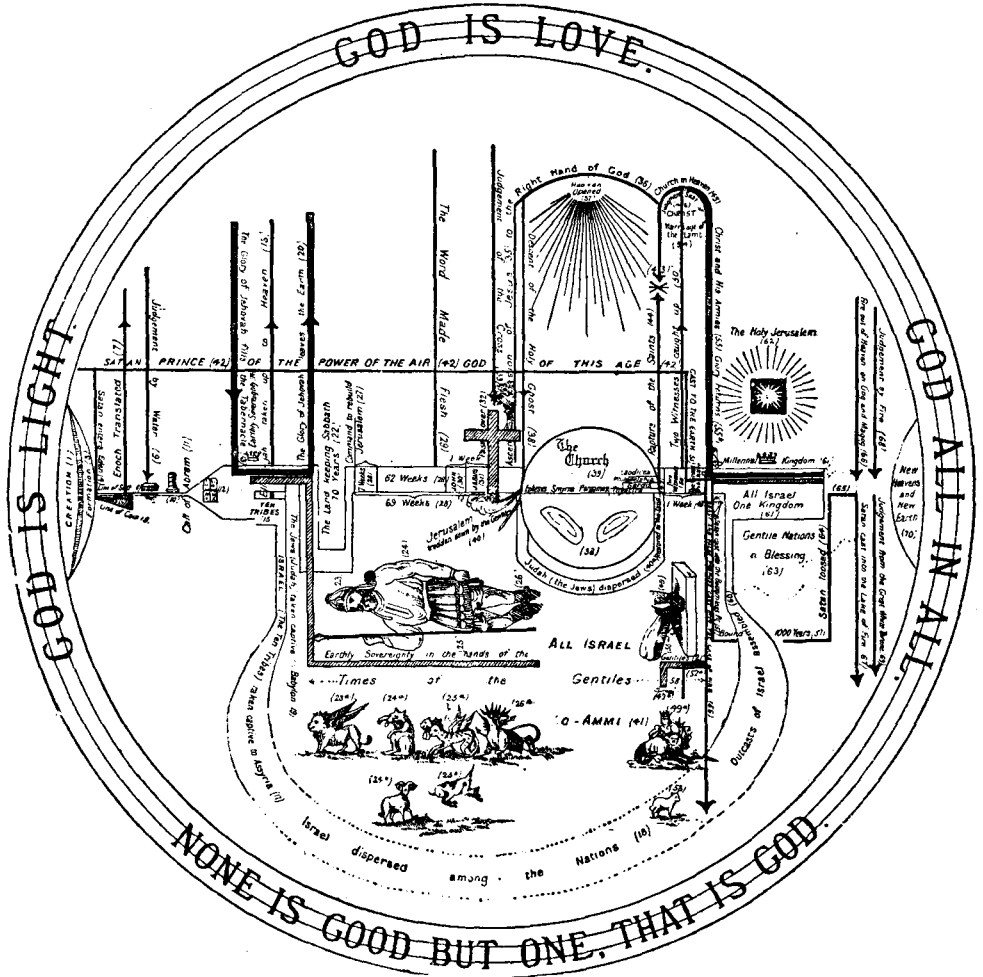
24, 24a, 24b. The Breast and Arms of Silver; the Bear with three ribs in its mouth; the Ram with two horns—representing the Medo-Persian Empire in

different aspects. Dan. ii. 32, 39; vii. 5, 17; viii. 3-7, 20.

25, 25a, 25b. The Belly and Thighs of Brass; the Leopard with four wings and four heads; the He-goat with a notable horn—representing the Grecian Empire in

different aspects. Dan. ii. 32, 39; vii. 6, 17; viii. 5, *et seq.*

26, 26a. The Legs of Iron; the Dreadful and Terrible Beast—representing the Roman Empire in two aspects. Dan. ii. 33, 40; vii. 7, *et seq.*



27. Going forth of the Commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem; Commencement of the Seventy Weeks. Dan. ix. 25; Neh. i., ii.

28. Seven (7) weeks and threescore-and-

two (62) weeks, making together sixty-nine (69) weeks. Dan. ix. 25-27.

29. The Word made Flesh. John i. 1, 2, 14; Gal. iv. 4; Matt. i. 18-25; Luke i. 26-38; ii. 1-7; Psa. xl. 6-8; Heb. x. 5-9.

30. Ministry of John the Baptist for about three years and a half. Luke i. 5-22, 57-80; iii. 1-22; Matt. iii.; Mark. i. 1-11; John i. 6-8, 19-37; iii. 23-36; iv. 1; Matt. xi. 2-19; xiv. 1-12; xviii. 10-13; Mark vi. 14-29; ix. 11-13; Mal. iv. 4-6.

31. Public Ministry of Jesus for about three years and a half. Recorded in the Gospels.

32. The Passover. Lev. xxiii. 5; Matt. xxvi. 2, 17-19; Mark xiv. i. 12-16; Luke xxii. 1, 7-15; 1 Cor. v. 7.

33. Judgment of Sin on the Cross. Shown by the Cross in the centre of the diagram with the black line descending upon it. Psal. xxii. 1-21; Isa. liii.; Zech. xiii. 7; Matt. xxvii. 45-50; Mark xiv. 33-37; Luke xxiii. 44-46; Rom. viii. 3; 2 Cor. v. 21; Gal. iii. 13; 1 Peter ii. 21-24; iii. 18.

34. The Sheaf of Firstfruits—Resurrection of Christ. Lev. xxiii. 9-14 [*“on the morrow after the Sabbath,” i.e., on the first day of the week*]. Matt. xxviii. 1-10; Mark xvi. 1-14; Luke xxiv. 1-12; John xx. 1-18; 1 Cor. xv. 4, 20-23; Eph. i. 20; 2 Tim. ii. 8.

35, 36. Ascension of Jesus to the right hand of God. John xx. 17; Luke xxiv. 50, 51; Acts i. 9; vii. 55, 56; Mark xvi. 19; Eph. i. 19-23; iv. 8-10; Psal. lxxviii. 18; Phil. ii. 9, 10; Psal. cx. 1; Heb. i.; viii. 1; x. 12; xii. 2.

37. Heaven opened consequent upon the Vail having been Rent and Jesus having entered with His own blood. Matt. xxvii. 51; Mark xv. 38; Luke xxiii. 45; John xx. 17; Acts vii. 56; Heb. ii. 9; ix. 7-12; x. 19-21; Eph. ii. 13, 18.

38. Pentecost; the Two Wave Loaves; the Descent of the Holy Ghost. Lev. xxiii. 15-21; Acts ii. 1-4; Eph. ii. 13-18; 1 Cor. xii. 13; John vii. 39.

39. The Church of God. Matt. xvi. 13-18; xviii. 15-18; Acts xv. 14; Eph. i. 22, 23; ii. 19-22; iii.; iv. 1-16; v. 23-32; Col. i. 18, 24-27; 1 Tim. iii. 15. The special subject of Paul's ministry, as the *House* or *Temple* of God, the *Body* (38) and the *Bride* of Christ. The Church as the *Kingdom of the Heavens in mystery* (Matt. xiii.) The Church in her *historical* aspect (Rev. ii. iii).

40, 40a. Jerusalem trodden down of the Gentiles, and Judah (the Jews) dispersed. Luke xxi. 20-24; Lev. xxvi.; Dan. ix. 26.

41. All Israel, Lo-ammi. Hos. i., iii.

42. Satan, prince of the power of the air; god of this age. Isa. xiv. 12-15; Ezek. xxviii. 13-15; Luke x. 18; John xii. 31; xiv. 30; 2 Cor. iv. 4; Eph. ii. 2; vi. 12.

43. The Coming of Christ as the Morning Star; the distinctive Hope of the Church. John xiv. 1-3; Col. i. 27; 1 Tim. i. 1; 1 Thess. iv. 18; v. 11; 1 John iii. 3; Rev. xxii. 7, 12, 16, 17, 20.

44. Rapture of the Saints. Rom. viii. 11; 1 Cor. xv. 23, 51-57; 1 Thess. iv. 13-18; v. 9-11; 1 John iii. 2.

45. The Church in Heaven prior to the commencement of and during the 70th week. Rev. iii. 10; 1 Thess. v. 1-10; 2 Thess. i. 6-10; ii.; Rev. iv. 4-11; v. 8-14.

46. The Judgment-seat of Christ. Rom. xiv. 10-13; 1 Cor. iii. 12-14; iv. 1-5; 2 Cor. v. 9-11.

47. The Jews Restored to the Land.

48. The 70th Week. Dan. ix. 27. Rev. iv. to xix. contains the detailed account of God's dealing in judgment during this period.

49, 49a, 49b. (1) The Feet and Toes of Iron and Clay; (2) the Beast with Seven Heads and Ten Horns; (3) Coming up out of the Sea; (4) the Woman sitting upon the Beast. (1) Dan. ii. 33, 41-43; (2) Rev. xiii. 1-10; xvii.; Dan. vii. 19-25; (3) Rev. xiii. 1; xvii. 1, 15; (4) Rev. xvii., xviii.; xix. 1-4.

50. The First Half of the 70th Week; the Two Witnesses; Taken up to Heaven. Rev. xi. 3-12.

51. Satan cast into the Earth. Rev. xii. 7-17.

52. The Second Half of the 70th Week; the Great Tribulation. Matt. xxiv. 15-28; Mark. xiii. 14-23; Dan. xii. 5-7.

52a. The Beast fully energised by Satan. Indicated by the *black line* rising up and running through the end of the line of Gentile sovereignty. Rev. xiii. 2-7; xvii. 8-17; 2 Thess. ii. 12; Dan. ix. 27; xi. 31-36.

53. The Second Dragon-speaking Beast with Horns like a Lamb; the False Prophet. Rev. xiii. 11-17; Dan. viii. 9-12, 23-26.

54. The Marriage of the Lamb. Matt. xxv. 10; Eph. v. 25-27; Rev. xix. 6-9; (Psa. xlv. 13-15); John iii. 29.

55, 55a, 55b. Christ and His Armies; the Stone cut out without hands; the Glory of Jehovah returns to the Earth. Rev. xix. 11-21; i. 7; xvii. 14; Psa. ii. 1-5; Dan. ii. 34, 35, 44, 45; Joel iii. 9-14; Zech. xiv. 1-5; Matt. xxiv. 30; Psa. lxxxv. 9; Ezek. xliii. 1, 2; (Rev. i. 15); xlv. 4; Hag. ii. 7-9.

56. The Beast and the False Prophet cast alive into the Lake of Fire. Rev. xix. 19-21; Dan. vii. 11; viii. 25; xi. 45; Isa. xi. 4; Ezek. xxi. 25.

57. Satan cast into the Bottomless Pit and Bound 1,000 Years. Rev. xx. 1-3.

58. The Times of the Gentiles—The whole period during which earthly sovereignty is not exercised by a prince of the house of David. Luke xxi. 24.

59. The Memorial of blowing of Trumpets. On the *first* day of the seventh month. Lev. xxiii. 23-25; Psa. lxxxi. 1-5; Isa. xxvii. 12, 13; Matt. xxiv. 31. THE DAY OF ATONEMENT—on the *tenth* day of the seventh month. Lev. xxiii. 26-32; Zech. xii. 10 to xiii. 1.

60. The Outcasts of Israel Assembled. Isa. xi. 10-12; Ezek. xx. 33-44; xxxvi. 24-38; Hosea ii. 14-17; Zech. x. 7-12.

61. Millennial Kingdom; all Israel one Kingdom. Rev. xx. 4-6; Dan. ii. 44, 45; Gen. xv. 18; xlix. 10; Psa. lxii.; Isa. ix. 6; xi. 1-10; xxiv. 23; xxxii. 1; Jer. xxiii. 5, 6; Ezek. xxi. 25-27; xxxvii.; xlviii.; Micah iv. 1-7; Zech. xiv. 8; Matt. xix. 28; xxv. 31-46; I Cor. xv. 25. THE FEAST OF TABERNACLES—on the *fifteenth* day of the seventh month. Lev. xxiii. 33-43; Zech. xiv. 16-21; John vii. 2, 37, 38; Isa. xii. THE SMITING OF THE ASSYRIAN AND OF ROSH, at the commencement of the millennial kingdom. Isa. x. 5-34; xiv. 24, 25; Micah v. 5; Ezek. xxxviii., xxxix.

62. The Holy Jerusalem; the Bride the Lamb's Wife. Rev. xxi. 2, 9, 27; Isa. lx.

63. Gentile Nations in Blessing. Gen. xii. 3; xxii. 18; Isa. ii. 2-5; xix. 18-25; Rom. xi. 12, 15; Rev. xxi. 24-26.

64, 65, 66, 67. Satan loosed for a little season: Gog and Magog; their Judgment and Satan's. Rev. xx. 3, 7-10.

68. Judgment by Fire. 2 Peter iii. 7, 10-12.

69. Judgment of the Dead before the Great White Throne whence they are cast into the Lake of Fire. John v. 28, 29; Rom. ii. 6, 8, 9; Rev. xx. 11-15; xxi. 8.

70. New Heavens and a New Earth. Isa. lxxv. 17; 2 Peter iii. 13; Rev. xxi. 1, 5.

"Blessed is he that readeth, and keepeth the words written, for the Time is at Hand." Rev. i. 3; xxii. 7.

"YE ARE MY FRIENDS."

JOHN XV. 14.

BY THE LATE DR. MULOCK.

"GREATER love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends."

There are no conditions of salvation—all are equally *saved*, but we are not all equally *happy*. There is a contingency or condition attaching to happiness. "If ye know these things *happy are ye if ye do them*" (John xiii. 17). "Ye are My friends if ye do whatsoever I command you," and we shall only fully know that by knowing Him for what He *is*, not for what He *has done*. The Lord is just teaching us here the difference between a servant and a friend. A servant comes in and goes out, but he knows nothing of the master's thoughts and purposes; but when a friend comes in you tell your mind to him, ask his advice, and take counsel with him. Value such, beloved, for they are *scarce*!

Paul, we find in Phil. iii., had *one lesson*, "that I may know Him;" verse 10, *one object*, "I press towards the mark;" verse 14, and *one hope*, "we look for the Saviour;" verse 20, "Ye are My friends if ye *do*." From chap. xiv. 21 we just learn this, that

if disobedient there will be no revelation of Himself. The motive, too, is not that we are to obey for what we can get, but because it pleases Him; so then our obedience should be because He desires it, and not merely because it is written. If it rises no higher than the bare command it will bring joy neither to us nor to the Lord. It is a blessed thing to do God's will without a command. A loving child will keep the *words* and *wishes* of his parents, and let us who are God's children seek to know His will, that we may do it because it is His delight and pleasure.

We will look at one or two examples of obedience, Gen. xiii. 7, &c. We have here the type of two Christians—one who walks with God, the other worldly in thought and desire. God said, "I am your friend, Abraham" (see James ii. 23, 2 Ch. xx. 7, Isa. xli. 8); but as to Lot, how far otherwise. Contrast the two. There is Abraham in the full joy and sunlight of fellowship with God, and Lot with nothing but trouble, sorrow, bitterness, and loss, all through his history. Thus the name of Christ and Christianity is dishonoured by the worldly Christian. Look, again, at the 18th chap., Abraham *lifted up his eyes* and beheld—not well-watered plains like Lot (xiii. 10), but the heavenly messengers come to commune with him, and he *ran and bowed himself*. He saw Jesus there!—he knew who they were, *because he was the friend of God*. Like Mary, as soon as the Master's call reached her ear, she rose up *quickly* and came unto Him. Abraham was desiring fellowship, hence the request that they might stay and be refreshed, "For therefore are ye come to your servant." This reminds us of the journey to Emmaus, and consequent request, "Abide with us."

Observe how reverently and humbly Abraham acts towards his guests, so "love behaveth not itself unseemly." Abide with me! What a wonderful type of fellowship. Any little thing will be accepted if only there's love.

Where is Lot all this time? Poor Lot! Down in the world, inextricably mixed up

with it; *he* has nothing to lay at the Lord's feet.

Then comes that wonderful revelation to Abraham. Shall I hide from Abraham that thing which I do? And so, in verse 23, he is thinking about God's counsels regarding Sodom. Thus the child of God, in fellowship with Him, will, in like manner, be weighing his counsels with regard to the world, and we are dissatisfied till we are close to Him. Depend upon it, if there is something unsettled, I'll never love the still hour with Him.

Look at another Scripture, Luke x. 38-42. Observe in these verses that Mary chose that *good part*, not the *better part*, as people are never tired of misquoting it. At the same time, don't let us say when cumbered with *sin* that we are like Martha. No, Martha was cumbered in *servicing Christ*, as it ever must be when we let our service outrun our devotion to Him. The difference between these two women was just this. Martha consulted her own heart; Mary consulted Christ's heart. Our service must begin *from* His feet, then *for* Him. But, alas, how often it is just the reverse, and we are trying to appease conscience by working. Let us then begin again from His feet—"Severed from Me ye can do nothing." In John xi. the same two appear again, and the characteristic of each comes out here in the most striking manner. Martha is seeking *help from* Him; Mary is seeking her *resource in* Him; and so, while the one is rushing out to meet Him, the other *sits still till she is called*, and then she hastens *to His feet* (verse 32); but we do not read that Martha found that blessed place. The conduct of Mary just teaches us the dignity of constant intercourse with Him. If we can't hear His voice we must press closer. Who can tell the value of ten minutes with Jesus!

In John xiii. we have yet another aspect of the blessedness of nearness to Him. The order here is—First, *cleanness* through His word, verse 10 (see also xv. 3); next, *rest of heart*, leaning on Jesus' bosom, verse 23; searched by the Word through

and through—nothing kept back. The contrast here between Peter and John is most impressive. Peter is at a distance, and so when the question is raised (verse 24) Peter says, "Ask Him, John, who it is." Why didn't he ask himself? Because he was not near enough. And is not a parallel to this constantly occurring in our daily experience? We ask a friend, in acknowledgment of the fact, "I'm not near enough." Note also another feature which we gather more completely from the other Gospels. They all said, "*Lord, is it I?*" John didn't say, "*Lord, is it I?*" but in the full confidence of realised love he said, "*Lord, who is it?*" In like manner is our chief joy in Christ. I do not mean salvation. The true knowledge of salvation, however important, will never keep us separate. We have Himself to occupy our hearts, and just in the measure in which we learn this, shall we be able to understand the *leaning* of verse 23, changed into the "*lying* on His breast of verse 25. Like the sick child in the mother's bosom—it need not speak, she knows all; and so our communications are not so much *to* Him as *from* Him. How this position will wither up self. How it will shrivel and burn up our selfishness. May we always be *too near* to say, "*Lord, is it I?*" and ever near enough to say, "*Lord, who is it?*" In chap. xxi. 7, John said, "It is the Lord." *He* knew Him though the others didn't. If we would seek to be able to minister to others, we must let Him take *all* our hearts.

HYMNS AND THEIR TUNES.

WE venture to offer a word of exhortation relative to the singing in the assemblies, and the tunes that are selected.

Singing is somewhat like the art of speaking and writing. To sing correctly is, to a large extent, an acquirement, a matter of education.

To lead the singing of an assembly ought to be the work of those who, by

natural ability and education, combined with spirituality, are best fitted.

Not unfrequently the singing is led by one who has so little knowledge of music that he starts a common metre tune to a long metre hymn, or *vice versa*, with the result of coming at the second line to an ignominious halt, utterly destructive for the time being of the spirit of worship; whilst one better instructed begins at last, under great difficulty, to take the place he should have taken at first, and leads with a suitable tune. "Let all things be done decently and in order."

But even where the singing is led by one who is competent to do so, as regards knowledge of music, and voice and ear, how very commonly it occurs that out of his limited stock of tunes he manages to find, on the spur of the moment, only one that will suit the metre. It is anything but appropriate to the words, but then it is the only one he can get his tongue about at the moment, and so it is sung, but with feelings of extreme discomfort by most, and of positive distress by those who have more than average ear and taste for music. Again the spirit of worship is marred, praise is hindered, and edification lost.

It was with a view to help the assemblies in these matters that the Music Edition of "The Believers' Hymn-book" was prepared.

We cannot but rejoice and thank God for the remarkable acceptance the edition, with words only, has found in Scotland, north and south, in England, in Ireland, in America, Australia, New Zealand, and even in other parts.

It is by no means perfect, and in future editions many errors that have passed unobserved will, it is hoped, be corrected; but, such as it is, we have reason to believe that it has been made a blessing.

But we feel that a word is needed to help to more uniformity as to the tunes.

We should deplore as a great calamity the putting of music above praise, or, in any respect, over-estimating its value. It must ever be regarded as subordinate. But if there is to be singing at all—and it is

fully warranted in the New Testament (1 Cor. xiv. 15, Eph. v. 19, Col. iii. 16)—surely it ought to be such as will help devotion rather than hinder.

In this we place foremost *the appropriateness of the tune to the words*. Our beloved brother, who bestowed labour much and long upon the music, has, in most cases, succeeded in this to an extent that only the use of the book will prove.

As instances of adaptation of music to words that cannot fail to be appreciated, we may refer to the few following out of many:—

- No. 1, DEERHURST, to "Abba, Father, we approach Thee."
 " 5, ST. AGNES, DURHAM, to "According to Thy gracious Word."
 " 15, MAINZER, to "Before the throne of God above."
 " 17, ST. MAGNUS, to "Behold the Lamb with glory crowned."
 " 22, CELANDINE, to "Bright, bright home."
 " 42, DUNSTAN, to "Crowned with thorns upon the tree."
 " 44, THANKSGIVING, to "Crowns of glory ever bright."
 " 79, ST. PETER'S, to "How sweet the Name of Jesus sounds."
 " 187, AURELIA, to "O Head once filled with bruises."
 " 258, SHARON, to "Sweet the moments."
 " 279, LYNNWOOD, to "There is a Fold whence none can stray."
 " 304, HARRINGTON, to "'Tis past, the dark and dreary night."

Of course, to some extent, adaptation is a matter of taste, and therefore it would be impossible always to please everyone.

The introduction of tunes new to an assembly requires caution and discretion. We think it is not desirable, as a rule, to do so at the gathering around the Lord's Table, as it necessarily involves some distraction until it has been sung a few times. But, surely, at the close of a meeting through the week, all who are gathered might spend, not unprofitably, a little while singing over, by way of practice, some of the less familiar tunes.

The great increase of the larger occasional gatherings of late years, commonly known as "Conferences," affords a further reason why it is so desirable that the same tunes be sung to the different hymns in all places.

The modern hymns by Sankey, M'Granahan, &c., are never known or sung apart from their own appropriate tunes; the tune is, in fact, a part of itself. Why should it not be so with nearly all our hymns?

There are now a good many assemblies in which the tunes in the Music Edition of "The Believers' Hymn-book" are pretty generally adhered to, and we think all such will gladly testify to the benefit received.

CENTRAL AFRICA.

The last intelligence from Brother F. Arnott, dated March 9th, 1886, from Garenganzi, is encouraging and hopeful. At that date he did not know that Brothers Scott and Swan were on the way to join him; but he was "earnestly" looking for helpers, and was preparing for the arrival of such. Ere this, let us hope that they have met. The following letter, although of an earlier date, only arrived with the later letters, is full of interest, and may well stir up to thankfulness to God for caring for His young servant in the midst of much perplexity and danger:—

"IN THE GOVALE COUNTRY, CENTRAL AFRICA,
 "4th December, 1885.

"I AM now by the upper feeders of my own Zambesi. Have much country to go over yet in front of me, but the Lord He goeth before me, and His *kindness* will not depart from me. We know how He has led in the past. We feel His present love, and His goodness is sure to us all the days of our life. 'I had fainted unless I had hoped to see the goodness of God in the land of the living.'

"Let us keep the word of His patience. *He* hath set before us an OPEN DOOR which *no man* can shut; for nothing in earth or hell is able to foil us, or even to hinder us, in serving Him—in pleasing Him. What precious figures those are in 2 Tim. ii. for us to consider—The soldier free of entanglement, that he may obey *Him* who hath enlisted him;—The wrestler, wrestling *lawfully*;—The fruit of the husbandman's labour FIRST the husbandman's. (1), *Free* to obey Him; (2), *Careful* to obey Him; (3), *HIS, All for Him*.

"That cloth you sent me is doing capital service—my carriers are highly pleased with it; so you might send off, when you may have received enough to pay *all* expenses, the same amount (9 pieces, 100 oz. each). If you can get the same cloth—a dark navy blue colour (common in trade)—send *also* 9 pieces of it.

"I had not thought to trouble you again with getting cloth for me, but the men have appreciated the better quality and extra width, so that it has gone a long way toward inducing men to carry, who otherwise might not *have cared* to.

"Hoping to get letters from you soon, some way or other. As you will see from my journal, I have had a hard time of it getting off, and at no ordinary cost. The powers that be were against me. My stock in hand is very low. If I arrive at my destination with one bale of cloth I shall be thankful."

"F. S. ARNOTT."

LETTER from C. Swan, dated Nov. 7, from Balinda, whither Scott and himself had returned from interior on their way to the coast. Scott had completely broken down, and Swan was, of course, compelled to see him safe back again to the coast. Did not intend to stay at Benguela, as it was expensive, but would be compelled to return again to make purchases on Arnett's account, also to await carriers from Garengani country. Mr. Faulknor was due to sail from Liverpool to Lisbon on Wednesday, January 12. Address W. L. Faulknor, c/o W. C. Kendal, 32 Rua das Janellas, Verder 1º Ander, Lisbon.

Correspondence.

QUESTION 252.

SENDING CHILDREN TO DENOMINATIONAL SUNDAY SCHOOLS.

To the Editor of *The Witness*.

I was a little surprised to see your reply in *Jan. Witness* respecting Denominational Schools. Many who are a grief to Assemblies on that very score will find a shelter there for their practice, and it is in direct opposition to Mr. Holiday's article, for the more godly the teacher and superintendent, the more danger there is of the children being ultimately led there altogether. Then how can those in *sects* be "sound in the faith"? You will not find a Denomination free of *non-eternity*. Why did we leave them? Because of their unsoundness of faith; for, being right on the question of "the Person and Work of Christ" is only a *part of the faith*, though of first importance; but if we wanted to act upon, and act out the whole truth, we had to come out, and it would be a grief to a parent's heart, and a dishonour to God, to see our children go back, and the godly teacher would be the first link. Ezra viii. 21—"A right way for our little ones."

G. R. GEDDES.

[We are at a loss to know why our Br. Geddes, and others who have formed a like impression, regard our reply to Question 252 as sanctioning the sending of the children of believers to Denominational schools. One correspondent says, the right answer would have been "an emphatic *NO*." But we fear there is much danger of saints relying on man's opinions, and regarding such a paper as *The Witness* as an AUTHORITY. This we jealously seek to avoid, and though we might often reply with an

emphatic "Yes" or "No," we think it more after the way of divine wisdom to make it an aim to exercise the understandings and consciences of enquirers, so that they may be led to act before God upon intelligent and scriptural grounds. Our own belief is that no Denominational Sunday School will stand the simple and scriptural tests suggested in our reply, nor would we in any degree modify now our reply to a similar question in June, 1883, Vol. xiii., Question XCI.—Ed.]

Questions and Answers.

QUESTION 253.—1 Tim. iii. 2, "A bishop must be blameless, the husband of one wife." Does this imply that a man who is without a wife cannot do oversight work?

We have no doubt the true meaning is obtained by emphasising the *one*. Many converts must have had more than one wife at the time of their conversion. It is noticeable that had the apostle's meaning been to forbid an unmarried man doing oversight work he would, in all likelihood, have said, "*Must be married*," as in 1 Cor. vii. 10, 34.

Paul himself was unmarried (1 Cor. vii. 7, 8), and probably also Timothy. Nevertheless, there are experiences in married life tending, in those who are rightly exercised thereby, both to fit them for such a service and to demonstrate their fitness. For example, 1 Tim. iii. 4, 5.

QUESTION 254.—Does the word "many," 2 Cor. ii. 6, mean the majority, and not the whole assembly; and is it scriptural for the majority to act without the whole assembly?

The word, no doubt, signifies "the more part," and probably implies that a section of the Corinthian Church, who called in question the apostle's authority, refused to act out the mind of the Lord in the matter.

The greater part did so act towards the man who had sinned, that he felt it to be a punishment inflicted on him to be so shut out from Christian communion.

But the fact that their faithfulness produced the desired effect in his soul, does not lessen the sin of any who, by not acting out the command of the Lord through the apostle, did all they could to harden him in his sin. Often have we seen, with sorrow, how the edge of conviction was blunted, and true restoration hindered, by a keeping up of friendly intercourse with an excommunicated person.

It may have been out of natural kindness, and well meant, but none the less evil in its character, and mischievous in its results.

The desirableness of *unanimity* in church action can hardly be over-estimated, and well would it be if differences of judgment were the occasion of patient waiting upon God, and of godly controversy, if need be, rather than of hasty division.

But, in a matter so clear as the case referred to in Corinthians, there was no course open to the spiritually exercised majority but to bow to the apostolic command without delay.

QUESTION 255.—What did the apostle Paul mean by Eph. iii. 1, "The prisoner of Jesus Christ for you Gentiles"?

At the time he wrote this epistle, as also the epistle to the Philippians and that to the Colossians, the apostle was a prisoner at Rome. The conditions of his bondage are found in Acts xxviii. 16, 20, 30, 31.

It is referred to in Eph. iii. 1, as above, iv. 1, vi. 20, see margin; Phil. i. 7, 13, 14, 16; Col. iv. 3, 18; 2 Tim. i. 16, and ii. 9.

The expression "for," or "on behalf of you Gentiles," may refer to the fact, that one occasion of the inveterate enmity of the Jews, through which he became a prisoner, was their jealousy of his ministry to the Gentiles. See 1 Thess. ii. 16; Acts xiii. 50, xvii. 5, xxii. 21, 22.

But probably there is a deeper reason. It was upon no ordinary ground of preference that Paul styled himself the Apostle of the Gentiles (Rom. xi. 13).

At the time of his conversion the Lord indicated this as the first sphere of his service, "To bear My name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel" (Acts ix. 15). Then, along with Barnabas, he was designated for this particular line of service by the Holy Spirit (Acts xiii. 2). Mightily was he used and helped of God in all his evangelistic journeyings among the Gentiles. But in Acts xviii. 21, we find him fixed in purpose to keep a feast at Jerusalem. In Acts xx. 16, he is hastening to arrive, if possible, in time for Pentecost. In Acts xxi. 4, he receives intimation from disciples, "through the Spirit," that he should not go up to Jerusalem." We judge from this, that the purpose of xviii. 21, and the haste of xx. 16, could not be of the Lord, for the Spirit would never hinder the Lord's command. In verse 8 he is found in the house of Philip, whose four daughters prophesied. But when the Spirit again has a message for Paul it is given, as was fit, by the man Agabus, and not by Philip's daughters. Here again he is warned of the Spirit and besought by the brethren, but such is the fixedness of his purpose that, in spite of all, on he goes to Jerusalem.

Then follows the ceremonial purification, the declaration that he keeps the law, "until that an offering should be offered for every one of them," Paul included.

But, most graciously, the Lord, whose Spirit's warnings had been unheeded, prevents by His providence the purposed offering from ever being presented. When the seven days were "almost ended," the Jews laid hands on him. It was those Jews who were of Asia, and who therefore knew of his fellowship with Gentile Christians, that so acted.

Then in xxii. 21, he seems to remember afresh how definitely the Lord Himself had before charged him that his special sphere of service was to be

among the Gentiles. The same is indicated in xxvi. 17.

Finally, as a prisoner, he is sent to Rome, and thence he wrote those precious letters which have ever since been no small portion of the Church's heritage.

His whole journey to Jerusalem has been summed up, as to results, in the following words, "An enraged populace, a trembling Felix, an almost persuaded Agrippa, but no record of a soul saved." What a contrast to Acts xiv. 27!

From all this it may be seen how deeply he felt the words as he wrote them, "The prisoner of Jesus Christ for you Gentiles."

QUESTION 256.—Is it right that a hymn should be sung between "the breaking of bread" and the passing of the cup?

There is no scriptural precedent for this practice, and it has always been felt by us to be out of place. On the contrary, the singing of a hymn after the Supper is over, is according to Scripture (see Matt. xxvi. 30), and is always felt, if suitable in its character, to be fitting and edifying.

It is with unfeigned sorrow we announce that **our beloved brother, F. A. Banks**, for whom prayer was requested last month, passed away peacefully into the presence of the Lord on Sunday evening, January 16th, at half-past eight. His health failing in May, he spent some time in the North of Scotland, then in Switzerland, but feeling no better, returned to Ashburton, in Devonshire, where he "fell in sleep." Many of the Lord's people in England, Ireland, Scotland, and Demerara, who have been helped by his ministry, will learn with sorrow of his departure.

Our dear brother wrote to Aberdeen in reference to the New-Year Meetings there, as follows—"I am thinking of the Conference now so near. I trust it may be alike profitable and practical. A Conference may be a great blessing, or the source of far-reaching evil. Give my love to all, and remind them of the passage, 'Work . . . while it is day: the night cometh when no man can work'; and also of 1 Cor. iii. 13, 14, 15 verses."

We may also mention that the closing letter on Rom. viii. 11 in our January Number, was the last communication we received from the pen of our beloved brother, now with the Lord.

Mr. William Maurice Banks, the brother of Mr. F. A. Banks, writes—"I wish you would thank those kind friends who have so kindly sent letters of condolence with me in my bereavement, they being more than I fear I can answer separately, and especially those who travelled miles to attend his death-bed, funeral, &c.; all seemed to love him as a brother."

THE FIVE GIFTS OF EPHESIANS IV.

(Translated from the Swiss "Nouvelles.")

ONE of the first consequences of the ascension of the Lord Jesus was the descent of the Holy Spirit on the witnesses He had chosen, in order that they might be "clothed with power from on high." Then, as assemblies were formed by their means, the continued care of the ascended Christ for His Church was proved by bestowal of spiritual gifts to these assemblies. And what was true then is true now, notwithstanding all these centuries during which the truth has been obscured by man's tradition. Christ has never ceded His place, as the Giver of every gift whereby His Church is to be edified, to any man or body of men. He still holds the individual responsible to use whatever gift he may have received, and the assembly responsible to recognise each and every gift with joy and gratitude. In the verses read (Eph. iv. 11, 12), we find five classes of ministry—that of the apostle and of the prophet, that of the evangelist, and the pastor, and the teacher. Let us look at them in order:—

1. THE APOSTLE is literally "one sent forth." To be an "apostle of Christ Jesus" it was necessary to have seen the Lord after His resurrection (Acts i. 21, 22; 1 Cor. ix. 1). This at once sets aside the pretensions of those who, in our days, have dared to call themselves "the Lord's restored apostles."

2. THE PROPHET spoke to men "unto edification, and exhortation, and comfort" (1 Cor. xiv. 3), besides being the medium of direct revelations to the Church, while as yet the canon of New Testament scripture was not completed. It would appear that with the prophets of the New Testament, as with those of the Old, *preaching* occupied a greater place than *prediction*. We have been "built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets," Jesus Christ Himself being the extreme or foundation corner (Eph. ii. 20). These two ministries have therefore ceased, as one cannot twice lay the foundation of the same building.

3. THE EVANGELIST is literally "a bearer of good or joyful tidings." His mission is to disciple the nations, to baptise (that is immerse*) the disciples, and to teach the immersed (Matt. xxviii. 18-20).

4. THE PASTORS, elders, or overseers, find their place in the already formed assembly. In order to take oversight, a certain age and experience are essential; therefore, they are spoken of as *elders*, and must on no account be ones newly brought to the faith (1 Tim. iii. 6).

The simple and seemly patriarchal order, as it existed in the world in the remotest times, re-appears in the Church. "Days should speak, and multitude of years should teach wisdom" (Job xxxii. 7). "*Should*," we repeat, for it does not follow that all elder brethren are God-given overseers.

The pastor can only exercise his gift amongst brethren whom he knows and to whom he is known. The evangelist can begin to preach the gospel on the very day of his arrival in a strange district, and the teacher can immediately set himself to instruct brethren to whom he is unknown by face. In both cases the manifestation of their gift serves them by way of introduction; but the pastor must first become acquainted with his surroundings, and with each individual character with which he has to deal. The words, "bishops," "pastors," and "elders," are always in the plural throughout the New Testament, except when applied to Him who is "The Shepherd and Bishop of our souls" (1 Peter ii. 25). In the professing churches of to-day this order is set at nought, for if Christ should give twelve pastors to one church, one pastor would be utilised and eleven immobilised; while if He should give none, the church would procure one for herself. To-day there must be several churches for one bishop; in the days of the apostles there were several bishops in one church.

5. THE TEACHERS give instruction to the souls gathered into the assembly by the

* The old-fashioned but much abused English words "dip" and "dipper" express more accurately, in our judgment, than any other, the meaning of the Greek "baptizo" and "baptistees."

evangelist. This is just the opposite of what we see in the multitudinist churches around us. They begin by receiving as Christians all who will come into their communion, and then to these "communicants" they preach the Gospel. What would be thought of a regiment in which the recruiting-sergeant was employed among the rank and file, and drill or instruction rendered impossible by the difficulty of guessing who were recruits and who were not? And what can we think of the system that compels a preacher to address the same congregation sometimes as "brethren in Christ," and at other times as unregenerate sinners? What can result from such confusion but that the self-righteous will claim the consolation addressed to the true believer; while the latter, in his humility, will apply to himself the threatenings addressed to the unrepentant and the hypocrite? Thus saith the Lord Jehovah; "With lies ye have made the heart of the righteous sad, whom I have not made sad; and strengthened the hands of the lawless one, that he should not return from his evil way, by promising him life." The teacher is set in the Church to prevent this confusion by "rightly dividing the word of truth," by distinguishing between Gospel for the unsaved and sound doctrine for the saved; by giving milk to the babes and strong meat to them that are of full age; by shewing the difference between the promises given to Israel and those given to the Church; between fulfilled and unfulfilled prophecy; in short, by explaining the Bible by itself, and neither by the tradition of the fathers nor by the reasonings of more recent times.

The Epistle of James contains a special warning on the subject of teachers (ch. iii. 1). Alongside of a great liberty for the exercise of the various gifts, the Scriptures counsel a holy moderation in their use. Let no one persuade himself lightly that he is a teacher, and let those who have the gift employ it in fear and trembling, "knowing that we (that is, we who are teachers) shall receive a severer judgment." The teacher becomes responsible, not only for

his own errors, but for the Lord's people whom he may have led astray.

The three gifts which still remain to us are prefigured in the Old Testament. When the Tribe of Levi was numbered (Num. iii. and iv.) the Lord appointed to each of the three families of the Levites special duties in connection with the service of the tent of the congregation.

1. Thus Moses committed to the charge of the sons of Merari the boards of the tabernacle and the bars thereof, and the pillars, etc., which they had to bear across the desert to the appointed place of sojourn.

2. Then came the families of the Gershonites, who bore the curtains of the tabernacle, the coverings of the tent, and the cords and hangings of the court. Their duty was to bind all together; to cover and close the structure.

3. Lastly, the Kohathites, with the ark, the table, the lampstand, the altars, and the utensils of the sanctuary, all to be carefully deposited in their respective places within.

Applying this type to the labourers of the present dispensation, we may say:—

1. That the work of the evangelist corresponds to that of the Merarites. His duty is to herald the good news where they have been little or not at all proclaimed; he does not build on another man's foundation. In the place where he found nothing, so to speak, but the sand of the desert, he plants the base of the apostles' doctrine, on which is raised up an assembly of God, composed of individuals who own Christ as Saviour and as Lord, and who are united together in a holy fellowship.

2. The pastors' work corresponds to that of the Gershonites, who consolidated the work of the Merarites. They must heal the broken and sustain the standing. In doing these things, and in taking heed to their conduct and doctrine, they both save themselves and them that hear them.

3. In the last place, the teacher, like the Kohathite, puts each of the precious things entrusted to him where it ought to be: the *doctrine* which, like the seven-branched lampstand, lights up the house of God;

the *fellowship* in which, as from above the mercy-seat, God meets and communes with His people; *the breaking of the bread*, in which we present ourselves before God, as the tribes of Israel were represented on the table of shewbread; and the *prayers* and *praises* which mount, as the perfume from the golden altar, an agreeable odour to the Lord.

Just as the Levites were nourished by the tithes taken from their brethren who came out of the loins of Abraham, there are certain servants of God called to devote themselves entirely to preaching and teaching, and the assemblies are responsible (to God, not to them) to care for their temporal wants. Paul questions the Corinthian saints thus—"Who goeth a war any time at his own charges? Who planteth a vineyard and eateth not of the fruit thereof? or, who feedeth a flock and eateth not of the milk of the flock?" The necessity of this ordinance of God is specially manifest in the case of the itinerant evangelists ("who for the Name went forth, taking nothing from those of the nations"), whose duty is to preach the gospel from place to place, insomuch that they, clearly, cannot support themselves by working with their hands. Still, the Scriptures are very careful not to suggest that a preacher or teacher is dishonoured by so working when he can or must do so.

Paul himself worked with his hands, not that he had any doubt as to his authority to receive of the Church's bounty, but, necessity being laid upon him to preach the gospel, he willed to labour for a reward (1 Cor. ix. 18), as well as to set an example to leading brethren who should come after him (Acts xx. 33-35).

If assemblies do not see their privilege of helping forward the "brethren, even strangers," and of doing so "worthily of God," He will not send out His labourers to starve, neither will He supply by miracle the needs of those already out. If we pray Him to thrust forth labourers, we must consider what we are willing to do *when He answers our prayer*. And where the love of money or the love of self is dominant, it will only make matters worse to cloak these

evil things with the pretence of high spirituality and keen discernment of another man's lack of gift or calling.

We are not aware of any example in the New Testament of a pastor supported by the Church. The pastors arise in the very assembly wherein they take the oversight; and the assembly has no warrant to send to a distance for a new pastor when the Lord removes an old one. Thus, the work of the overseer does not involve much travelling, and they will usually glorify God more by continuing in their own businesses while shepherding the flock of God.

This is what Paul says to the elders of the Church in Ephesus (Acts xx. 17-35), and what Peter writes also in his First Epistle v. 1-6. These scriptures teach besides—

1. That the "elders" or "presbyters" (Acts xx. 17, R. V.) and the "bishops" or "overseers" (v. 28 R. V.) are the same persons;
2. That the elders are placed "among" the flock, and the flock "among" the elders (1 Pet. v.; comp. vv. 1, 2); and,
3. That the Greek word "*Kleeros*," from which the word "clergy" has been derived, signifies the flock to be tended, and not the shepherd or shepherds who care for it.

Finally, all these gifts are bestowed "with a view to the perfection of the saints unto work of service" (Eph. iv. 12, Gr. lit.). In other words, the gifts having manifested themselves ought to reproduce themselves.

Thus, the evangelist ought to train the budding gifts in younger brethren, in order to leave on the scene of his labours not only converts, but preachers of the Gospel.

The teacher ought to commit the truths he has learned to faithful men, who will be competent to teach others also.

The pastors ought to encourage those into whose heart God has put the same earnest care for the saints.

If this is carried out practically, the result will be increasingly unto edification; whereas, if prominent servants care for nothing but the exercise of their own gifts, sooner or later it will be seen that believers are being gathered around man, and not unto the Lord Jesus Christ. A. P. M.

THE GOSPEL OF JOHN.

CHAPTER XIII.

NOTES OF ADDRESSES BY W. LINCOLN.
Communicated by J.S.H.

WE now begin a new section of this Gospel. The Lord is speaking as if He were in heaven, and His own family gathered around Him.

In the first twenty verses of this chapter we have brought before us that beautiful and touching scene of the Lord washing His disciples' feet, and that in a particular character, not only as the Divine Servant, but, as He says Himself, in His character as Lord and Teacher, as though He were at home: "having loved His own which were in the world," as if He were gone. In fact, this beautiful scene really brings before us the Lord's action at the present time, how, as if girded with the towel, He is ever, ever, though upon the throne of God, washing His disciples' feet. When the Lord Jesus came down from Heaven to serve His people, He descended into the lower parts of the earth. This is put before it speaks of His giving apostles, prophets, &c. (Eph. iv). Now upon the throne of God still is He serving by washing their feet. Then when He comes again, we learn from Luke xii. that He will gird Himself, and come forth and serve His people.

It is essential to the understanding of this scripture to bear in mind that the Lord speaks as if He were in heaven. In chapter xii. He had referred to Himself as the corn of wheat dying; this forms, as it were, the introduction to this scene.

The chapter opens with four facts put in juxtaposition by the Holy Ghost. The time had come for Him to depart to the Father, His own are in the world, and He loves them unto the end; and it is love in action, love washing their feet. Hell was rousing itself to put down, if possible, the Son of Man by death. On the other hand, Jesus, knowing whence He came and whither He went, rises and girds Himself to wash their feet.

First we have to enquire who they are that have their feet washed. "He that is bathed needeth not save to wash the feet." So that the passage draws a distinction between the two washings. And let me remind you that the washing is not in blood but in water, the water of the Word. Besides the purging of the conscience once for all by the blood of Jesus, there is the washing of regeneration by the Holy Ghost; or, in other words, the communication of a new nature. "Born of water and of the Spirit," or, "having our bodies washed in pure water." The allusion in part is to Old Testament types. We find on looking at the Old Testament that when Aaron and his sons were consecrated to the priest's office they were washed all over with water (Leviticus viii.); then we find that whenever they went into the Tabernacle to minister, they had to wash their hands and their feet at the brazen laver. Now, it is essential to keep these washings distinct before the mind. We are washed, we are sanctified, we are justified (1 Cor. vi. 11); but now is the time for the washing of the feet. For Christ not only gave Himself for the church, but has to see to "nourishing and cherishing" it, and to the "washing in water by the Word." We have been washed; we have got a new nature; we have been born again; and precious is it to remember, first, that through the blood there is not a sin upon the soul or the conscience. And then, secondly, that blood, when I go in before God, is reckoned there at the price at which God alone could estimate it, and I stand before God according to all its infinite value. Then, further, I not only stand in the value of the blood of Christ, but have a new nature, the same nature as my great High Priest. So that, with my title in that precious blood, only rightly valued in there, and with the nature of the Lord Jesus Christ, my position before God is a grand one. Only, seeing I am in the wilderness, in the world, as a matter of fact my communion is continually being disturbed; and therefore is that Holy One, the High Priest of our confession, washing our feet.

In Exodus xxxviii. we are told that the laver was made of the looking glasses of the women, to show that we are not to look at self, but to look at Christ. Contrast that with the laver before the throne of God in Revelation, which we are told was a sea of glass. In between the laver of Exodus xxxviii. and Revelation iv., glass to begin with and glass to end with, to show that we have done with self, and again that we may behold ourselves without spot—in between is this beautiful picture for us who are in the wilderness, and need our feet to be washed. And we have the same thing in Numbers xix. in type.

He loves them to the end. And observe how He loves them. He loved us, for He gave Himself for us; that is past. But He loves us to the end, that is, my Lord would lift me up to communion with the Father, and seeing that there is death here and other things that would jar with that, my blessed Lord and Teacher will wash my feet. "He loved them to the end," "that He might present it to Himself, the church glorious, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing." An action incomplete at present, He has begun it, and has been at it ever since. Oh, how this beautiful picture should endear Him to us. We know He will do this priestly work as well as His Saviour work, and will restore our souls to the light of His presence, to the full communion of the presence of God. He is engaged in this lowly occupation, not for a day, or for half an hour, but at all times. And, oh, wonder of wonders, it is as our Lord. This is the gentle character of His sway, and when He rules, it is, as it were, by entreating us even upon His knees. As when we were unsaved, so now that we are saved, He is entreating us. "We pray you, in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God." "I beseech you, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice unto God." He could come with power and assert His rights; but this loving Lord condescends to show His will in a gentle, gracious way, and to entreat us.

And if we are not in communion, and dis-

obedient, then He is our Lord and Teacher. And this is what He will do until He has got us home with Himself, resting under His eye. It is His own doing; He devolves it, strictly speaking, upon no one else. It is customary in the east for one to hold the basin, another the towel, and for another to wash; but Jesus does it all. Yet is there a sense in which the Spirit of God acts under Him, for the Spirit is pleased to act under Christ, as Christ under the Father. "He shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you."

Jesus is our Teacher, yet is He pleased to teach us by His Spirit, and as He teaches us He would wash our feet; if not, then His teaching has not profited us much.

We come, in the second place, to a very practical way of looking at this, because the Lord goes on to say, "Ye call me Master and Lord: and ye say well; for so I am. If I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet; ye also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you. Verily, verily, I say unto you, the servant is not greater than his Lord; neither He that is sent greater than He that sent Him. If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them." So now I ask your attention to the practical bearing of this scripture.

The Lord Jesus lifts us into association with Himself. Is He the King and Priest? We are kings and priests with Him. Is He the great High Priest? We are priests under Him. Is He the great feet-washer of His people? Lo, He constitutes us feet-washers too. He shares all with us now that the work of the Cross is effected. Now bear in mind what is the object of all feet-washing and teaching. It is dealing with the saints of God so as to bring them into and sustain them in full communion with God. If there be a speck upon your feet, you are not fit to minister before God. If anything is allowed in your life inconsistent with His brightness, and of which you are conscious, you will never

enjoy communion with Him. And how are we to be brought back to this? By the washing of the feet. As a matter of fact, there is not one of us in the fullest communion of God that we might be. As long as we are in the world, "His own which are in the world," we ever and constantly need to have our feet washed. As long as there is darkness in my judgment, disobedience and negligence in my heart, and a thing that I do for one moment to displease Him, these bring the need of teaching and the need of feet-washing in order to break us down. Now, you see there is no communion with God but in perfect light: "If we say that we have fellowship with Him, and walk in darkness, we lie and do not the truth; but if we walk in the light, as He is in the light, we have fellowship one with another." Walk itself is only a means to an end, and here it is walk corrected, that communion may be restored in full. So our Lord Jesus has constituted us feet-washers, one to another; and left us a beautiful example, that we should do one to another as He, our Lord and Teacher, has done unto us.

To make this more practical still, I would classify the saints of God in three ways. First, there are those whom God gives in His church specially as teachers; and the test of a true teacher is this, whether he is the means of lifting your soul up into fuller communion with God and sustaining you there. Not the mere talking of truth, but talking of it in power. All God's gifts are spiritually discerned; and if teachers were fully faithful, and all the church was attentive to its teachers, what a different state would it be in. But, secondly, there is a large class of brethren, who, though not given to the church distinctly as teachers, yet can in some way teach. That is, they could talk to a believer, could deal with the conscience privately, and speak with respect to walk, waywardness, or negligence; that is teaching. And observe our great Pattern; it is as Lord and Teacher He acts; Ruler and Teacher combined. So you see how nearly every one of God's saints, at all mature

in the divine life, has some measure of responsibility put upon him. "A bishop should be apt to teach," and this is something not so advanced as a teacher. So again, in Timothy, an elder is to be "one that ruleth well his own house"; if we cannot labour in the Word, we can in life and actions. Then there is a third class of whom the apostle Peter speaks in his Epistle, chapter v. 5. "Likewise, ye younger, submit yourselves unto the elder: yea, all of you be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility." So that all, the very youngest, may sometimes teach and rule. We are all feet-washers, and all to teach, to exhort, to encourage, to build up one another. And look how He rules, not carrying things with a high hand, but by washing our feet, by convincing us of our disobedience and making us ashamed, and thus He wins our hearts. That is His way of rule, and of which He leaves us an example who is our Lord and Teacher; and He ordains that we should be each washing one another's feet in the water of the Word, taking the lowly place and acting as the servant.

PERFECTION.

BY THE LATE DR. MULOCK.

I BELIEVE the substance of all that Mr. S—— has taught is true—that is, all that I can understand of his teaching, for it seems ill-digested and ill-expressed, and uncertain on many points.

The substance of it has been long held in theory by most instructed Christians, and taught by those who are gathered to the name of the Lord alone as brethren in Christ.

That there is more power in His resurrection than we have ever known or recognised—much less used—for holy living, fruitful service, and calm peace and rest of heart, is most certainly believed amongst us; and that the Lord has used the children of God at ——, lately assembled, to remind and stir up the Church of God generally about it, I think cannot

be doubted; but, just like everything human, the fly gets into the ointment. However, we must not throw away the good with the bad.

I find continually weak brethren are doing this, with regard to teaching, among ourselves—such as the teaching, so invaluable to the Church of God, of such men as Mr. Darby. To reject all that he has taught because of much that is evidently not of God (evidenced by its results more and more every day) is the act of a feeble mind that cannot discriminate.

Some notable things I mark in Mr. S——'s teaching, and they have been remarked by others. He makes the standard of sinless perfection our own consciousness and not God's estimate, and strangely confounds sin, the evil principle within (which God takes chief notice of), with its fruits or results, sins in the life, which man can see and judge of. How blessed that the sin-offering is provided for sins of ignorance! And that it is not only "If I confess my sins" (1 John i. 9), but "if any man sin," &c.—in ignorance—(1 John ii. 1); and not only did He bear "our sins," but in Him God condemned *sin* in the flesh (root, fruit, and branch).

Thus, root and fruits condemned are put out of God's sight by the Cross. But we are never to say we have no sin (root, or evil nature, or flesh) in us, or we should be deceiving ourselves, and the truth would not be in us (1 John i. 8).

Again, the free use made by Mr. S—— of dispensational truth, such as Luke i. 74, 75, which has so distinct an application to the Jews.

The ignorance of the mystery of the Church, and our hope (that purifying hope, the very motive for our practical sanctification), which is ever held out as the one object for the believer (and with the mercies of God seen in Romans i. to xi.), the great motive-power of a holy, obedient life and walk.

The wresting of Scripture from its context and original meaning, such as in 1 Cor. iv. 4, where Paul, by the Spirit, is not speaking at

all of sinless perfection in the abstract, but from the context is evidently dealing with charges of ministerial or official unfaithfulness or delinquency.

Again and again, Mr. S—— makes Scriptures, which can apply only to perfection in glory, such as John xvii. 23, and only possible of attainment then and there, to apply to our attainment in this time and state. And, on the other hand, what is actually ours, such as union, imputed righteousness, and sanctification in Christ, our completeness in Him risen (which is the present and immediate possession of the new-born babe in Christ) is set down in much of this teaching as an attainment as we advance in the Divine life. Thus, the distinct things—the work of the Spirit in us, and the work of Christ for us; what is *imparted* to us, and what is *imputed* to us; our state and standing; our attainment and our completeness—are all huddled together in a promiscuous jumble, than which nothing can be more confusing to the young believer, or more calculated to unsettle those who are weak and unestablished in the faith.

We have triumph, because we are completely and eternally saved from the penalty of sin. We have conflict, because we are not yet saved from its presence (deliverance from its power is our happy privilege, and there is otherwise no triumph); but far different is this from holiness of heart or perfection.

We have triumph, because we are not in the flesh; we have conflict, because we have still the flesh in us. We have triumph, because God has judged and crucified that same flesh or old man; we have conflict, because we have daily and hourly to mortify it. We have triumph in the work of Christ for us; but we have conflict from the work of the Spirit in us.

Does Scripture teach that Christian conflict is between old life and new? Certainly not! but old life and the Spirit. "The flesh lusteth against the Spirit," &c., &c.; not the old life against the new. The apostle plainly states, "Our old man is crucified with Christ, that the body of sin

might he destroyed." The old nature in God's sight, and now to faith, came to its end on the Cross.

Practical Christianity may be said to consist of two things—1, In nourishing the new life through occupation with Christ; 2, In judging the old, on which God has put the sentence of death in the most awfully solemn manner on the Cross.

How are we to watch against its risings and judge it? The apostle answers, "Walk in the Spirit and ye shall not fulfil the lusts of the flesh."

We have no power against the evil nature but in the Holy Spirit, and in the assurance, by faith, that the flesh is a crucified thing in God's sight, and done with, and thus we walk in the liberty and power which faith gives. "Ye are dead," but, thank God, that is not all. "Your life is" safely and securely "hid." All that was thine is gone—all that is Christ's remains, in unchanged and unchangeable perfection, in the best place, "in Him." By the Cross we get rid of all that is ours; in resurrection we are put in possession of all that is Christ's. "I am crucified with Christ (old man), nevertheless I live (new creation). Yet not I (not sinful self, nor righteous self, nor improved self, nor religious self), but Christ, liveth in me" (He is the end, object, and spring now).

Both natures are in us—one unmixed good, the other unmixed evil. Suppose I meet a person deeply concerned about his soul, earnestly longing for Christ, I am sure the Holy Spirit is working there; such desires would never spring from a nature that hates both God and Christ, and loves this world better than Him. That soul may refuse to be comforted, but in God's mind it is saved already. When it believes, it will rejoice. The good work was begun in the soul of the prodigal when he said, "I will arise and go to my father." The Spirit of God will fully satisfy the desire He creates.

The test of worldliness is, "Is this of the Father?" If not, it must be of the world. To test the actings of the flesh, "Is this of the Spirit?" If not, it must be of the flesh.

And to test the workings of Satan, "Is this of Christ?" If not, it must be of the devil. There is no middle or neutral ground.

"These two are contrary the one to the other." We find ourselves constantly disappointed in ourselves and others; but this only tends to teach us the unchangeable character of the flesh, whether regarded morally, intellectually, or religiously.

Christendom is full of religious flesh, the worst kind, because it uses the name of Christ to sanction itself.

The apostle does not make a one-sided statement, as if the flesh only lusted against the Spirit; that would be antinomianism; but the flesh is hindered by a counter-lusting of the Spirit, so that it cannot carry out its enormities.

Nothing is our safeguard but our eye on the Cross, and seeing ourselves crucified there; and then, however the flesh would cry "spare thyself," we give it no quarter, but take up our cross. Led of the Spirit, we may, as Jesus, be led into conflict with the devil, world, and flesh. But the same Spirit shows He is our strength—in Him is our fulness.

Christian experience proper is not the flesh lusting against the Spirit, as in Gal. v. 17, but so living and walking in the energy of the Spirit as to live above the actings of the flesh. I find a man in my house who would do evil if at large. I seize him and lock him up in a room. The man is not changed. If he were free he would do as much mischief as before. He coaxes me to let him out, but I have tried him; I know he is a liar, and I keep him there now. He gets very strong when he is let out, but I don't leave anything in the room for him; I am sure to see it is empty. It is not Christian experience, as some think, leaving the door open and letting him out.

The state of rest—content. Philippians iv. 11 is gradually and increasingly attained, through constantly victorious conflict, constantly and increasingly triumphal reliance on, and experience of, Christ's power through His Spirit in our hearts; and *not* as an immediate act of faith. That would confound

practical sanctification, the work of the Holy Spirit, with immediate and perfect sanctification imputed to us in Christ by faith; and would confound it further with the immediate act of justification by faith. Practical sanctification involves a constant life of watchfulness and discipline, and much holy exercise of soul before God, and constant dependence in prayer. Who can say in this "I have attained?"

Meanwhile, a conscience continually purged from all sense of sin *on us* (with, at the same time, ever-increasing consciousness of a sinful nature *in us*), and deliverance from the power (as well as condemnation) of sin, and from the consciousness (our own) of sinning, is the portion, and should be the experience, of all who are in Christ.

But who can understand his errors? or who can tell the wondrous work the Great High Priest is doing for us in heaven? Washing our fouled feet, and giving us by this such liberty of conscience, enlargement of heart, and boldness of access, in the full assurance of understanding our position as we enter into the presence-chamber continually. Who can value this as it ought to be valued?

May our high vocation be our high standard, and nothing lower, for our practical walk in righteousness and true holiness, which we shall never think of having attained here as we set *it* before us, though we may ever have the conscious joy of walking worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, and being filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are by Christ Jesus, unto the glory and praise of God.

May, the last prayer of our Lord, that we should be sanctified by His truth, be well pondered and prayed over by us all, who are, by His grace, in any measure, however small or humble, seeking to guide or feed the flock in "difficult times;" and may we seek more and more to know the true "rest of faith," by committing all our lives, with their events, great and small, to His hands, who careth for us, and who has promised, on that condition, to garrison our hearts with His peace.

Yours, in His mighty love till He come.

J. B. M.

THE FIRST EPISTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS.

CHAP. XI. 23, ETC.

NOTES OF AN ADDRESS BY J. R. C.

"THE Lord Jesus, the same night in which He was betrayed, took bread." Mark the expression. It does not say, "On the night of the Pass-over;" but, "The same night in which He was betrayed." I think it is beautiful to see how the Spirit of God connects these two things. When He appointed this feast He was not ignorant of what was before Him. It is written, "Jesus, therefore, knowing all things that should come upon Him, went forth." Up till that time no hand could be laid upon God's Holy One. But now it is the hour and the power of darkness; the eve of His betrayal. That very night, the shades of which had already set in, while the blood-like sweat of agony was still upon His brow, the traitor came forward as a familiar friend and kissed Him. He was, as it were, just about to step into the dark awful shadow of the Cross. He knew it all, nor need we have been surprised though the dreadful prospect had absorbed His thoughts and engrossed His mind. But it was even at such an hour that He thought upon His Church. Most touching to our hearts it is to know that it was then He instituted this memorial-feast, to unite His people and keep them in memory of His dying love.

Oh, wondrous love and grace, that in that dreadful hour the Son of God should think of us! Oh, wondrous devotedness to His Father, that ere He stepped forth into the thick darkness of that night His blessed lips should join with His disciples in a song of praise to His Father and His God! Truly here we have the Burnt-offering, wholly laid upon the altar. Let us gaze upon the Son of God thus yielding himself up, and then we shall know something of the claims of God. I heard a man to-day saying that he is without sin; no sin in his heart, no evil in his ways. I do not believe

it possible for one whose eyes have been opened by the Spirit to behold God's Holy Lamb to utter such words. Job said, "Now mine eye seeth Thee, wherefore I abhor myself and repent in dust and ashes." May God give us anointed eyes to see Jesus. I may test myself by some human standard of morality and think I am doing well; but let me compare myself with the spotless Son of God and I sink down into the dust. Beloved, let us ever maintain God's standard. Christ is God's perfect weight. If we weigh ourselves in the balance with Christ, there will be no fear of us thinking much of ourselves.

"He took bread, and when He had given thanks, He brake it."

It is worthy of note that the apostle says nothing about "blessing" the bread. Much is made, in some quarters, of "the consecration of the elements." But there was no such sacerdotal act performed by Christ. In those passages where it is recorded that the Lord Jesus "blessed and brake" (Matt. xxvi. 26, Mark xiv. 22) it is not said that He *blessed the bread*. He blessed God, or "gave thanks" to God, as it is otherwise stated in Luke xxii. 19 and the verse under consideration. The word "it" is inserted by the translators and would be better omitted. The very same word is used, and the same action by the Lord, in Matt. xiv. 19, which passage is not construed into transubstantiation of any kind or degree. It is rendered exactly by Rotherham, thus—"looking up into the heaven, He blessed; and breaking, gave the disciples the loaves." The same action is recorded in Mark vi: 41, and viii. 6, 7; and these, compared with John vi. 11 and 23, show that the blessing was God-ward, and not a "consecration of the elements." In 1 Cor. x. 16 "the cup of blessing which we bless" does not mean the cup that is consecrated by a priest, but the cup that we "speak well of," literally, or for which we give thanks. So, to bless God (James iii. 9, Luke ii. 28) is "to speak well of God."

"Take; eat; this is My body which is broken for you; this do in remembrance of Me." It is a memorial-feast; a feast in

which we call to remembrance the death of the Lord Jesus for us.

"For as often as ye eat this bread and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till He come." In thus breaking the bread He shewed that His own pure incorruptible flesh was to be broken, so broken that His life's blood might be poured out, and that it was for them—for us.

The Lord Jesus was Himself the fulfilment of the Passover. He had greatly desired the keeping of that feast with His disciples, and it was on that occasion, after the Passover was eaten, that the Lord's Supper was instituted. From the passage in Luke it might appear that Judas was present at the institution of the Supper; but a careful comparison of the various scriptures renders it plain that he was not. In John xiii. 2 we get light from the Revised Version. It is not "supper being ended," but "during supper." This was evidently the Paschal supper, for in ver. 26 there is the dipping of the sop, which could only refer to the dish on which the Passover lamb had lain.

Immediately upon this Judas withdrew—see John xiii. 30. Then in verse 31 and onward, the heart of the Lord seems to flow out unhindered, in strains of tenderest love, as it had never done before. The seeming discrepancy between Luke and the other evangelists is accounted for by the fact, often observed, that Luke combines the circumstances he records, not so much in chronological as in a moral order.* Judas was at the Passover supper, to which, as a Jew, circumcised and ceremonially clean, he had a right. But at the Lord's Supper, as a saint, he had no place. From Matt. xxvi. 25, and Mark xiv. 21, it is evident that the conviction and exposure of Judas by the sop, was *before* the institution of the Supper. This, combined with his *immediate* exit, as recorded in John, is conclusive.

In Acts ii. 42 we read, "They continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine, and in fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers."

* See Tract by the late Mr. Macleod Wylie, "Did Judas partake of the Lord's Supper?"—THE PUBLISHING OFFICE.

Here we find God's order. Baptism first; an outward act expressing "the obedience of faith." Being baptised, they continued stedfastly in "the apostles' doctrine." They were not now directed to the law of Moses, as in Malachi iv. 4; but to the testimony of the Holy Spirit concerning the risen Christ, from the lips of the apostles. It was a new dispensation, with new legislation, direct from its Lord. In 2 Peter iii. 2, we have the confirmation of the same authority, and no other, for the closing days of the dispensation; and lest any should exclude the testimony of Paul, his writings are in verses 15 and 16, so to speak, bound up together with the "other" Scriptures which form the authoritative ground of our faith. They continued also "in fellowship." Fellowship is not going in and out not knowing or caring who sits on the same bench. It implies a loving mutual interest in, and care for one another. Satan scatters. God gathers. We are to spend eternity, gathered around one Centre, in holy, happy fellowship, in the light and love of God, and it is His will that we should even have a foretaste of that heavenly joy in the fellowship of those who love His name on earth now.

They continued also in "breaking of bread." It was the last dying command of the Lord, and loyal hearts would keep it and cleave to it. But could the observance of it once in six months be regarded as "continuing stedfastly" in it? What saith the scripture? Turn to Acts xx. 7—"And upon the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread"—just as in 1 Cor. xi., the disciples "came together." This was not a promiscuous audience composed of church and world. It was a company of *disciples*. The normal condition of such a company was that "of the rest durst no man join himself unto them." The unbeliever coming in being forced to own that the presence of God was there (1 Cor. xiv. 24, 25).

When gathered to break bread, "Paul preached unto them," or, literally, *discoursed with them*—"(*dialogomai*," from which

comes our English word "dialogue")—it was not a set sermon, but rather conversational. They did not come together to hear Paul, or to hear any other man. Their fixed definite object was "to break bread," continuing stedfastly in it; thus shewing respect to their Lord's command. It was not "the first Sunday of the month," but "the first day of the week." What presumption for man to think that he can improve upon the arrangement that thus receives the Divine approval!

Though He who was to redeem must needs partake of flesh and blood, and so was born into this world, yet no day has been divinely set apart to commemorate His birth. But God makes much of the happy resurrection morn, when He who had endured the last of suffering and humiliation was begun to be glorified; welcomed from the grave with the divine greeting, "Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten Thee."

On that day of His triumph over all the powers of death and darkness, He, as it were, summons His redeemed around Him to break the bread and drink the wine, and keep the feast that commemorates His death.

Suggestive Topics.—II.

DIVISION OF PSALM XXIII.

The Lord is <i>my</i> Shepherd,	Possession.
I shall <i>not want</i> .	Provision.
He maketh me to <i>lie down in green</i>	} Position.
- pastures :	
He leadeth me beside <i>still waters</i> .	Pasturage.
He restoreth <i>my soul</i> ;	Personal.
He <i>leadeth</i> me in the paths of right-	} Progress.
- eousness,	
For <i>His name's</i> sake.	Purpose.
Yea, though I walk through the valley	} Parting.
of the shadow of death,	
<i>I will fear no evil</i> :	Peace.
For <i>Thou art with me</i> ;	Protection.
<i>Thy rod</i> and <i>Thy staff</i> they comfort me,	Pilgrimage.
Thou <i>preparest</i> a table for me	Participation.
In the <i>presence</i> of my enemies ;	Presence.
Thou <i>anointest</i> my head with oil ;	Preparation.
My cup <i>runneth over</i> .	Plenty.
Surely goodness and mercy shall fol-	} Persuasion.
low me all the days of my life :	
And I will <i>dwell</i> in the house of the	} Place.
Lord for ever.	

CHRIST'S VICTORY OVER DEATH.

COME, see the place where Jesus lies,
The last sad rite is done;
With sorrowing hearts and aching eyes,
The faithful few are gone.

They washed with tears each bloody trace
Of those dear limbs that lay,
Then spread the napkin o'er His face,
And turned, and went their way.

By the sealed stone, with grounded spears,
The guards their vigils keep;
They wist not other eyes than theirs
Watch o'er the Saviour's sleep.

All heaven above, all hell beneath,
Bright Hope and black Dismay,
Look on to see if tyrant Death
Can hold his mighty Prey.

"Now, tyrant Death, thy powers combine,
Now gird thee to the strife";
Yet needs there stronger arm than thine
To hold the Lord of Life.

'Tis done! O Death, thy conquering Lord
Hath broke thine iron chain;
The Son of Man, the Son of God,
Who died and rose again.

—Contributed by M. T. B.

HALF-HOURS with a CONCORDANCE.

THE object of these papers is to arrange, for the help of the youngest believers, the information that a concordance supplies as to the meaning of words employed by the Spirit of God, many of which words have their meaning settled by their occurrence in passages in which it is beyond question.

JUSTIFY.

The question may arise, what is the precise meaning of this word, as it occurs, for instance, in Rom. iii. 23, "Being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus"? Does it mean

"make just or righteous"? as one might suppose from the etymology of the English word.

This verb occurs about forty times in the Greek New Testament. The four following passages may help as to its meaning:—Matt. xi. 19, and Luke vii. 35, "Wisdom is *justified* of (all) her children;" Luke vii. 20, "The publicans *justified* God;" Rom. iii. 4, "That Thou mightest be *justified* in Thy words." These passages are sufficient to show that the word "justify" implies no change IN the person or thing justified. The action must be altogether external to its object; for clearly neither "wisdom" nor "God" was any different after the justification stated in these scriptures.

Evidently the word means simply to reckon or account as just, or to show or exhibit as just or righteous (for the word "just," it need hardly be said, is the same as "righteous"). This is confirmed by the usage in the following places:—Luke x. 29, "He, willing to *justify* himself, said;" Luke xvi. 15, "Ye are they which *justify* yourselves before men, but God knoweth your hearts;" 1 Cor. iv. 4, "I am conscious of nothing as to myself; yet am I not hereby *justified*; but He that judgeth me is the Lord;" 1 Tim. iii. 16, "He who was manifested in the flesh *was justified* in the Spirit."

The meaning then so gathered from these eight scriptures is equally true in the other places where the word occurs.

Nearly half of these are in the epistle to the saints in Rome; and noteworthy among these is the first—ii. 13, "Not the hearers of the law *are* just before God, but the doers of the law;" what? "are just?" The Spirit does not say so, for "There is none righteous (*or* just), no, not one" (iii. 10); and the doers of the law here are not imaginary persons, who kept the whole law without sin, but such as were, in their habit and manner of behaviour, doers of the law, like Zacharias and Elizabeth (Luke i. 6). Of such it here says that they "shall be *JUSTIFIED*," *i.e.*, "justified by faith apart from deeds of law" (Rom. iii. 28). For faith toward God, which in His grace justifies by and before

Him those so believing Him, was accompanied by works evident to man which justified the doers manward, as we see in the Epistle of James ii. 21-24, "Abraham . . . justified by works . . . by works a man is justified." For Gal. ii. 16 testifies without doubt "that a man is not justified by the works of the law"—that is, before God,—God does not account a man just because of aught he has done—"but by faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Christ Jesus, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law; for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified"—"in His sight," as again in Rom. iii. 20.

Thus the publican, having taken the sinner's place and put his faith in atonement, went down to his house reckoned just (Luke xviii. 14). He was one of those who, in Luke vii. 20, acknowledged God to be just, who was just; and, atonement being made, God, in response, reckoned him to be just who was not just.

The scripture concerning Abraham in Rom. iv. is worthy of especial note, for here is an exemplification of that which is mentioned in ch. iii. 21-26, "A righteousness of God apart from law;" "A righteousness through faith of Jesus Christ unto all them that believe" (R.V.) For it is not here THE righteousness of God, as though meaning His righteous character, or, THE righteousness as referring to righteousness previously spoken of, but A righteousness here first in God's scriptures exposed to view; an imputable righteousness. To make it plainer, let it be noted that verses 25 and 26 speak of the righteousness which is God's attribute; while verses 22 and 23 speak of a righteousness derived from the act of righteousness, or accomplished righteousness, of Rom. v. 18 (the "justification" of Rom. v. 16). The latter verses read, "As by one offence judgment came unto all men to condemnation, even so by one act of righteousness (the work on the Cross) *the free gift* came unto all men unto justification of life," that is, unto being reckoned just. So "Abraham believed God, and it was reckoned

unto him for righteousness"; so "to him that worketh not, but believeth on Him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is reckoned for righteousness" (Rom. iv. 3-5). The "justification" of verse 16, Rom. v., and the "righteousness" of verse 18, are the same word; as translated in the Revised Version it is an "act of righteousness"; whilst the word "justification" in verse 18 is that which is derived from the verb "to justify," and which occurs only once elsewhere, viz., Rom. iv. 25.

Thus we learn that God works by His Son for those who, by nature and practice, are unrighteous, giving Him to die, the Just for the unjust; that by virtue of this accomplished righteousness, namely, His atoning death, God can and does reckon as just those who are not just, imputing to us the righteousness of Rom. iii. 21, 22. Thereafter He calls on us whom He has justified to let our works justify us before men; nor does He leave us powerless for the effort: for the same Spirit who reveals to our wondering souls God's work for us, does a work of God in us likewise; not indeed a work of justification in us, for justification is a work outside us, but a God-conforming work, a soul-saving work (Mark viii. 35), a sanctifying work.

The following are the occurrences of the word "JUSTIFY," to an attentive perusal of all of which the reader is affectionately exhorted:—

- Matt. xi. 19; Luke vii. 35, vii. 29; Rom. iii. 4; 1 Tim. iii. 16.
 Luke x. 29, xvi. 15; Gal. v. 4.
 Rom. iii. 20, iv. 2; Gal. ii. 16 (twice), iii. 11; 1 Cor. iv. 4.
 Luke xviii. 14; Rom. ii. 13, viii. 30 (twice), 33.
 Rom. iii. 24; Tit. iii. 7.
 Acts xiii. 39 (twice); Gal. ii. 17; 1 Cor. vi. 11.
 Rom. v. 9, vi. 7.
 Rom. iii. 26, 28, 30, iv. 5, v. 1; Gal. ii. 16, iii. 8, 24.
 Matt. xii. 37; James ii. 21, 24, 25.

C. M. L.

EARNEST PLODDING BELIEVER, hold on to your work, and if discouraging things be said to you, consider this—Satan's bitterest, sharpest, most stinging taunts are generally thrown at persevering Christian workers when those workers are on the eve of success with and for God.

Revised Readings.

FROM VARIORUM BIBLE.

Hebrews x. 23.—"Let us hold fast the profession (or confession, R. V.) of our faith (literally, *hope*, R. V.) without wavering (so that this profession shall not waver), for he is faithful that promised."

Revelation i. 10.—"I was (*found myself*, Wordsworth) in the Spirit on the Lord's day (so Alford, Bengel, Bleek, Davidson, De Witte, Wordsworth); *In the Spirit I was present at the day of the Lord* (Winer, Zullig)." This is the only text apparently sanctioning the use of the "Lord's day" for the first day of the week. The latter readings give the thought accepted by some, that John was in the spirit concerning the day of the Lord, but it will be seen that most commentators favour the ordinary reading.

Correspondence.

THE TRESPASS OF MATTHEW 18.

Following upon the "Revised Reading" of Mat. xviii. 15, in *The Witness* for January, at page 14, the following by Mr. NEWBERRY on this portion will no doubt be helpful to many assemblies:—

"The Codex, Sinaiticus, and other MSS., omit 'against thee,' both here and in the parallel passage in Luke xvii. 3—"If thy brother trespass, rebuke him"—and this, if correct, is important. In this case, verse 15 will read, 'Moreover, if thy brother trespass (or sin), go and tell him his fault between him and thee alone.' Compare Lev. xix. 17, 'Thou shalt not hate thy brother in thine heart: thou shalt in any wise rebuke thy neighbour, and not suffer sin upon him.' This would be *general*; and the inquiry and reply in reference to *personal* offences follow in verse 21 to end. 'Then came Peter to Him and said, Lord, how often shall my brother sin against me and I forgive him?' And so in Luke xvii. 4, 'And if he trespass against thee.' In either case the principles are of divine value and importance, and are *universally* applicable; they are in fact the *fundamental principles of all Church discipline.*

THE FIRST STEP.

'Go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone.' Oh the divine wisdom of these words! 'Between thee and him alone.' Thus the citadel may be taken at the outset. 'If he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother.' Otherwise, all the sweets and benefits of brotherly communion are lost; but thus the bond of brotherhood is preserved unbroken.

THE SECOND STEP.

'But if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established.' Thus the benefits of Church fellowship widen, and the

desire to preserve intact the sweet bond of holy love constrains the offended, or the one who has a conscience about sin, in fellowship with God, and love to his brother, to go and tell the offender, and then, if individual effort fail, he can call in the aid of one or two more.

THE THIRD STEP.

'And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the Church.'

THE LAST STEP.

'But if he *also* neglect to hear the Church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican.' The word '*also*,' which has been omitted in the Authorized Version, is important here as connecting this 17th verse with what has gone before. The Lord does not say, 'If he neglect to hear the Church let him be unto thee as an heathen man,' *as though He would imply that the Church had authority to teach, and that its teaching was to be received as authoritative*; 'But if he *also* neglect to hear the Church.' The brother trespassed against, or the one taking part with God as to trespass against Him, had spoken to his offending brother; one or two more had in vain endeavoured to *gain* him; their united testimony had been received by the assembly, and the voice of the assembly had also been disregarded; the Lord then *Himself pronounces the sentence*—"Let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican."

QUESTION 241.

WHAT QUICKENING IS REFERRED TO IN ROMANS VIII. 11?

To the Editor of *The Witness*.

ESTEEMED BROTHER IN THE LORD,—Permit me to add, in your widely read columns, a few words in further reply to Question ccxli., as above. The questioner rightly suggests that there are different quickenings. There is, for example, the one that is *past*, as regards *all* who are saved by grace, spoken of in Eph. ii. 5—"Even when we were dead in sins (trespasses) God quickened us together with Christ"—see also Col. ii. 13. Then, in i. Cor. xv. 22, we have the resurrection of the dead in Christ spoken of as a great *FUTURE* quickening—the words "shall be made alive" being the translation of the one word, "quickenings." The "quickenings" of Rom. viii. 2 is clearly named as being of the *mortal* body. Such a body *none* of the dead in or out of Christ have! The mortal body is a body liable to death; is, indeed, the *kind* of body those in Christ have, who have not been put to sleep through Jesus. Of this mortal body it is definitely said in Rom. viii. 10, that, "Because of sin it is indeed dead!" yet, "Because of righteousness, the Spirit is life." Thus, the judicially dead body is made to possess life. It is worthy of very special attention that it is *not* the *person* of the believer that is here looked at, but the *body* of the Christian; from which a proposition is made, and a fact made known, viz., verse 11. "And if the Spirit of Him that raised up Jesus from the

dead dwell in you, He that raised up CHRIST from the dead shall also quicken YOUR mortal bodies by, or because of, the indwelling of His Spirit in you."

This quickening is of the *mortal* body, and is by the indwelling Spirit through the working or operation of God. I am not aware of any scripture that teaches that the dead in Christ will be raised by the Spirit, or by God the Father. Neither do I know of any scripture that teaches that God the Father will act even by the Spirit on those who are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord. But rather the raising of the dead, and the changing of the living in Christ, shall be the action of the Lord Himself, who, with archangel voice, shall blow the trump of God, and in a moment catch up all in Christ to Himself in the air, and so shall we ever be with the Lord. The root-thought in the word quickening, is "To make alive," with which, be it well noted, that the believer's body is *now*, because of sin, indeed dead. And surely, if momentary reflection does not satisfy as to *what* and *when* the quickening of the mortal body is, such scripture as the following may show. Eph. i. 18-20—"That ye may know . . . what is the exceeding greatness of His power to usward WHO BELIEVE. According to the working of His power which He wrought in Christ, and raised Him from the dead." Or, Phil. iii. 10—"That I may know Him and the *power* of His resurrection . . . If by any means I may attain unto the *OUT*-resurrection from among dead ones," which is manifestly an experience for the time that now is, yea, a resurrection the result of a *present* quickening.—I am, in the Lord, very truly yours,
JOHN BROWN.

[The words "shall also quicken" being *future*, and not as in Eph. iii. 20, *present* ("the power that *worketh* in us"), seems to us conclusive as to the "quickening" being a future act and not any present experience.—Ed.]

QUESTION 241.

To the Editor of *The Witness*.

DEAR BROTHER,—Ere the "Question" regarding Rom. viii. 11 (December *Witness*) is left, I should like, with your permission, and with all possible deference to those who have already written on the subject, to submit what has long seemed to me to be the teaching of the passage.

I am convinced that a very general mistake has been made in attributing to the *Spirit* the raising up of Jesus, whereas, reading the verse emphasised, thus, "But if the Spirit of *Him that raised up Jesus from the dead,*" &c., we get at the evident meaning of it, and also find ourselves in accord with the uniform testimony of Scripture which ascribes this memorable act (most fittingly) directly to God the Father. For example, "Whom God hath raised up, . . . This Jesus hath God raised up" (Acts ii. 24, 32); "Him hath God raised up" (Acts x. 40); "God hath raised Him from the dead, . . . Whom God raised again" (Acts xiii. 30, 37); "Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the

Father" (Rom. vi. 4); "We have testified of God that He raised up Christ" (1 Cor. xv. 15); "He which raised up the Lord Jesus" (2 Cor. iv. 14); "The God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, . . . raised Him from the dead" (Eph. i. 17, 20); "The God of peace brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus" (Heb. xiii. 20); "God raised Him up from the dead, and gave Him glory" (1 Peter i. 21).

It was God who, in judgment, forsook His Son (Psalm xxii.); when on the Cross His soul was made an offering for sin (Isa. liii.), and—satisfied and glorified by that atoning death—it is God who, apart from any agency, raises Him from the dead; so justifying the surety, and betokening His acceptance of the accomplished work.

Now, while the *raising up* is clearly attributed to God, the words, "dwell in you" are connected with "the Spirit," who, being "the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus" (verse 2)—telling of our vital union with the Risen One—we are thus even now in possession of the divine pledge that God, having raised up Christ from the dead, shall also give to all for whom He died, and lives, that of which the Spirit is "the first fruit," viz., "the redemption (or resurrection) of the body" (verse 23).

Again, we read in verse 10, "If Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the Spirit is life because of righteousness;" that is, the spirit of the believer (see R.V.) is already quickened into life on the solid basis of righteousness, established through the work of the Cross; and, while "the body is (yet) dead on account of sin," God, who "has life in Himself, raiseth up the dead and quickeneth them" (John v.), will do for the body that of which *life to the spirit* is a further earnest, and hence the emphatic "but" with which verse 11 begins—"But if the Spirit of Him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwelleth in you, He that raised up Christ Jesus from the dead shall *quicken also your mortal bodies* through (because of—margin) His Spirit that dwelleth in you." (R.V.)

In support of the marginal reading, "because of," I would observe that the same Greek preposition (*dia*) is twice so rendered immediately before—in verse 10, just quoted—and in numerous other parts the same translation of the word is given. The Revisers say in the margin, "Many ancient authorities read *because of*," and the obvious sense of the passage and its context require the adoption of this reading.

If the first clause is made to teach (as in the "answer") that *the Spirit* was the agent in the raising up of Jesus, and the last clause that, again through the Spirit's agency, the present mortal body of the believer is to be quickened, then the passage stands alone, unsupported by any other that I know of, not to speak of its being brought into collision with every scripture bearing on the same themes. We do get Agency in the resurrection of the saints, but the Agent is invariably and exclusively the Lord Jesus Christ; in proof of which it is unnecessary to occupy space with quotations.

I remark, by the way, that it is interesting and instructive to note the change from "Jesus" to "Christ" in this verse. God raised up *Jesus* as in His *individual* character, but on its being re-stated that He raised Him from the dead, it is as "*the Christ*," viz., as "Head of the body, the Church" (though this is not the line of truth dwelt upon in Romans). And so, God having raised the one, He will raise the other, *every member of it*—"Christ the first fruit; afterward *they that are Christ's*, at His coming" (1 Cor. xv. 23). The "mortal body" is identical with "the body," which is declared already "dead because of sin (verse 10), and the former term, as used here, cannot, I judge, be restricted in its application to the saints who will be alive and remaining at the Lord's return, but must cover the whole ground, whether occupied by those "alive" or "dead." In the case of the former they will be found in "mortal (or death-doomed) bodies," while as to those "fallen asleep in Christ," theirs will simply be an advanced stage of the same common condition; the *raising* of the latter, and the *changings* of the former (1 Thess. iv.) being both embraced in the *quickenings* of the verse under consideration.

At the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ—"Who abolished death, and brought life (for the living) and incorruption (for the dead) to light through the Gospel" (2 Tim. i. 10, R.V.)—"this mortal shall put on immortality"—a change wrought in the body equivalent to resurrection; but where, as with myriads of "the ransomed Church of God," "corruption" has ensued, then "incorruptibility" shall displace it—a most important distinction (made in Corinthians, though not in Romans), pointed out in the letter of our beloved, departed brother, F. A. Banks, who now shares the "bliss" of which he wrote, "being with the Lord in spirit," and soon shall know "the joy of being glorified with Him for ever." That "quicken" means *resurrect* seems conclusively proven by what is affirmed of the Lord Jesus—"raised from the dead"; for this must find its exact parallel in those for whom He died and rose again, which the word "quicken" surely supplies; and this is confirmed by the same word being rendered in 1 Cor. xv. 22, "Even so in Christ *shall all be made alive*," which, undoubtedly, is resurrection.

Without attempting here to say what 1 Peter iii. 18 does teach, I think that a careful and unbiased study of this passage must lead to the conclusion that the explanation given in the "answer" before us (which is the common one) is not warranted. The R.V. gives a much more correct translation of the verse than our A.V. furnishes. "Being put to death in (the) flesh, but quickened in (the) spirit." It is doubtful whether the definite article should be expressed, and spirit being now properly printed with a small "s" (agreeing with the form of the Greek word, *pnūma*, with a small "p," as in Rom. viii. 10, "the *spirit* is life," and verse 4 of this chap. (1 Peter iii) "a meek and quiet *spirit*"), makes it stand in contrast with "the flesh" of Christ, in which He was "put to death"; and therefore, if

in His own "spirit" He was "quicken'd," it is not the Spirit as a Person who is spoken of; and this quickening being "in spirit," and not of His flesh or body, it manifestly cannot refer to the resurrection of Christ.—Yours in Him,

DOUGLAS RUSSELL.

Questions and Answers.

QUESTION 257.—How can we distinguish between the Temptations of the Devil and those of the Flesh?

We do not believe it either possible or necessary for us to make such a distinction.

The test is the Word of God. If it be not according to the revealed will of God, then, whether the thought was injected into the mind directly by Satan, or indirectly by his acting upon a fleshly desire, it is sin and must be mortified.

Satan found nothing in the Lord Jesus upon which to work. There was no evil propensity in Him by means of which He could be influenced to turn aside from the path of faith and obedience. Hence Satan's temptations to Christ assumed the form of direct suggestions, each of which was at once detected and judged by the Word of God.

With us it is different. Satan finds that in us whereby he can influence us for evil, taking advantage of our weakness or our propensities.

Happy is he who, in conscious weakness, has learned to "abide in Christ," and so obtains by faith the victory over the threefold Enemy—the world, the flesh, and the devil.

QUESTION 258.—Do Genesis i. 27, and ii. 7 teach Two Creations?

We notice this, which to many might seem a needless question, as it affords an opportunity of shewing the perfectness of the Scriptures, and the importance of reading them carefully.

In Gen. i. 27 the fact of the Creation of Man by God, in His own image, and male and female, is simply stated.

There was nothing about the work of the previous five days requiring further notice or instruction from God; but about this part of Creation God has more to say, and, therefore, He takes it up again.

But in ii. 7, He does not *repeat the fact of Creation*, but gives instruction as to how "the Man" was "formed," and as to *how* the "Woman" was "builted."

The *body* of the man was *formed* (a different thought from created) of the dust of the ground. After that, a separate divine act—God breathed into his nostrils the "breath" (Heb. "N'sha-mah") "of life"—a word in the Hebrew that is only used of man, never applied to the natural breath of the lower animals.

The *summary* of Creation in chap. i., and the *detail* of the Creation of Man in chap. ii. are alike perfect, and are not, as some might suppose, a mere repetition.

THE FIRST EPISTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS.

CHAP. XI. 23-28.

NOTES OF AN ADDRESS BY J. R. C.

THERE is a simplicity peculiar to itself in all the appointments connected with the New Covenant. And it was concerning this simplicity that the Apostle was so jealous. In his second epistle to this same church he says, "I am jealous over you, with a godly jealousy, for I have espoused you to one husband that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ, but I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtilty, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ" (xi. 3, 4). We know how Satan has succeeded in seducing the church from her allegiance to Christ in His own appointments. In nothing is it more evident than in this ordinance. In the Church of Rome it has been exalted to a sacrament consecrated by a so-called priest, by which process they profess that the bread and the wine in the eucharist are converted into the body and blood of Christ. The bread is dispensed by a priest set apart by men, and in a sacred or consecrated place. A great deal of that arises from Satan's device of reproducing in some way or other the ordinances of the old covenant—the temple made with hands, the holy place, &c., all which was done away with at the Cross. It is a building again of that which God has set aside. When Luther came forth bringing to light that precious doctrine, Justification by Faith, which had almost been lost, many other things were left by him unreformed in that which was called "The Reformed Church." To this ordinance there still attaches a sacramental influence which cuts at the very root of all true enjoyment of it, and deprives it of its proper place in the assembly of God.

In most of the denominations around us it cannot be observed without the presence of a clergyman; it requires to be dispensed

by an ordained man. The observance of the Passover in Israel did not require the presence of a priest. It was a household ordinance, and partook of the family character. If (as some contend) the Lord's Supper came in room of it, then it was an ordinance of Jehovah's which could be observed without a priest. Upon no scriptural ground can any priestly or official element be associated with it.

If we have seen from the Word of God that there is no such thing as a clerical class, and that every believer is a priest and a minister, and a member of the body of Christ, and that each one is called to fulfil his own responsibility, then let us seek humbly to do so before the Lord.

Is there not a feeling in some of the assemblies that only certain persons should dispense the bread and the wine? We receive the bread and the cup from the pierced hand of our blessed Lord. It is His table, and faith sees and owns Him in the midst of His redeemed. The one who takes the bread and the cup from the table and hands it to another does no more than his neighbour who hands it to the one next to him. I believe there is an error in the minds of many on this matter, as if the brother who first breaks the bread and hands it to another was doing an official act. The Lord when He fed the five thousand, and at the Passover Supper, gave thanks.

The one who gives thanks for the bread and the wine leads the assembly in their thanksgivings, and they say "Amen!" The one who leads, no more gives thanks than the one who bows his head and says, "Amen!" I would add here that it is a most unseemly thing for brethren and sisters to be looking about them when thanks are being given. We ought to realise very specially what we are about, We ought to be as consciously in the Lord's presence, as if we saw Him in person there.

In the handing of the bread and the wine from the table, it is better to be done by one who is at hand. It would not be

fitting that a woman should do it, or a very young believer. Though only an act of service, yet it is a prominent act, and pertains to those who have the respect and confidence of all. On the other hand, if we confine this act to one or two elder brethren, we may unintentionally take away from the simplicity with which the Lord has surrounded it.

Remember again, that in all that concerns this solemn and blessed ordinance throughout its observance, there ought to be a realisation that it is not an ordinary meal. It should be done reverently, and as in the presence of the Lord, and realising that we are not merely eating bread and drinking wine, but that which, for the time being, figures the very body and blood of the Lord. Just as the one who goes down under the waters of baptism realises that it is *the very grave of Christ*—the waters of death and judgment. It is our business to discern the symbolic import of the ordinance. Concerning the Passover it is written, "A bone of Him shall not be broken." How gently, how carefully, would that lamb be cut up into its pieces, that not a bone should be broken. And it is said concerning the Lord Jesus, that whilst they brake the legs of the two malefactors, when they came to Jesus they brake not His legs, because they saw that "He was dead already." And "these things were done that the Scripture might be fulfilled." When the precious body of our Lord was left cold in death upon the Cross, it was loving hands that took it down and carefully laid it in a sepulchre in which never man had been laid. Let us ever seek to keep this holy feast in the same tender, reverent, humble, and chastened spirit, having regard to the glory of God.

In the book of Malachi the Lord complains that His people offered Him polluted bread, and instead of bringing Him the very best they could bring, they brought the blind, the lame and the sick for sacrifice. He says "Offer it now unto thy governor; will he be pleased with thee, or accept thy person?" "Am I less than an earthly

governor?" Were we gathered around the Queen's table, how would we behave ourselves? Would we not see to it that we were there at the very time appointed? Not five or ten minutes behind the time!

In our assembling together, how very little consideration we appear to have for one another? How often it happens that many who come in early sit at the very back, instead of going to the front, and so leaving room for those who come in later. If we considered one another in these things more than we do, there would be less to distract the minds of the saints when gathered together. The Christian should "consider his neighbour for his good to edification." Some are necessarily late; such as servants, and those who are called to attend to others; therefore those who have more liberty, and can be forward to the meeting in good time, should consider such, instead of doing only what they like. There are many other things in which we ought to consider one another, which will occur to those who are exercised before the Lord.

This word, "Let a man examine himself," goes deeper than that. These little things are like straws on the surface of the water, showing how the stream goes; these things tell whether we have been pondering before the Lord the importance and solemnity of our assembling together. "Let a man examine himself." That is, let a man try or prove, or put himself to the test. What does that mean? Is it to be late in going to bed on Saturday night, so getting up late on Sunday morning, and then hurrying into the meeting without any preparation of heart to worship the Lord, looking to some gifted and spiritual brethren to do the speaking and the praying for them? I believe there is deep dishonour done to the Lord in the way that many of the people of God come together. I don't believe in the false solemnity of the grand cathedral, the dim religious light, the organ's solemn sound working up a sort of fleshly feeling of awe and devoutness; it is "strange fire." But neither do I believe

in carelessness or levity, or indifference to the glory of God in our outward demeanour, as we go to meet the Lord. It is in such a connection as this that the Apostle says, "Despise ye the Church of God?" It is God's assembly; and we are gathered together there owning the Lord Jesus as present, the One through whom our praises ascend to God. Could anything be more solemn, and blessed, and holy, until we surround the throne of God with the Lamb in the midst?

Turn to an illustration of this self-examination (Matt. v. 23, 24), "Therefore if thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there remember that thy brother has ought against thee; leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then offer thy gift." Although this refers to the ordinance of a past dispensation, still there are divine principles in it to guide us now in our relation to, and in our fellowship with, one another. The very moment a man approaches the altar with his gift, the light of God searches into his heart, and he remembers that his brother has somewhat against him. It is in the light of God's presence that we remember our sins and discover our vileness; and it is in that same light that we behold the blood which cleanseth from it all. How often we hear of the Lord's people keeping away from the Lord's table, because their conscience is defiled. Instead of going to God and getting matters put right with Him, the holy service around the table is too searching for their conscience, so they go to "a church" to "hear a sermon," and leave "the breaking of bread." This is no uncommon occurrence, and is a sure sign of deep departure from the Lord.

Here, in the fifth of Matthew, when the man comes with his gift, the remembrance that his brother has something against him at once mars his intercourse with God. Unconfessed sin comes into his mind; it is like the fowls that came down upon the sacrifice of Abraham to mar and devour it. Hence the need of self-examination. What

was the man to do in Matt. v.? "Your brother has something against you; go away, both you and your gift." Not so. He is told to *leave his gift*, not *on* the altar, but *before* the altar; then to get matters put right with his brother, and after that to offer his gift. God wants to have communion with him. God wants the joy of receiving his gift, but that cannot be until he is reconciled to his brother. Am I walking uprightly before God? Am I walking charitably towards my neighbour? Have I much to confess? Then have it all right and straight with your brother and with God, before you appear as a worshipper in His assembly.

"Let a man examine himself," and "so let him stay away?" No, that is not it, but it is, "And so let him eat." For whatever sin is discovered within me, there is the precious blood which "cleanseth from all sin" to remove it from my conscience. For a man to tell me that he has searched into his motives, that he has tested himself in the presence of God, and finds nothing to confess, I say it is a delusion of the Devil. But for a man to say, "I have come short of the glory of God, I have done things that I ought not to have done, and left undone that which I ought to have done," and to go and have it out before God, then there will be a tasting of the sweetness of communion with God, such as the self-deceived perfectionist can never know.

In connection with the Passover Lamb there was not only to be the unleavened bread, but also the bitter herbs; not very pleasant, but very wholesome. As we remember the death of Christ for us, there will be a bitterness when we realise that it was our sins that brought Him down to the Cross to suffer and die for us. This remembrance will be good for our souls. It is good for us to sit down quietly before God, and examine ourselves as to our service to the Lord, the motives which actuate us, testing our faithfulness and love to Him and His saints. As we thus search our hearts before God, we are sure to find

much of self and sin mixed up with our service, but it will make the blood of Christ tenfold more precious to our souls. If we deal thus faithfully with our spiritual condition before God, before coming to the Lord's table to hold communion with Him and rejoice in His presence, it will prove to us a season of joy and peace.

Jehovah said to His people that none were to come before Him empty. How often do we come before the Lord empty? Fancy an Israelite whom the Lord had blessed coming before Jehovah with an empty basket! He would be saying by action, if not in words, "I am so poor, and my God is such a hard God, I have nothing to bring to Him." Can we go professedly to thank God for His unspeakable gift, and not have our hearts ready to give thanks to our Lord? Alas, how often our hearts are cold and thankless in the presence of God and His people! Far more ready to judge our brother, and criticise all that is said and done, than to give God thanks. I speak these things, knowing that most will own how true they are.

"Whosoever shall eat this bread and drink this cup of the Lord unworthily shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord" (verse 27). Mark, it is not that a man who does this was not a Christian; it was written to saints in Christ Jesus. It means that the dishonour that is done to that bread and wine through treating them as common things, and not discerning in them that which they symbolise, viz., the body and blood of the Lord, is felt by God as dishonour done to the body and blood of His Son. Therefore let us handle it reverently; let us come together with prepared hearts, and seek grace to discern what we are about; that we come together not for the worse, but the better.

Israel were to observe the Passover throughout their generations as an ordinance for ever. We do not find such a command given to the saints in this dispensation. We are "to show the Lord's death till He come." Let us keep that in view.

It is "on the first day of the week," the

resurrection morn, that we show forth the death of our Saviour, and it is in prospect of His coming again. Thus are brought as it were, into one focus, the death, resurrection, and coming again of the Son of God. Can anything be more blessed and glorious than this? As much as to say, our yesterday is Christ, our morrow is glory; and we stand between the two, waiting till He come. Then it will not be remembering an absent One; but there, in the midst of the throne, we shall see the Lamb of God. We shall see Him who was slain for us, and our everlasting song and worship will just be the same as we offer around His table on earth. Our fitness for glory is the same as our title to the table here, the blood of the Lamb and the anointing of the Holy Ghost.

TO KNOW HIM.

"O H, the blindness of poor sinners, that they can see no beauty in the Lord Jesus Christ. We look up to Jesus, and, to the eye of faith, He seems 'the chief among ten thousand, the altogether lovely One.' Do not think you know enough of Him. Oh, what is any discovery you have made, compared with what is in Him? Paul had seen much of His glory, and tasted much of His love. When He said, 'That I may know Him,' Paul could say in the same breath, 'I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord.' Ah, Paul felt that all he had seen was but a chink opened to let Immanuel's glory into his soul. His glory! Oh, it will be the subject of eternal anthems. Make it your boast now—be concerned for His glory—hate all that would intercept the shining of His countenance. Let sin be bitter to you. Let error be shunned. Error dims Him. Sin offends Him. Call upon Him, then, in sincerity and truth. Let us draw near to Him in prayer. He is rich to all that call upon Him, and His heart-satisfying, enduring riches will flow into your soul as it did when first you could call Him precious."

THE SCHOOL EXERCISES OF HEBREWS XII.

BY G. STABLES.

WHEN the intellects of the young are being trained, in order that they may better accomplish the work that lies before them in life, how often the feeling of weariness and impatience finds expression in such utterances as "I can't see the use of this or that. Why should I have to endure the hardship of plodding through the one or the other? It is very hard." Those who have in measure passed through such experience, though we may smile at their simplicity, must yet, to some extent, sympathise with their difficulties, for they are *very real* to them; and the wise instructor, while striving to encourage the learner, will seek that his intelligence may be duly exercised at the same time. He will call to his aid the example of those who have made their mark and have left their footprints behind, while he takes care that the exercises are not so simplified as to fail of their purpose.

And has not our Father some such training school for His children? No one, we think, can read Heb. xii. without learning that such is the case. The noble army of the children of faith, enumerated in Heb. xi., are gathered together in chap. xii. 1, a "great cloud of witnesses"—not spectators *of* us, as some imagine, but testimony-bearers *to* us—that no one walks by faith without obtaining faith's blessings, or runs the race for nought.

They surround us; so that, turn which way we will, they are constantly reminding us that entire dependance upon or confidence in God is that which alone glorifies His name, and assures the blessing of His people.

But, while all this is most encouraging, there is great danger lest the children of God should be trying to lean upon and walk by the faith of others; and, therefore, though the "great cloud" encompasses us for our encouragement, not one of them, nor all the company together, is *sufficient example* for us. Hence the word in verse 2,

"Looking unto Jesus;" or, literally, "Looking *away* to the author and perfecter of faith—Jesus," the only one who has left a *perfect pattern* of what a life of faith really implies. The more we consider Him, the more we find the absolute perfection of His example displayed. Wherefore, let us divest ourselves of every encumbrance. Some are asking what these are, forgetting that the race itself is the best means of disclosing them. There are, of course, many things that must be left at the starting place, as every child of God knows; but, surely, there are many other hindrances that are only discovered as the circumstances in which they lurk call them forth. Does the athlete stay to enquire what impedes his progress? None know so well as they who are actually contending in the race what those things are that hinder. If we have made a start the impediments will quickly be manifested, and as they become so let us lay them aside. Gal. iv. 17-24 gives their source, and also the remedy: "That ye *put off* the old man"; "That ye *put on* the new man." We start with the consciousness of what *Christ has done*—we run in the strength of what *He is*. The path is not our own choosing—the course is marked out for us—the race is set before us.

If we cannot run *where* we like, neither can we run *as* we like, for the principal condition is "*with patience*." The course may lie through bodily sickness, physical suffering, or heavy affliction; and, too often, the first desire is that the suffering one may be restored, or the trial removed, as the case may be, without a thought that the real nature of such a request would oft-times be equivalent to a desire to be taken out of the race altogether. Not that the sufferer should refrain from the desire for relief, only let it be in God's way. We would sometimes like to eliminate the word "patience" from the conditions; or, to return to our illustration, we want to escape the lesson, because it is very hard, and we cannot understand it. We are sometimes told that Paul's thorn in the flesh was to

keep him humble, but there was much more in it than that. It was to prove the sufficiency of the grace of God for every condition and circumstance, by showing us one of His children able to praise Him, not only *in*, but *for* the trial. This seems to be the full meaning of "Most gladly, therefore, will I glory *in my infirmities*."

It is said that some of the poor Chinese idolaters are so intensely earnest and unremitting in gazing at the countenances of their idols, that their own faces gradually assume the same expression. What a lesson this should read us, in view of the third verse of Heb. xii. ! "Consider Him." The original is even stronger. It reads, "Consider attentively Him who endured." Compare 2 Cor. iii. 18, "We all, with open (that is, unveiled) face, beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image." The object of our contemplation then is Christ, *the enduring One*; He who could say, "I have glorified Thee on the earth; I have finished the work Thou gavest Me to do." That which sustained Him in all the anguish and suffering of the Cross—that awful scene of shame and judicial death—was "the joy that was set before Him;" for which He "endured the Cross, despising the shame;" the joy of being able to say, "I will declare Thy name unto *my brethren*;" "Behold, I and the children which God hath given Me;" "I ascend unto My Father and your Father;" "I will come again and receive you unto Myself."

Oh that we could realise the full meaning of this, when called to mourn the falling asleep of loved ones, that their presence with Him has added *one measure more* to that joy which carried Him through the deep, dark, and troubled waters of judgment, to open up the way to God! "For it became Him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the Captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings" (Heb. ii. 10). But had He no present joy as "God manifest in the flesh?" Such words as "I delight to do

Thy will, O God," and "I do always those things that please Him," tell us plainly that, in the midst of the scene where "sin reigned unto death," He had that deep unbroken joy of perfect obedience and submission to the Father's will. This we read of in John xv. 11, as "*My joy*." It is the necessary accompaniment of verse 10: "I have kept My Father's commandments, and abide in His love."

May grace enable each one of His children, and especially the tried ones, so to *consider Him* that, in an ever-increasing measure, "this mind may be in us which was also in Christ Jesus," when He humbled Himself into the very dust of death, whence He has received the name that is above every name.

"Jesus! Thou name of power divine
To all of heavenly birth!
Jesus! the never-failing mine
Of richest, sweetest worth!"

In the power of that holy name may we be enabled to practise the exercises of 2 Pet. i. 5-9. Then we shall not only be able to "resist unto blood" (Heb. xii. 4); that is, death to the flesh; but, being neither barren nor unfruitful in the school of God, shall yield the peaceable fruit of righteousness, without despising or making light of the chastening on the one hand, or giving up in despair on the other (verse 5).

His hand is just burnishing the precious metal till He can see His image reflected thereby; and, if the process be necessary, and often painful, we must not forget "the exhortation that speaketh unto us as unto children," that infinite love is the directing power, and the end to be attained, likeness unto Himself.

Realising this, the hands that hang listlessly by the side will be once more braced for the conflict; the knees will receive fresh vigour and energy; and the path, so crooked and tortuous, will again become clearly defined; while the lame ones who may have overtaken us, and whom our halting and hesitating may have turned aside, are enabled to return to the course; and, being there, are in the place where healing power can reach and sustain them.

THE GOSPEL OF JOHN.

CHAPTER XIII.—CONTINUED.

NOTES OF ADDRESSES BY W. LINCOLN.

Communicated by J. S. H.

THE remaining part of this chapter I would subdivide into three:—First, the two Incarnations; secondly, the two Glorifications; thirdly, the two Homes.

The two Incarnations. “When Jesus had thus said, He was troubled in spirit, and testified and said, Verily, verily, I say unto you, that one of you shall betray me.” He was troubled, not only because he was to be betrayed, but because it was by one of His company. It seemed the will of God that every drop of sorrow that was possible to be added to His cup He should drink; not one thing lacking. We know something of how we should feel, if one we trusted turned round upon us; and Jesus felt the more poignantly, for His human sensibilities were not blunted by sin.

So He tells His disciples this, and they are troubled. What is the cause? Because each was afraid lest He should have pointed at them; none suspected Judas, each and all suspected themselves. They knew something, evidently, of their own badness, and nothing but the lips of love could reassure them after an announcement like that. So they seek to ascertain, and in the way here mentioned, who it was of whom He spake. Peter gives a nod, so to speak, to the one lying on the bosom of Jesus. We are not told who it was, which is exceedingly significant. The one nearest to Christ is nameless. There is no question but that it was John himself; still the Holy Ghost must have an object in avoiding the mention of his name. Fame in this world, and intimacy with the Lord, do not always, probably never, go together. Which would we rather have?

The peculiar expression about John occurs in these three other places—at the cross, at the resurrection, and at that which, in John’s Gospel, stands for the ascension. Does it not teach us that if we would enter

into His love, that is the way, by death and resurrection. And then (for there is no account of the ascension here, nor could be), there is the picture of the Lord receding from view, with two followers, one representing the saints who are to die, the other the saints who are not to die. It is remarkable that in chapter xxi. there is a distinct reference to this scene (verse 20), so that the two are connected together. Are we waiting for the coming of the Lord, and to disappear into the glory with him? May we lie upon His bosom, and learn there the secrets of His love. John did not lie in His bosom *because* he would hear the secrets the Lord could tell him; he lay there because of the love of the Lord, and lying there he did learn the secrets. First lying in the bosom, then learning the secrets, God reveals the precious things of His Word to His chosen ones.

Then John, looking up at the Lord, says, “Lord, who is it?” Evidently it was not a question of mere curiosity, for the Lord tells him. The Lord appears to keep nothing from him—He is open-hearted to His people; the only things He refuses to tell us of are times and seasons. And see the way He answers—Look at the person to whom I give the sop. Why did He not say “Judas,” right out? Evidently to spare his feelings. Why did He give the sop to Judas? It was the last kind action the Lord could do for him. It is the same nowadays. Unconverted people get a great deal of kindness from God, and this is often its effect—only to harden them. Giving the sop, again, was like a permission for Judas to act. This is strikingly emphasised in Matthew, how that Judas had to wait for the Lord’s permission or he could do nothing. “And it came to pass, when Jesus had finished all these sayings, He said unto his disciples, Ye know that after two days is the feast of the passover, and the Son of Man is betrayed to be crucified. *Then* assembled together the chief priests, &c.” They could not arrange for the day until *He* had fixed it. He is the Arbiter of all. He was a voluntary Victim, as the

burnt offering so blessedly brings out. Then Satan enters in; Satan incarnate, before God incarnate, He could entrust so tremendous a work to no other hand. Judas had been very bad, and full of the devil before; "the devil having now put into the heart of Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, to betray him" (verse 2); but now he enters right in. Oh, unhappy man, thus ripening in guilt and sin. Ah, there are awful realities taking place in this world, people ripening in this way and ripening in the other; may we see to it that, as our character is forming, it may be forming in a heavenly way. Yet all appeared outwardly right, for even the disciples did not know who was meant. And then we have an inimitable touch of the Spirit in those words, "and it was night." Night all around, and dense dark night in that lost man's soul. What a different part is ours, to "walk in the light as He is in the light." Let us not do anything with night in our souls, but in the full light of God's smile.

Then secondly, we have the two Glorifications. "Therefore, when he was gone out, Jesus said, Now is the Son of Man glorified, and God is glorified in Him." As if he were now at liberty. It is a bad sign when a church of God is gathered together, and someone present fetters them. Are we each of us a help or a hindrance to the communion of others? It seems as if the spirit of Jesus were more free, Judas having gone out. But there are the two Glorifications spoken of in this chapter. First, there is that remarkable expression, "Son of Man," the name of His deepest humiliation, and of His highest glory. "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up." "Now is the Son of Man glorified, and God is glorified in Him;" and then in verse 32, "If God be glorified in him, God shall also glorify Him in Himself;" that is, He will glorify the Son of Man in Himself. But first, look at the other in verse 31, "Now is the Son of Man glorified and God is glorified in Him;" that is, when Judas was gone out He counted the work as it

were accomplished; that He was already sold, crucified, and slain. Do not stumble because the Lord speaks of the Cross as a glorification of Himself. Did He not there put away sin, annihilate the power of the Devil? In His hour of deepest humiliation and weakness, there to conquer and dispose of everything against us. But that was only a part; God had been sinned against. Sin was an offence against God; therefore, He could not overlook it, but must have His say about sin. And he had it, and the hand of God came down upon Christ in wrath. None tasted that but Christ. Some will taste it; what a fearful thought. The world is virtually divided into two parts—those who prefer to encounter the wrath of God themselves, and those who would prefer that Another should for them, who could do it. Jesus went to meet that wrath, and sank down into death for it, but He could bear it all. Thus did He tell out God. Observe that it is also added, "God is glorified in Him"; that is, all the holiness of God, all His indignation against sin, was told out at the Cross. Hell will not tell out the wrath of God as did the Cross. Christ was always glorifying the Father all His life, but on the Cross He fully told out God, all the heart of God, as well His abhorrence of sin as His love of the sinner. Ah there is such a deal of instruction in that Cross; God grant we may ever be learning its many deep, profound lessons. He had one Son, His beloved, and that beloved Son upon the Cross tells me how much God loves me, and how much He hates my sin. "God is glorified in Him." Then God will, if He can, make it up to Christ. God (speaking reverently) is now Christ's debtor. "If God be glorified in Him, God shall also glorify Him in Himself, and shall straightway glorify Him." He will return it to Him; and already has He begun to do this. There is a Man in God now. That is a striking expression, you remember, in Colossians iii, "Your life is hid with Christ in God." But this is only the beginning; it is not all God has in view; it is only the foundation. God is going to bring all who plead

His name up to where Jesus is. And God is now engaged in the delightful yet arduous work of testifying His approbation of His Son's blessed work. "Glorify Thy Son that Thy Son also may glorify Thee." Every time I come and learn out the name of Christ, I learn more of God's love too.

You may observe the same two glories brought out in Ephesians i. We have this expression there, again and again. "To the praise of His glory." This is after mention of the work of Christ, and the work of the Holy Ghost; but once, "To the praise of the glory of His grace, wherein He hath made us accepted in the Beloved." That is after mention of the work of God. The difference is this—He had been speaking in the earlier verses, of God having made us His sons; that tells out the glory of His grace, in lifting us up who were so vile. But if it is Christ ultimately Lord of all creation, then it is the praise of His glory. All the telling out the infinite resources of Divine grace is in the Blessed One hanging upon the Cross to bring us to God. But by-and-by it will be to the praise of His glory when the work is seen completed, all gathered together in Christ, Lord of all creation.

THE EPISTLE OF JAMES.

EXTRACT FROM A LETTER FROM FRED. S. ARNOT.

IN my own quiet hours I have been much refreshed in reading the epistle of James. It begins and ends with patience and prayer of faith. It speaks of patience as a thing to be exercised—wisdom to be asked for. It shews that the hindrance to prayer in faith is a 'double mind' in the asker (Chap. i. 8), and exhorts such to purify their hearts (Chap. iv. 8). Those in poverty and adversity need heavenly wisdom to rise above the cares of the world, to glory, and to lay hold of the crown of life. There is a divine privilege in our being *poor* and *tried*. The rich and prosperous man requires wisdom to see his own humiliation in the fading away of all his riches and prosperity (verse 10, 11). Chaps. ii., iii., and iv. seem

to be wholly occupied with expounding verse 19 of Chap. i. Swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath. Let *hearing* be united with *doing* (verses 22-25 Chap. i). We see here also the connection of the Apostle's arguments followed out in Chap. ii. that faith without works is dead, for faith cometh by hearing. *The life of faith*, as described in Chap. ii. is most practical and blessed. We no longer see things as they are to our eyes but as God describes them. (Gay clothing or vile garments do not influence the man of faith.) The works also described are positive (verse 15, 16).

"Chap. iii. 'Not many teachers' (R.V.), because not many are 'slow of speech'. It is also implied here that a teacher must not be a great talker. In this chapter it is also shewn that if we have wisdom and understanding to shew or teach unto our brethren, it is *safer* to shew it by *example* than by speech (verse 13).

"Wisdom to restrain creature wrath is next dwelt upon (Chap. v.). The first verses convey a solemn warning to all employers of labour. I have often been reminded of it when paying my carriers, and have been restrained from niggardliness. In the exhortation to patience in verse 7, is not the illustration of the husbandman and his seed very forcible? What though we, and all we are, be, for the time, buried in the earth! ('It doth not now appear what we shall be.') The morning cometh. Though we be oppressed, despised, cast out, forgotten, it may be even by our brethren (verse 9), let us 'murmur not' (R.V.). We have seen how the prophets suffered (Heb. xi.), how Job endured to the end what the Lord gave him, therefore we count them happy who endure. (Moses chose this happiness—Heb. xi. 25.) This 'long patience' of the husbandman, this happy enduring of the enlightened soul, thinketh of no *other* time but the *perfect time* (after the early and latter rain), looketh for *none other* to deliver but Him, our Lord. Those two points give great joy. No truce until *He cometh*. No other hand to deliver but *HIS*. Connect last clause of verse 9 with end of verse 12."

NOTES ON THE PROVERBS.

PART XI.

PROVERB.

PARALLEL.

Chapter xiv., verse 27. "The fear of the Lord is a fountain of life," &c.

See Prov. xiv. 27. "The law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death."—Rom. viii. 2).

Verse 29. "He that is slow to wrath is of great understanding," &c.

Moses—Nu. xii. 3. "Swift to hear—slow to speak—slow to wrath, for the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God."—Jas. i. 19, 20. "Be ye angry and sin not."

"Let not the sun go down upon your wrath." See Rom. xii. 18-20.

Verse 30. "A sound heart is the life of the flesh," &c.

Both temporally and spiritually. But envy has no rest.—1 Cor. xiii.

Verse 32. "The wicked is driven away (or thrust down) in his wickedness," &c.

"It shall be well with them that fear God, which fear before Him."

Stephen—Acts vii. 55-60.

Paul—2 Tim. iv. 6-8.

"But it shall not be well with the wicked."—Eccl. viii. 12, 13.

1 Cor. vi. 9, 10; Rev. xxi. 8.

Verse 34. "Righteousness exalteth a nation, but sin is a reproach to any people."

Contrast Israel under Joshua; and after his death Judges i. 2. "Whatever is morally wrong cannot be politically right."

Righteousness is immortal.

History confirms this.

Verse 35. "The king's favour is towards a wise servant," &c.

This is true in earthly courts; how much more in the heavenly.

"Well done, thou good and faithful servant."—Matt. xxv. 21.

"Thou wicked and slothful servant."—Verse 26.

Chapter xv., verse 1. "A soft answer turneth away wrath."

Note the meekness of the Reubenites.—Josh. xxii. 15-34.

Saul and Jonathan—1 Sam. xx. 30-34.

Paul and Barnabas—Acts xv. 39.

Strive rather to convince than to vex your opponent.

Verse 3. "The eyes of the Lord are in every place, beholding the evil and the good."

"The eyes of the Lord run to and fro throughout the whole earth," &c.

Adam and Eve—Gen. iii. 8, 9.

Hagar (Gen. xvi. 7-13) and the Ethiopian (Acts viii. 29) in the desert.

Nathanael—John i. 48.

Peter and Cornelius—Acts x.

"His eyes were as a flame of fire."—Rev. i. 14.

"His eyes are as the eyes of doves by the rivers of water."—Song of Sol. v. 12.

Verse 4. "A wholesome tongue (healing tongue) is a tree of life," &c.

The one is as balm, the other as vinegar, to a wound.

Abigail's advice to David compared with Jezebel's to Ahab.

Verses 8, 9, and 29. "We know that God
"The sacrifice of the hearth not sinners,"
wicked is an abomi- &c. (*i.e.*, sin-loving
nation to the Lord," men).—John ix. 31.
&c. The costliest offer-
ing of one who is lead-
ing a wicked life is
hateful in the sight of
God; while the *prayer*
of the good man, even
though he may have
no sacrifice to offer,
is acceptable to Him.
Cain and Abel.

Verses 10 and 12. See chap. v. 12;
"There shall be grievous chap. x. 17.
correction for him
that *forsaketh* the way,
and he that hateth
reproof shall die."—
R.V.

Verse 11. "Hell Job. xxvi. 6; Ps.
and destruction are cxxxix. 8.
before the Lord," &c. "I know your
thoughts."
"He knew what was
in man."—John ii.

Verses 14, 15. "A "Oil to make him
merry heart maketh of a cheerful counte-
a cheerful counte- nance."
nance," &c. "Be ye filled with
the spirit."—Prov. xvii.
22; 1 Sam. xvi. 12;
Acts vi. 15.

Verses 16, 17. Contrast Paul in
"Better is little with prison (Phil. iv. 11,
the fear of the Lord." 13, 18; 1 Tim. vi. 6)
with Ahab in a palace
(1 Kings xxi. 4). God
is a substitute for
everything, but no-
thing is a substitute
for God.

Verse 19. "The Every effort is pain-
way of a sluggard is ful to lazy beings.
as a hedge of thorns."
—R.V.

Verses 20, 21, 22. Explained chaps. x.
1; x. 23; xi. 14.

Verse 23. "A Joseph to Pharaoh
word spoken in due —Gen. xli. 33-37.
season, how good is Paul to the jailor—
it." Acts xvi. 28.

Verse 24. "The So Noah, Joseph,
way of life is *above* and Moses found
to the wise," &c. God's way taken en-
sures safety and eternal
deliverance.

Verse 27. "He Lot—Gen. xiii. and
that is greedy of gain xix.
troubleth his own Laban—Gen. xxxi.
house," &c. 15.

Achan—Josh. vii.
24, 25.
Gehazi—2 Kings v.
27.
Hating gifts—*i.e.*,
refusing bribes.—Ex.
xxiii. 8.

Verse 30. "The "His favour is as
light of the eyes re- a cloud of the latter
joiceth the heart," rain."—Chap. xvi. 15.
&c. "Good tidings of great
joy."

Verses 31, 32. Compare chap. xxi.
"The earth that heareth 16.
the reproof of life,"
&c.

Verse 33. "The Honour is derived
fear of the Lord is from wisdom—wis-
dom is through the
the instruction of fear of God, which
wisdom," &c. is essential to true
humility.

Joseph feared God,
became wise, was
humbled as a slave,
learned humility, and
then was highly
honoured. A. O. M.

In all your natural, civil, and religious
actions, let divine glory rest upon your soul;
let the glory of Christ lie nearest your hearts.

HINDERERS.

THE small remnant which had returned to Jerusalem from Babylon, were under their governor, Nehemiah, engaged in a great work, and because the work was of God, those who tried to hinder were many.

The opposition was from three classes—their adversaries, their kindred, and of those amongst themselves (Neh. iv. 10-12).

Under the leadership of Christ, there are those engaged to-day with work for God. The same tactics to hinder from the same classes are still pursued. Open opposition must be reckoned upon. This, however, is the least dangerous, and since unconcealed enmity usually defeats its own purpose, it is seldom resorted to in this day. In one sense it is a blessing, as persecution has always a bracing effect. Mere professors are weeded out, and the true-hearted only driven the closer to Christ.

Of quite a different kind was the attack made by their kinsmen, of whom quite a number dwelt at ease *among the enemy*, crying continually unto the faithful few (see margin verse 12), "Ye must return to us." In other words, they said it is no use, your work will come to nought, it is impossible to succeed, it will end in nothing; some day you must take your place amongst us. Is there not something like this now? A number escaped from bondage, freed from tradition's weakening influences, seeking unto the Lord as at the beginning. After the way called heresy, worshipping God, and exercising themselves to have a conscience void of offence toward God and toward men (Acts xxiv. 14-16). Their kinsmen in numbers are *around* them. Instead of being *with* them, are mixed up with the ungodly. The relationship is certainly acknowledged; but the little separated companies are despised, slighted, and greeted with taunting words akin to those used to the remnant in the days of Nehemiah.

Yet again were they hindered, and this time by those from whom it might have been least expected. Judah, who was of them-

selves, said (verse 10) our strength fails, the difficulties are unsurmountable, we are not able for what we have undertaken.

There is nothing so paralyzing to sustained effort in a godly way as the drag of half-hearted, despairing co-workers, and when the subtle lie of Satan finds utterance from the lips of those to whom the workers look for guidance, the case is well nigh hopeless. Judah was the royal tribe, whose standard was pitched to the east of the tabernacle. They ought to have been the first in leading on to liberty, instead of being the first to propose again bondage as the heritage of a delivered people.

"Remember the Lord"; "Every man to his work" (verses 14, 15), were the watch-words wherewith Nehemiah rallied the people, and raised their drooping spirits. Let the same words be as the blast of the bugle in our ears. "Fear not, My Spirit remaineth among you," assures the final triumph and victory. P. H.

COURAGE OR COWARDICE?

WHEN the Dutch Fleet drew near Chatham, fearing it might effect a landing, the Duke of Albemarle determined to prevent it by inspiring the men with his own dauntless spirit. Calm as if beyond the touch of death, he took his position in the forefront of the battle, thus exposing himself to the hottest fire from the hostile ships. A loving but over-cautious friend, seeing him in such peril, darted forward, seized him by the arm, and exclaimed in great agitation, "Retire, I beseech you, from this shower of bullets, or you will be a dead man." The Duke, releasing himself from his grasp, turned coldly on the man who thus tempted him to cowardice in the hour of his country's need, and replied, "Sir, if I had been afraid of bullets I should have quitted the profession of a soldier long ago." He had counted the cost before going to war. But, alas! many who enrol their names beneath a holier banner do so only in view of the sunshine, the music, and the pay.

It is easy to be warriors in time of peace when there is nothing to fear. But in God's army the time of prosperity is the time of conflict. When the Spirit seeks to draw men to Christ, then comes the arch enemy, in battle array, to dispute His claim to the hearts of men. Jesus, whose heart was love, said, "I come not to bring peace but a sword," and from the day He spoke those words until now, has great spiritual blessing ever been accompanied by persecution and hatred. Shall we ask for the laurel and the crown before the conflict begins? Labour comes before rest. Sinners are looking to Christians to see if they stand firm against the assaults of the foe; and by their courage or cowardice will they judge of the power of faith. When soldiers of the Cross put on the whole armour, and manfully meet the foe, then shall victory be theirs. C.

Revised Readings.

FROM VARIORUM BIBLE.

Hebrews ix. 28.—"So Christ also having been once offered to bear the sins of many, shall appear a second time, apart from sin, to them that wait for Him unto salvation." (R. V.)

This verse was rendered in the 1878 edition of New Testament, by *Rotherham*, in his severely literal manner, as follows:—"Thus the Christ also, having once for all been offered for the bearing up of sins of many, a second time, apart from sin, will appear, to those who for Him are ardently waiting unto Salvation."

The theory that only "watching" Christians are to be caught up to meet the Lord at His coming is mainly built upon this verse; but the above renderings show it to be quite untenable.

The "waiting for Him unto salvation" entirely accords with Rom. xiii. 2, 1 Thess. v. 8, and Phil. iii. 20, "from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ—in which the same Greek word is rendered "look for" as in Heb. ix. 28.

Surely none will deny that there is a very deep and real sense in which all believers are "looking for Him unto salvation."

JOAB was about the most popular man in David's time, yet there is no mention of him in the list of David's worthies.

DISCORD and division become no Christian. For wolves to worry the lambs is no wonder, but for one lamb to worry another is unnatural and monstrous.

CONSECRATION.

WE sometimes sing—

"Consecrate me now to Thy service, Lord,
By the power of grace divine."

What do we mean by it? To be consecrated is to have the hand so filled that there remains no room for anything else. Therefore, it means set apart to that one thing, wholly occupied with it.

We desire that the service of God may have the whole heart, and mind, and soul, and strength: that henceforth whatever is done, may be "in singleness of heart, as unto Christ," whether it be preaching the gospel, teaching the saints, or following the daily business. And this we ask may be by His grace; nothing else will do it effectually.

It may be done in the moment of excited feeling, when artificially wrought up to religious fervour. It may be the result of ambition; the natural desire to excel producing the necessary concentration of energy. But, to be real and lasting, it must be constrained by realisation of the love and grace of God.

Only as long as we are beholding Him, having our eyes opened by the Spirit to His lovingkindness and beauty, shall we be consecrated in heart. We need to admire our God; study His Word to find out His perfections until we are drawn to adore Him, and our spirits are bowed in worship before Him. He loved us when there was nothing loveable in us, but we need to see His loveableness before we can return that love.

Many waters cannot quench His love, but ours needs to be fed. Therefore, it is that when communion with God, and study of His Word are neglected, the heart grows cold towards Him and consecration, is at an end until the return brings fresh realisation of His grace. Both the condition and result of consecration is a will subject to His—a will which is but the echo of His own, which waits to know His thought or desire before having any.

When the will is allowed to be independent of His, a rival claim is admitted, consecrated to Him the soul is not for the time being. When the will turns aside, instead of remaining in unison with His, self has usurped His place. In life, if not in song, self-pleasing has taken the place of His service. Some rebellion of will may be the first indication to us of rebellion or backsliding of heart. Careful search should be made before the Lord, with the prayer that He may restore singleness of aim. M. M. A.

Correspondence.

QUESTION 241.

[We purposed closing the correspondence on this subject in our last, but we give the following letter a place on account of its importance at this time, when some are talking of being now in possession of "spiritual," or even "glorified," bodies, being deceived by Satan as an angel of light.]

To the Editor of *The Witness*.

DEAR BROTHER IN CHRIST,—You may think enough has been said on this question, but as the subject is important, and especially so in view of some curious teachings of the present day with regard to the body of the believer, I venture to submit a few additional remarks to your judgment.

The fact, to which you have *twice* called attention, that the verb is in the future tense—*shall quicken*—conclusively determines the point that the action is *future*, not present. But it may be well to state that the participle "indeed" in verse 10 shows that the statement there made is a kind of concession, as if Paul had said, "I grant that the stupendous fact—that the Spirit of God and of Christ is in you—has not yet made any difference in the body; nevertheless, it has in the spirit, and it must ultimately affect the body as well." "The body indeed is dead because of sin, but the Spirit is life because of righteousness." The assertion of verse 11 undoubtedly is that GOD raised up Jesus, and that the same God that raised up Christ will quicken the mortal bodies of believers. Whether we read "by His Spirit," or "because of His Spirit," does not seem to me to make a great difference. This cannot be determined by the fact that it is the same preposition that is translated *because* in the previous verse, but turns upon the question whether the preposition is followed by the genitive or the accusative; and in a case where external authorities are somewhat balanced, and internal evidence will be differently estimated by different people, it is perhaps not wise to press the point, though I incline to accept the *text* of both A.V. and R.V. This, at least, is clear, that the indwelling of the Spirit is a pledge of the future quickening of the body.

One correspondent says, "I am not sure of any Scripture that teaches that the dead will be raised by the Spirit, or by God the Father." The latter point is met by 1 Cor. vi. 14, and 2 Cor. iv. 14, and I think also by 1 Cor. xv. "God hath both raised up the Lord, and will also raise up us by His own power." "He which raised up the Lord Jesus shall raise up us also by Jesus, and shall present us with you."

We have to be very careful that we do not draw lines of contrast where God would have us mark unity and fellowship, and I should be slow to disallow the thought of the operation of the Spirit of God either in the resurrection of Christ or of His people. One of the grandest doctrines of Scripture is the perfect and wondrous fellowship of the Father, Son, and Spirit, in all the works and ways of God. "God sent forth His Son, born of a woman," and "The Word became flesh"; but it was through the mysterious operation of the Holy Ghost that He did so. *God* wrought wonders and signs and miracles by Christ, and He Himself did them *by the Spirit of God*, while in working them He manifested forth *His own* glory (Acts xi. 22; Matt. xii. 28; John ii. 11). In the death of Christ we see this same perfect fellowship. Jehovah awoke His sword against His fellow; Christ laid down His life for the sheep; and it was "through the eternal Spirit" that He "offered Himself without spot to God" (Zec. iii. 7; John x. 18; Heb. ix. 14). The resurrection of Christ is generally and definitely attributed to GOD; but even as the Lord fulfilled the command to lay down His life, so He fulfilled the command to take it again. And without resting on 1 Pet. iii. 18 (though I by no means express a judgment in refraining from doing so), I think it may be said that if Christ offered Himself *through the Spirit*, and acted in that same perfect fellowship of the Spirit immediately after His resurrection (Acts i. 2), anyone who would assert that because God the Father raised up Christ from the dead, *therefore* the Spirit had no part in that mighty work, may well be reminded that it is very possible for a natural inference to be quite wrong when we have to do with what is supernatural.

Therefore, a consideration of the perfect unity and fellowship of the glorious Godhead, as well as the statement of Rom. viii. 11, would prevent my accepting the assertion that the Agent in the resurrection of the saints "is *exclusively* the Lord Jesus Christ," though it behoves us to keep in prominence the great truth that it is He who, as the Resurrection and the Life, the Lord of living and dead, will raise them.

Eternal life is the gift of the *Father* (Rom. vi. 23) and of the Son (John x. 28), and yet it is possessed only by those who are "born of the Spirit," and the resurrection which brings God's redeemed ones into the full enjoyment of that eternal life, is the joint action of at least the Father and the Son; and, I believe, the Spirit too.

May I add that if, as stated by a former correspondent (page 16), the word "quicken" only referred to that "which is to be the unique and blissful portion of *living saints* when the Lord shall come again," the promise *has not* been fulfilled, and *cannot* be fulfilled to myriads of those who have treasured it up, *including* those to whom the blessed assurance was first given, for *resurrection alone* can put them in possession of living and glorified bodies. Should we not rather say, that the Word here as truly includes the resurrection of all who have departed to be with Christ, as His own promise of resurrection in John vi. involves the change of all who are alive and remaining when He comes? Here again let us learn that as Scripture keeps resurrection prominently before us, as well as the coming of our Lord, or as linked with His coming, so we should seek not, even in thought, to separate those who, whether waiting *with* Christ or *for* Christ, have "one hope," which must be realised in that *one* blissful moment when we are "caught up TOGETHER to meet the Lord in the air," that we may "live together with Him."

Yours in that "blessed hope,"

W. H. BENNET.

THE CALEDONIAN BIBLE CARRIAGE.

REPORT OF THE WORK BY E. STACK.

I HAVE had some little experience in Bible Carriage Work. Twenty-three years ago, about a year after I was converted, the late H. Moorhouse and myself were labouring together in the Gospel, and commenced this kind of service in the east end of London.

At the outset our brethren, John Ritchie and Thomas Dunlop, had charge of the work at

PARKHEAD CROSS.

The Carriage was removed to

GOVAN CROSS,

where I was at that time. The Gospel was preached from the Carriage, and many Bibles, Testaments, and Gospel books were sold and distributed. The Carriage was then taken to other parts of the city of Glasgow and suburbs, where the Gospel was preached, and many Bibles and books were sold at nominal prices, also, leaflets distributed.

On the 15th of July I entered upon this work, purposing to make the Carriage a machine not merely for effecting sales, but also for conveying the Gospel message to sinners. We arranged to spend the most part of our time each evening in preaching, and this we have been enabled to do. We left Glasgow for

MOTHERWELL,

and found the village visitation workers with Brother Ritchie there. I do not think that a single person refused a book from us, and many both heard and read the Gospel. At

HAMILTON

we continued about a week. The head constable said to us, "Dear me, what is this you have got, is it a new baker's van?" I said, "We don't carry that kind of bread, but we carry a better—the Bread of Life." We got a stand in a central place in the town, and whilst there we had the fellowship of the local and other brethren. We sold a large number of books, principally Penny Testaments, and preached the Gospel each evening to large crowds. We went on to

LARKHALL,

where we preached the Gospel on Sunday evening in the Gospel Hall. Three persons professed to be converted. The whole village seemed to be turned out. Then at

STONEHOUSE

we had a good time. The people stood and listened attentively till after ten o'clock. We reached

BROXBURN

about two o'clock on a Saturday afternoon and stood near a public-house. There might be about fifty Roman Catholics standing round the Carriage, and not one opposed us, but many accepted Gospel books. At

EDINBURGH

we gave away about one hundred thousand Gospel books. Our first stand was in Nicholson Square, and then near the main entrance to the Exhibition. Brother Dunlop attended to the Carriage and horse, while I gave Gospel books to those entering and coming out. I found that more grace was needed to hand these Gospel books to people there than to preach the Gospel from the platform. We met all sorts of people, high and low, rich and poor, illiterate and educated; dwellers in the city, and from many parts of Great Britain, Ireland, and the whole world. With a few exceptions, all received the books thankfully, thus carrying these Gospel messengers away to their distant homes. We visited

QUEENSFERRY

and found opportunity for distributing books, etc., among the workmen at the Forth Bridge works. Next we went to

DALKEITH.

The Superintendent of Police was very courteous, saying that it was not a good day for selling our wares. We let him know that it was not a commercial enterprise in which we were engaged. He gave us the best place in the town. At this point we bought a horse to pull our Carriage along from place to place. We thought this better than hiring one every now and then. We went on to

BONNYRIGG.

Before doing anything we called upon the chief man in connection with the police force. While there we met with more real opposition than anywhere else. He would not give us permission to stand in any central place. However, we dropped down at the corner of a street in the outskirts of the place, and the people gathered around and we preached to them.

We made another effort the next night, but were hindered by this official. At

PENICUIK

we were allowed a central place, and had a good time. We came on to

GALASHIELS.

On Saturday afternoon we took up our position in Market Square. We sent the bellman round the town, and the people gathered in large numbers. At half-past seven o'clock we had no less than a thousand people, who listened most attentively. Then at

HAWICK

we were granted a good central position, and had great crowds of listeners. A young man was led to Christ through our testimony, and was soon after baptised. I also heard of another. God thus graciously gave us tokens, from time to time, that our labour was not in vain in the Lord. Next we went to

KELSO.

We sent the bellman round; but when the hour came there was no one to preach to. I just thought, "We are here for God, and if the people won't come to us, then we must go to them." So next day we went through the town and delivered Gospel books. Then we went to

BERWICK.

We got permission to stand right in front of the Town Hall, where we preached Christ to about seven hundred persons. Other places we called at that I have not mentioned; but the Lord knows them, and all those who heard the Gospel preached, and we wait for the time when the result will be manifest. This is the sowing time, but the reaping time will be when the Lord comes. Whilst it is our privilege to scatter the good seed, you can have fellowship with us in this work. It is said of one who served the Lord in secret, "Epaphras, who is one of us, a servant of Christ, saluteth you, always labouring fervently for you in prayer" (Col. iv. 12). There is a service for our sisters and others who are not called publicly to preach—a service not likely to puff up, but which God will own. Those who faithfully serve Him He will reward. When we consider that God speaks to sinners through His Word, what a privilege and responsibility it is to be the bearer of the Message of Life to those dead in sins. How dependent we are upon the Spirit of God to carry it home to the hearts and consciences of sinners. In conclusion, I may say that I know of no better means of reaching sinners with the Gospel than through this work of the Bible Carriage.

The above account of the work has been printed and circulated for the information of all those who followed it with their prayers and fellowship last year, and also with the view of securing a wider interest in it for the future.

Individuals or assemblies desiring to have fellowship in the expenses, may forward contributions to Mr. Thomas M'Laren, 27 Ann Street, Glasgow, by whom they will be duly acknowledged.

Questions and Answers.

QUESTION 260.—In what sense can a believer be said to have a clean heart?

The cleansing process is in Acts xv. 9, "purifying their hearts by faith." That which the heart is cleansed from is "an evil conscience" (Heb. x. 22). The cleansing of the conscience is effected by the "blood of Christ" (Heb. ix. 14). The purified heart becomes the dwelling place of the Spirit (Gal. iv. 6, 2 Cor. i. 22). This is that clean or cleansed heart for which David prayed (Ps. li. 10), and to such as possess it truly God is good (Ps. lxxiii. 1).

But all Scripture goes to shew that, whilst this mighty change is wrought in the heart of the believer, it does not imply deliverance from the presence of ignorance, which may be more or less blame-worthy, or of sin the result of ignorance, or of a liability to sin through temptation which may arise from within through the "deceitful lusts," or from without through the deceitfulness of Satan.

There is continual liability to defilement from within and from without, but there is also the abiding provision for the sinning child. "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." "If any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ, the Righteous, and He is the propitiation for our sins." "The blood of Jesus Christ, His Son, cleanseth us from all sin." He who forgets that his heart is deceitful, and who consequently trusts in his own heart, is a fool. He who most values the cleansing he has obtained through faith in the blood of Christ will most jealously watch the desires of his own heart. "Keep thine heart with all diligence, for out of it are the issues of life."

QUESTION 261.—Does the Scripture command, "Servants, obey in all things your masters according to the flesh" (Col. iii. 22), justify a Christian servant in obeying his employer to do evil?

Nothing can justify anyone in doing evil. No scripture could possibly be intended to convey such an idea. The position is illustrated by the action of Peter and John in Acts iv. The rule of the believer is to be "subject to the powers that be," to "obey magistrates," &c., &c., but here the magisterial command is contrary to the command of the *higher* authority, which is God. The only just answer is that given by the apostles (verse 19): "Whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye."

But let the Christian servant be quite sure that it really is obedience to God that necessitates a refusal to obey the master according to the flesh. There must be very sure ground to go upon if such a stand be taken.

In many cases a respectful request, previously made the subject of believing prayer, will avail. See Daniel i. 8.

SCRIPTURAL HOLINESS.

BY A. STEWART.

FROM A HEARER'S REPORT.

SCRIPTURAL holiness means two things. It means, in the first place, a holiness that is *revealed* in the Word of God. There are many spurious kinds of holiness, but there is only one true holiness, and that is the holiness which is after the pattern revealed in the Scriptures. But, more than that, it is not only a holiness made known to us in the Word, but it is a holiness which is *produced* by it. This is a simple distinction—the holiness that God reveals in His Word, and the holiness which He imparts by His Word to them that believe it.

As I have said, there are many spurious kinds of holiness. We do not need to go beyond the Gospels to find one special form of it, that is, the holiness of the Pharisee—an outward seeming sanctity, which God cannot own, because it does not spring from love to him. It is not a holiness produced by the power of the Spirit of God, and it is a thing that the Lord Jesus condemned in even stronger terms than the grossest sins—"Woe unto you scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites." These were the words of the Son of the Blessed. Pharisaic separation is not holiness.

Again, there have been those who have separated themselves entirely from their kin, and shut themselves up in monasteries, or lived as hermits in the desert. They have been looked upon as holy by many, but theirs is a holiness that God cannot own any more than that of the Pharisee. The very step that separates you from your fellows takes you into a place where you cannot carry out the mind of God.

What sheds a light upon both of these false forms of holiness, is the life of our Lord Jesus Christ as we have it in the Gospels. He was not a man that separated himself from men. You find Him continually in the towns, and villages, and in the Temple

where men congregated. He was like the light which shines into the foulest place, and remains untarnished, unsullied. Such was the Son of God.

The life of the monk has, no doubt, seemed attractive to many spiritual men, and, doubtless many who have sought it have done so with a sincere desire for holiness; but—

"We need not bid, for cloister'd cell,
Our neighbour and our work farewell;
Nor strive to wind ourselves too high,
For sinful men beneath the sky;
The trivial round, the common task,
Should furnish all we ought to ask—
Room to deny ourselves, a road
To bring us daily nearer God."

It is in the family and in business, in the place where God has put us, that we are to be holy men and women to His praise. Therefore, I say that true holiness must be after the pattern revealed in the Holy Scriptures, in that sense it must be scriptural holiness.

The other point is this—it must be a holiness that is produced by the Word. In connection with that I would ask you to turn to several passages of Scripture.

Romans vi. 16, 17—"Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, His servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death or of obedience unto righteousness? But, God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you;" or, as in the margin, "whereto ye were delivered." That is to say—as I take it—the doctrine, the Word of God, is looked upon as a stamp or seal, and these Roman believers are regarded as a lump of clay or wax. The two are brought together, with the result that the lump takes the impress of the seal. The obedient believer, with a heart softened by the Holy Ghost, always takes the impress of the doctrine of God; he answers to the mould of the doctrine. There was in Rome the preaching of the doctrine of the Lord, and there were people there who heard it, and were as wax to the seal.

2 Tim. iii. 16, 17—"All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness; that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works." Now, there is the man of God, and there is the tool that fashions him according to the mind of God, and that tool is the Holy Scriptures. Just as a mason takes a rough block of stone, and by the tools of his trade, guided by his skill, shapes the block to what the builder designed it to be, so God takes the man and, by the Word brought to bear upon him by the Holy Ghost, fits him for His service.

John xvii. 17, "Sanctify them through Thy Truth: Thy Word is truth." In this chapter the Lord is giving an account of His stewardship to the Father, and prays for those He is about to leave behind Him in the world. He prays for their sanctification, and asks that they may be sanctified through the Truth. The Truth is the instrument of their sanctification—the result produced is scriptural holiness.

You go into an architect's office, and he shows you a plan of a house; when it is built it should be just like what it is on the plan. But the plan cannot build the house, it takes a living builder to do that, and so the architect puts the plans into the builder's hands, and, by-and-by, the design is carried out and the house is completed. In the Scriptures the plan is made known, and by the Scriptures—the Word of God—in the hand of the Holy Ghost, we are fashioned according to it—wrought by the Word to the pattern of true holiness revealed in the Word.

Let us take an Old Testament illustration of our subject. Turn to Lev. xiv. This is the chapter that tells us about the cleansing of the leper. I would say, just at this point, that the instruction contained in it is divided into two heads; there is what was done for the man by another, and there is what the man did for himself. There were certain things that he had no hand in whatever, they were done for him by the priest,

and he was simply passive in the matter. But there were certain things which he did for himself, and which, without his doing them, could not be done.

We see what the priest did for him, in the particulars to which I wish to refer, in verses 11-18, and surely what we read there is simple and clear. The man was going to be practically consecrated, and this was the method of it: The priest took first the blood of the sacrifice and put it upon the tip of the right ear of him that was to be cleansed, and upon the thumb of his right hand, and upon the great toe of his right foot. By the blood he claimed the whole man for the God of Israel. Remember that God has a like claim upon you and me, in virtue of the blood of Jesus having been sprinkled upon us. "God gives all, and He claims all." He gave His Son. What does He claim? No man can say, in answer, less than "all." The moment a sinner believes in Jesus, he is sanctified by the blood of Christ in the whole man to God, and God claims no less.

The blood was applied first to the ear, and why so? Because if you get the ear, you command the whole man. If the word comes in by the ear, it moves the hand, and moves the foot, and draws the whole man after it. Therefore it is that first of all the blood was applied to the ear. And where the blood went the oil went—on ear, and hand, and foot. There is no poor sinner that comes under the blood of Jesus but receives the Holy Ghost. "In whom after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise" (Eph. i. 13). Where the blood goes the oil goes. If the blood separates you off to God, the Holy Spirit gives you power to carry out your separation. The shame is, that having that power, we should fail to be what God would have us—holy men and women.

That we may not be supposed to be giving way to imagination regarding what is typified by the oil, let us turn to two passages in the New Testament; one is Acts x. 38—"How God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power"; and the other is 1 John ii. 20—"Ye have an unction from

the Holy One, and ye know all things." These passages show the significance of the oil as representing the Holy Spirit of God. And I would here observe that it is not the blood that gives power, but the Holy Ghost. The blood atones for sin, it brings forgiveness and purges the conscience; but it is the Holy Ghost who enables us to carry out the will of God revealed to us in the Scriptures.

Turn with me to Isaiah l. 4, 5—"The Lord God hath given me the tongue of the learned, that I should know how to speak a word in season to him that is weary: He wakeneth morning by morning, He wakeneth mine ear to hear as the learned. The Lord God hath opened mine ear, and I was not rebellious, neither turned away back." These words were doubtless spoken of the Lord Jesus, and they have their application to us. You know that "as the rudder is set the ship will steer"; and you have found in your soul's experience that if, like the Lord Jesus, when you wake in the morning, the first thing you do is to hold up your ear to God that He may instruct you and tell you what to do and how to do it, the day will be a happy day to you. And if there be haste in the morning, and other things claim your ear before the voice of God, you will have cause in the evening to say, like that Roman Emperor, "I have lost a day." And why? Because God had not your ear at the beginning of it! What connects itself with the ear is obedience. We read in Proverbs of an "obedient ear." Why was it that the slave in Israel, who might have gone out free, but chose to remain a slave to his master for ever, was brought to the door-post, and had his ear bored through with an awl? Surely because all the commandments of his master came in at ear-gate, and by that action he said, "I yield my ear that the word of my master may command it for ever." And so your ear is sanctified to God, that you may hear His word and carry out His will.

(To be concluded in our next.)

ONE tribe in Israel did not follow another, one man did not follow another, they followed *the cloud*.

HALF-HOURS with a CONCORDANCE.

II.—SANCTIFICATION.

WHAT is sanctification? First let us look at a certain usage of the word "sanctify" in Matt. xxiii. 17-19. Gold is put into the temple and the temple sanctifies it. A gift is put on the altar and the altar sanctifies it. Now, what has happened to the gold? what has happened to the gift? Is this changed in its character? has that become more refined? or, is not the change one of position and relationship only? Before, the gift or the gold belonged to the offerer; afterwards it was devoted to God, set apart from other gifts, from other gold, by the sanctifying act of putting this into the temple, or that upon the altar.

Now look at John x. 36: The Father sanctified the Son and sent Him into the world. Does this, can this mean, that He made Him holy in the common acceptance of that term? or is it not plain that the devoting Him to a special sphere of labour is what is spoken of? Agreeably to which Christ Himself in turn, on the eve of His great work, says, "I sanctify Myself" (John xvii. 19). And, He having set Himself apart for humiliation unto death, the Holy Spirit calls on us, and leads us, to sanctify Him as Lord in our hearts (1 Peter iii. 15, R.V.); that is, to make Him occupy a distinct, a unique, yes, a pre-eminently exalted position there, as sole owner of our affections and master of our thoughts.

Turning now to scriptures. Regarding believers there are, FIRST, those which speak thus:—"All them which HAVE BEEN sanctified" (Acts xx. 32); "Them which HAVE BEEN sanctified by faith that is in Me" (Acts xxvi. 18); "To them that HAVE BEEN sanctified in Christ Jesus" (1 Cor. i. 2). These passages, and 1 Cor. vi. 11, "Ye WERE sanctified . . . in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and in the Spirit of our God," seem, beyond all controversy, to refer to a work done to the believer on his becoming a partaker of Christ: a work connected especially with the Lord Jesus Christ (as to Jude 2, see

R.V.) "For it He set Himself apart" (John xvii. 19). "That with (*i.e.*, by means of) His own blood He might set His people apart He suffered without the gate" (Heb. xiii. 12). So in Eph. v. 26, "Christ gave Himself for the Church that He might sanctify her, cleansing her in the laver of water," &c. Here, "sanctify" and "cleansing," like "sanctified," in 1 Cor. vi. 11, and "sanctify," in Heb. xiii. 12, are in the aorist, because in each case it is the action itself that is viewed; and the action looked at as a whole, not in progressive accomplishment. Whereas in Acts xx. 32, xxvi. 17, 1 Cor. i. 2, where the perfect participle is used, it is rather the action in connection with its result that comes before the mind. I think the allusion is to the same thing in Hebrews ii. 11, though the present participles are there used. The reason why I believe the past aspect of sanctifying work is here alluded to is because the Lord Jesus is spoken of as the Sanctifying One, whereas the present work is elsewhere ascribed to the Spirit and to the Father (see below). That the present participle is used need present no difficulty, for the work on which it is based (Heb. xiii. 12) was present in the time referred to in Heb. ii. 11 (compare verse 12 with Ps. xxii. 22, and Ps. xxii. 1 with Matt. xxvii. 6, 7). Moreover, this sanctification, while past to us who have already believed, is continually present in relation to those who *successively* become believers. So "He that sanctifieth and those who (one after another) become sanctified (through His blood) are all of one."

Then, inasmuch as we have been sanctified we are called "holy" (or "saints," which is the same word)—see 1 Cor. i. 2, Eph. i. 17, Col. iii. 12, 1 Thess. v. 27, Heb. iii. 1, and elsewhere very frequently.

SECONDLY, there are many scriptures which speak of a present, a continuous, a progressive work. In Heb. x. 14 we who have been perfected for ever by one offering are yet described as "them that ARE BEING sanctified. This is the work of the Spirit, (see 2 Thess. ii. 13, 1 Peter i. 2). It is through the Word.

John xvii. 17 (where it is ascribed to the Father, through whose Word and by whose Spirit it is effected). The power for it is Christ received into the heart as "wisdom from God;" "righteousness," the merit of His work on the Cross, imputed to us on believing; "and sanctification," the power of His Cross experienced by us in our lives; "and redemption," He is soon coming to carry carry off His ransomed ones (1 Cor. i. 30).

This word "sanctification" occurs ten times in the New Testament, but is five times incorrectly translated "holiness" in the A.V. (in the R.V. "sanctification" always). But between sanctification and holiness there is a vast difference, for the former bespeaks a work, the latter a state.*

Before looking at this more closely it will be well to premise that there are three other words translated "holiness" in the A.V., and whilst the word "holy" therein is nearly always the translation of the same Greek word (which is also rendered "saint" and "sanctuary"), yet there are about ten exceptions. (1) First there is a different word in Acts ii. 27, xiii. 35 (Thy Holy One or Thy Pious One—*Newberry*); Heb. vii. 26, Rev. xv. 4, xvi. 5 (R.V.), where it is applied to the Lord Jesus, in reference probably to His unswerving devotion to God; and 1 Tim. ii. 8 and Tit. i. 8, where a like thing is expected of men and of overseers. The word "holiness" in Luke i. 75 and Eph. v. 24 is from the same root. (2) Yet another word occurs in 1 Cor. ix. 13 and 2 Tim. iii. 15 ("temple things," "temple writings"—*Newberry*), and the same root appears in Titus ii. 3. (3) In Col. ii. 16 "holy day" stands for feast day. (4) And finally, "holiness," in Acts iii. 12, stands for the word usually rendered "godliness" (so R.V.). The words "holy" and "holiness" in these passages then are not the same nor from the same root as those we are considering; and we revert to the word "sanctification" in its ten occurrences.

Three of these are 1 Thess. iv. 3 to 7, and

* Hence, in the original, "holiness" is feminine, but "sanctification" is masculine.

two in Rom. vi. 12 to 23. Here a present work in the saint is clearly what is spoken of. By it he is set apart, yea, by the Spirit's power he sets himself apart, from every form of uncleanness and every form of unrighteousness; setting apart every member of his body as a servant of righteousness, that he may obey from the heart the form of teaching whereunto he was delivered; he marks them which cause divisions contrary to that teaching and avoids them (Rom. xvi. 17); he withdraws from every brother that walks disorderly and not after the tradition received from the apostles (2 Thess. iii. 6), desiring to follow peace with all, but also sanctification, without which no man shall see the Lord (Heb. xii. 14), that thus he may become a vessel unto honour as thus set apart, and therefore meet for the Sovereign's use (2 Tim. ii. 21). In the six passages just cited in 2 Thess. ii. 13, and 1 Peter i. 2, and in 1 Tim. ii. 15, this word is invariably used of the present—the progressive work, and I hence infer that the same thing is meant in 1 Cor. i. 30.

Now as to holiness. We are called holy (or saints) because we have been sanctified by the Lord Jesus; rarely or never are we called holy or saints by God in reference to our conduct or behaviour; but we are *exhorted* to perfect holiness (2 Cor. vii. 1; the same word occurs in Rom. i. 4 and 1 Thess. iii. 13), which reminds of 2 Peter i. 3 to 11, R.V., "His Divine power hath granted unto us all things . . . for this very cause adding on your part all diligence in your faith, supply virtue," &c. Agreeably to this we, although holy (saints) are exhorted in 1 Peter i. 15, "As He which called you [is] holy, so BECOME ye holy in all manner of behaviour."

The Father's share in present sanctifying of saints is brought out beautifully in Heb. xii. 5-10. He trains, disciplines, moulds us that we may partake of His "holiness," a holiness of nature—He hates evil. The word rendered holiness here occurs nowhere else. The very letters of Holy Writ conspire to "sanctify Jehovah of Hosts Himself." Yet of this, if we profit

by His chastening, we partake! What astounding grace!!

Thus far we have seen a sanctifying work done by the Lord Jesus in each one who becomes a partaker of Christ, a work "in the Spirit of our God." We have also traced a work of the Spirit, progressive and continuous, in the believer, through the Word and the discipline of the Father. Then THIRDLY, and finally, we in 1 Thess. v. 23, "The God of Peace HIMSELF sanctify you WHOLLY . . . AT THE COMING of our Lord Jesus Christ." Also in 1 Peter i. 16, the Father says, "Ye shall be holy, for I am holy" (R.V.), and in 1 Thess. iii. 12, 13, "The Lord . . . establish your hearts unblameable in holiness before our God and Father AT THE COMING of our Lord Jesus with all His saints."

"Then we shall be what we should be,
Things which are not now, nor could be,
Then shall be our own."

Thus, as the Christ was sanctified by the Father, sanctified Himself, and is being sanctified in His people's hearts by the Holy Spirit's work, so each one who believes in Christ He straightway sets apart by His blood once for all. Then this saint becomes the subject of a work of the Spirit in him, leading him bit by bit, now a little, then a little more, to dissociate his thoughts, his words, his deeds, yea, his very self, from everything which the Word of Truth reveals to be contrary to the holy mind and will of God, that he may better and better please Him who reigns as Lord in his heart, till at the coming of that thrice blessed One the work is perfected by the God of Peace Himself, and he that is a set-apart one shall be set apart wholly and for ever (Rev. xxii. 11, R.V.) C. M. L.

CHRIST, THE UNKOWN ONE, REVEALED BY THE SPIRIT.

The *darkness* comprehended it (the Light of the World) not (Jno. i. 5).

The *world* knew Him not (Jno. i. 10).

There standeth One among *you* whom *ye* know not (Jno. i. 26).

I (*John*) knew Him not (Jno. i. 31).

CONFERENCE JOTTINGS.

GLASGOW HALF-YEARLY MEETINGS OF
BELIEVERS, APRIL, 1887.

EVERE a type of the Church. Read Gen. ii. 24, "Therefore shall a *man* leave his father and his mother, and shall *cleave* unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh." Thank God it is the Man Christ Jesus who *cleaves* to the wife—the Church. Had the cleaving been on our side, how often we would have failed.

A *Restored Peter* wrote the First Epistle bearing his name. In it many of the Lord's words to him—those in Matt. xvi., and elsewhere—are reproduced. A *Restored David* wrote the Fifty-first Psalm. A *Restored Samson* also did more for God in the end of his life than in the beginning.

"Strangers and Pilgrims" (1 Pet. ii. 11). Strangers *in* the world around here, pilgrims *to* the glorious home beyond. Illustration—A party of Norwegian emigrants travelling *through* Glasgow to America, both strangers and pilgrims.

The word "Trinity" does not occur in the Bible, but that which it signifies—the Father, Son, and Spirit—are *often* linked in one verse, as in 1 Pet. i. 2.

"*Elect* according to the foreknowledge of God." Don't be afraid of election. God is a Sovereign, and has His purposes, or He would not be God. Man is responsible, or he would not be man. You have a will, *so has God*; and never let go the truth, that He will bring *all* His purposes to pass.

God has not given us a "Spiritual Directory" as to where we should go and where we should not go, but *He has given* us great principles and a Great Person to guide, if we only are willing.

No harm in the trees in the Garden of Eden, but much harm in Adam putting the trees between him and God. No harm in kicking a ball about a field, but great

harm if that or any other thing comes in between our souls and God.

"Ye are the salt." But salt is no good in a salt-box. What does it do when taken out? Impregnates and preserves anything to which it is applied. So a believer needs to be down among the masses to be of real use.

The *happiest day* we will have will be when we are "*like Him*."

Where does *restoration* of soul begin? With the Lord. "*The Lord sent Nathan to David*" (2 Sam. xiii. 1).

Never confound *Grace and Government*. Some steps we take in life, while forgiven by *Grace*, cause us by God's *Government* to carry burdens till the day of our departure.

Have you not noticed the *inattention* at a conference when the Word of the Living God is being read, and the *marked attention* the moment the earthen vessel begins to express his thoughts?

There can be *no growth* if there is not a drinking in of the sincere milk of the Word.

"*Pre-eminence*" is only twice mentioned in the New Testament—first, in Colossians, applied to the *Lord Jesus*; second, *desired and loved by Diotrophes*, in 3 John.

Thirty-eight years intervened between verses 7 and 8 of 1 Cor. x., and it is very interesting to trace the causes of the wonderful difference between the numbers of fighting men numbered at the beginning, and again at the end, of their wilderness journey.

The first letter man got from God was the two tables of stone written on *both* sides, leaving no room for *any addition* about a golden calf.

Three thousand slain was God's first dealing under law (Ex. xxxii). *Three thousand saved* His first dealing under grace (Acts ii).

The children of Israel were never safer than when Balaam tried to turn *God from*

them; they were never more in danger than when he tried to turn *them from God*, and thus Balaam succeeded where Balak failed. If I am to have Christ dwelling in *my heart* by faith, I must understand the position I now occupy in *His heart*.

The *forty years* of grieving the Spirit of God in the wilderness are called by Him "*the DAY of temptation*" and "*the provocation*," as though it were one continuous act.

Two-edged Sword of Revelation—first, in chapter i., for cutting off things contrary to God in His own people; second, in chapter xix., for the judgment of the nations. There is no *ceasing* from sin but by *suffering* in the flesh.

Two Reproaches in God's Word—first, Reproach of Egypt, with shame, suffering, and death; second, Reproach of Christ through obedience to His Word, which, in God's sight, is glory and honour. Israel entered Egypt as a dead, buried, and risen people; *THEN* circumcision took place ere they could be led on to victory. Egypt's stigma rolled away; they ate the Passover, and the captain of the Lord's host appeared to lead them on into possession and enjoyment of the inheritance that was theirs as the gift of God.

A servant of the Lord, returning from America some years ago, said, "*There* it was nothing but prayer meetings; *here* nothing but Bible readings." Would he have said so *NOW*? Are there not far fewer Bible readings among us than there used to be?

"*Going Home.*" Did you ever see the contrast—a boy leaving school, light-hearted and joyous, indifferent to all his surroundings? He is "going home." In the same train, same carriage, same line, and travelling onward the same way, is a man crest-fallen and sad. Why? His hands are bound; a policeman sits at each side; he is going to the penal cell. How thankful, how earnest, how active, should the Christian going home really be!

HY P.

OUR THOUGHTS.

A WRITER long ago made use of these remarkable words: "Such as are thy habitual thoughts, such also will be the character of thy mind; for the soul is dyed by the thoughts." The conviction is pressed upon one that this principle, if recognised and followed, would make a great alteration in the lives of most Christians. Is sufficient care taken of the thoughts that they may be kept always in subjection? Or are they not rather allowed to run wild, to be gathered in by a supreme effort on special occasions?

We are not left to mere Christless morality for this principle; it is found in the New Testament. "Bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ," writes Paul (2 Cor. x. 5); and in order to facilitate this he describes the subjects which should occupy the thoughts, the reins by which the thoughts must be held in: "Whatsoever things are true, honourable, just, pure, lovely, and of good report; think on these things" (Phil. iv. 8). Those things which will not stand this test must be rejected at once as tending to evil. Not only is it a shame to speak of some things because the telling pollutes the lips; but it must be a shame likewise to think of them because the thinking pollutes the soul. When the thoughts are not held in by these reins of truth, honour, and purity, the soul is in great danger. Satan has no more cunning and successful device than that of ensnaring the thoughts. Unless kept in check by prayerful watchfulness, they will be entangled and led on unconsciously into unsuspected labyrinths of evil. Thoughts need to be thought as directly in the presence of God as deeds to be done; only in His light can they be recognised in their true character. Many apparently right have been allowed to escape the girdle of truth, and so the soul has got into the maze of error, and been drawn in its perplexity further and further from Him who is light. The Lord never hinders the honest inquiries of that reason of which He is the Creator;

but to be successful they need special subjection to His guidance, and an intimate acquaintance with His Word. Otherwise they are pitfalls of Satan, the more dangerous because working upon that strongest and most devil-like principle in fallen man, viz., pride.

Peter also has an exhortation to rein in the thoughts (1 Peter i. 13). They are to be gathered in and restrained as the flowing Eastern garments were gathered in and confined by the girdle. That which should gird the loins of the mind is the revealed truth of God (Eph. vi. 14). Gathered up from contact with a defiling earth, let the thoughts be set on things above as revealed in the Word of Truth, remembering that things revealed belong unto us, but secret things unto the Lord. Lifted above the littleness of earth, fixed on that which is high, steadfast, and noble, the soul shall be elevated and ennobled, for the soul is dyed by the thoughts.

The Spirit recognises this to have not merely a negative, but a positive bearing, and points out that which should be followed rather than that which should be avoided. The only safeguard against the wrong is to have the thoughts always occupied with the right. "The full soul loatheth the honeycomb; but to the hungry soul every bitter thing is sweet" (Prov. xxvii. 7).

If the soul is dyed by the thoughts, what a key does this put into our hands for unlocking that problem, how am I to get in me the mind which was in Jesus Christ? Consider Him, think of Him, let the mind be occupied with Him. Dwell on His perfections. Study the incidents recorded of His life for the revelation they give of His character. Notice the meekness and gentleness of Christ; admire the dignity which mingled with His lowliness of heart. And as you behold as in a glass the glory of the Lord, you shall be changed into the same image, for the Spirit will be working within, dyeing the soul by those thoughts. So is one transformed by the renewing of his mind. New thoughts take their place there, giving

their colour to the mind, which becomes more and more partaker of the Divine nature (2 Peter i. 4). By meditation, prayer, and communion the soul feeds upon Him who is its life, growing thereby increasingly into His likeness. "Think of Buddha, and you will be transformed into Buddha. If men pray to Buddha and do not become Buddha, it is because the mouth prays and not the mind." So say Buddha's priests, and the principle is true when applied to the Christian and his God. No mighty effort, self-denial, or austerities, can have the sanctifying effect of meditation upon the Lord, and communion with Him. The former directs the thoughts inward, fixing all attention upon the hungry soul; the latter turns them outwards, to be channels of communication with Him who is the Bread of Life. As bread is necessary to the physical man, so is God necessary to the spiritual. All progress as much depends upon looking outside of oneself as does salvation in the beginning. Growing in grace is defined as increasing in the knowledge of God (2 Peter iii. 18). Eternal life is to know God (Jno. xvii. 3); increasing fulness and abundance of life is increasing knowledge of Him. That we might not only have life, but have it more abundantly, Christ came to reveal God as He had never been revealed before. In order to that purpose being realised, our thoughts must be occupied with the revelation, and be in communion with the One revealed. For encouragement, the Spirit makes known that the thoughts are precious to the Lord equally with the words of those who fear His name (Mal. iii. 16).

"Try me, and know my thoughts."

"I know their thoughts and their works."

M. M. A.

TWOFOLD WORK OF HOLY SPIRIT.—(Jno. 16).

1st.—Convince the world of (a) Sin; (b) Righteousness; (c) Judgment to come.

2nd.—Guide the Saints into *all* Truth.

"He shall *not* speak of Himself; . . .
He shall glorify *ME*."

THE FIRST EPISTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS.

CHAP. XI. 27, ETC.

NOTES OF AN ADDRESS BY J. R. C.

WE are here taught that indifference as to the spirit in which this ordinance is observed, and consequent lack of discernment as to that which the symbolic bread and wine represent, is regarded by God as disrespect shown to the body and blood of His dear Son. Thus, eating and drinking in a way unworthy of so solemn a Divine appointment, he eats and drinks judgment to himself.

The experience of believers, as well as the teaching of Scripture, shows that the chastening of the Lord does actually come upon those whom He loves, on account of various kinds of backsliding, lukewarmness, and allowed sin. Who has not had cause to bless the Lord for the stroke that aroused them from a state of indifference and self-confidence, and brought them afresh to realise and enjoy the grace that won our hearts at the first?

But what we have here is, that not only is our individual state and behaviour marked and dealt with by the Lord, but also that He is specially jealous as to our behaviour in our assembly capacity as gathered publicly in His name to shew His death in this ordinance of His appointment.

He has said, "I will be sanctified in them that come nigh Me." His complaint of Israel was—"This people draweth nigh unto Me with their mouth, and honoureth Me with their lips; but their heart is far from Me." This drawing near as professed worshippers with unexercised hearts, keeping up the outward form, but failing to discern the Lord's body, is a sin concerning which the Lord has thought fit specially to declare His jealousy. It was of this that many of the Corinthian saints had been guilty, and the weakness and sickness and death of many amongst them is here shewn to have been the special judgment of God upon this particular form of indifference to His glory.

The words "weak" and "sickly," in verse 30, are not to be understood as referring to spiritual weakness, but literally and physically.

So also the word "sleep" refers not to a sleepy condition of soul, but to the literal death of the believer.

There are two words in the original rendered "sleep"—one (*Kathudo*) never applied to death, used e.g. in Matt. viii. 24, xxvi. 40; Eph. v. 14; 1 Thess. v. 6, 7; and in Matt. ix. 24, used by the Lord as contrasted with death.

The other (*Koimaomai*) used in Matt. xxvii. 52; John xi. 11; Acts vii. 60, xiii. 36; 1 Cor. vii. 39, xv. 6, 18, 20, 51; 1 Thess. iv. 13, 14, 15; 2 Peter iii. 4.

This is the word here used, and a comparison of the above Scriptures will show that it can mean nothing else than the death of the believer, under the chastening hand of God. It is interesting also to note that this word, as signifying death, is not used concerning the ungodly, but applies to believers only.

The word "judgment" therefore (wrongly rendered "damnation" in verse 29) does not here signify eternal judgment, or condemnation, but, as explained in verse 32, it is the chastening or family discipline of the Lord, answering very much, we believe, to what we have in John xv.—"Every branch in Me that beareth not fruit He taketh away." There is such a thing as being taken away from the place and sphere of *fruit-bearing*.

Some talk as if it would be a great blessing to depart early to be with Christ. True, the Apostle Paul says, to depart and be with Christ would be "far, far better" than to remain amid the toil and sorrow, the suffering and conflict of earth. Who would question it? But then he had another object in view—"To abide in the flesh is more needful for you." He had a work to do. There was around him and in his heart the tempted, tried, and distracted flock of the Lord; and he knew that they needed his care and that the greater his endurance here, the brighter would be his recompense hereafter.

But these verses we are considering bring

before us the whole subject of the Lord's dealings in chastisement with His people. The word rendered "chastened" in verse 32 is a *family* word, and applies only to the household of faith. It is derived from the word "paidion," a child; the noun derived from the same word is "paidia," and is rendered "nurture" in Eph. vi. 4; "instruction" in 2 Tim. iii. 16; and "chastening" in Heb. xii. 5, 7-11.

The verb here used, "paidō," is rendered "learn" in 1 Tim. i. 20; "instructing" in 2 Tim. ii. 25; "teaching" in Tit. ii. 12; and "chasten" in Heb. xii. 6, 7, 10, and Rev. iii. 19. It therefore clearly means the discipline that pertains to the family, including both the instruction and the scourging necessary to secure its being received. We may therefore inquire, What is the character of the judgment that thus comes upon the children of God?

As guilty sinners before God we have already been judged at the Cross of Christ. This is seen in John v. 24—"Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth My word, and believeth on Him that sent Me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into judgment; but is passed from death unto life."

The instant a guilty sinner, with all the burden of his sins upon him, and the judgment of God hanging over him, believes on the Lord Jesus Christ, that is his position before God. Judgment is *passed* for him for ever. He sees the judgment due to him poured out upon his SUBSTITUTE on the Cross. He can now look back to judgment past, and look forward to glory. "Being justified by faith we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ," "and now we rejoice in hope of the glory of God."

But the one who is thus delivered from condemnation is at the same time "born again," born into the family of God. "As many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His name" (John i. 12). He is no longer regarded as a criminal at the bar of judgment, but as a child in the Father's family.

And just for this reason he is a subject of

the family *discipline* "paidia." This is what is referred to in 1 Peter i. 17—"If ye call on the Father, who without respect of persons judgeth according to every man's work, pass the time of your sojourning here in fear;" so also in verse 14, "As obedient children," &c. It is the language of the Father to the children, not that of the judge to the criminal, or the king to his subjects. It is the *Father* that shows no "respect of persons" among his children, dealing harshly with one and showing favour to another as earthly parents are wont to do, but in everything acting in perfect equity.

Then in 1 Peter iv. 17, we read—"For the time is come that judgment must begin at the House of God." Christ never took the place of judge in the world or in Israel. He repudiated it (Luke xii. 14). He came not to judge the world, but to save. His miracles were miracles of grace. But there was one place in which he assumed the attitude of Judge. It was in "His Father's House," the House of God—the temple made with hands. Thence, with a scourge of *small cords*—cords that might hurt but not destroy—he drove the money-changers. In that place, and in that alone, He assumed authority as the Son of God. But now the House of God, over which He presides, is composed of "living stones," builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit, and this is the sphere in which He now acts in judgment.

His title as Judge is "the Son of Man." "The Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son;" (John v. 22) "and hath given Him authority to execute judgment also BECAUSE HE IS THE SON OF MAN."

God "hath appointed a day in which He will judge the world by that MAN whom He hath ordained" (Acts xvii. 31). That day is future. But at present He is Judge as well as High Priest over the House of God.

Turn now to Rev. i.—Here we have in the midst of the seven golden lampstands, "one like unto the Son of Man." The title here corresponds with the entire

character of the book as a book of judgment. "His head and His hairs were white like wool," no doubt signifying that as Judge He possessed the wisdom and experience of age. "His eyes were as a flame of fire," searching through and through, trying the hearts and the reins. "His feet like unto fine brass, as though they burned in a furnace," &c., &c., and "out of His mouth went a sharp two-edged sword." In Rev. xix. 15, we see the same "two-edged sword," but there the sphere of its stroke is "the nations"—here it is the hearts of the saints. Then as King of kings He will judge the world. Now the sphere of His priestly judgment is the House of God.

It is a most beautiful appointment of God that the judgment of man should be committed to a Man: to the Man who knew what it was to be tempted and tried: the man who endured the Cross from very love to us—this is the One to Whom God has entrusted the work of judgment. "The merciful and faithful High Priest." "Merciful" in all His ways with us: "faithful" in all that concerns the claims of God.

Look with me, in connection with this, at the beautiful type in Exod. xxviii.—"And Aaron shall bear the names of the children of Israel in the breastplate of judgment upon his heart, when he goeth in unto the Holy Place, for a memorial before the Lord continually" (verse 29). Note the words "*the breastplate of judgment*," and mark where it was—"upon his heart."

"And thou shalt put in the breastplate of judgment the Urim and the Thummim; and they shall be upon Aaron's heart when he goeth in before the Lord: and Aaron shall bear the judgment of the children of Israel upon his heart before the Lord continually."

In this "breastplate" there were twelve precious stones, and upon each stone was graven the name of one of the twelve tribes of Israel. Aaron as the High Priest was a representative man, representing in his own person before the Lord the whole twelve tribes of Israel.

In like manner the Lord Jesus is now the

Representative Man before the throne of God. It is not the names of tribes that He bears, but the names of every one of the sheep for which he died; and He bears them not engraven on stones, but actually enshrined in His heart's affections before God. As the apostle said of the saints at Corinth, "Ye are in our hearts to die and live with you;" so in an infinitely higher degree are we, each one, in the heart of Him who gave Himself to God for us.

Aaron had in the breastplate the Urim and Thummim. Whatever this was, we know, at least, the purpose for which it was used. The words mean "Lights and Perfections." By means of these, light was given from God upon difficult matters; the High Priest became in this way the possessor of the thoughts of God concerning each individual case of judgment. See this brought out in the following instances:—Num. xxvii. 21; 1 Sam. xxviii. 6; Ezra ii. 63; and no doubt also in the following cases as well—1 Sam. xxii. 10; xxiii. 2, 4-12; xxx. 7; 2 Sam. v. 19-23. Although, in these, the Urim and Thummim are not mentioned, yet the connection of the Ephod and the Priest points to these as the means by which God communicated His mind.

We have heard of such a thing as a man being condemned to death who turned out not to have been the murderer after all. Thus may human judgment fail; but there was a man in Israel who possessed the means of ascertaining and pronouncing infallibly the judgment of God in all necessary matters about which God was inquired of. This was the prerogative of the High Priest, and was effected by means of the Urim and Thummim in the breastplate of judgment, which it pleased Jehovah he should bear continually on his heart.

And does not this most beautifully illustrate the attitude of our Great High Priest as He stands in judgment in the midst of the churches? He can say to each, as He searches them with His flaming eyes, "I know thy works;" and yet with what love and tenderness does He commend and warn, rebuke and encourage, promise and threaten!

Perfected in His sympathy through sufferings, He knows the case of each, and exactly the kind and degree of chastening that will be for blessing.

When John the apostle thus saw the Lord in Patmos, he fell at His feet as dead. It was a glorious sight: too much for mortal vision until Divinely strengthened to bear it.

When we talk of being "gathered to the Lord," and of having "Jesus in the midst," let us remember that this is the One with whom we have to do. Could our eyes be opened to behold Him, it would be that same glorious Person we should see with the two-edged sword and the flaming eyes, and girt about the breast with a golden girdle, girded as it were for the execution of discipline in the House of God.

THE GOSPEL OF JOHN.

CHAPTER XIII.—(CONTINUED).

NOTES OF ADDRESSES BY W. LINCOLN.

Communicated by J. S. H.

NOW there remains for us in the third place to consider the two Homes; or, perhaps better, the Home yonder, and the way to get there. The Lord says, "Little children, yet a little while I am with you. Ye shall seek Me: and as I said unto the Jews, Whither I go ye cannot come; so now I say unto you." He uses a term of endearment, "Little children," as if, as He was nearing the Cross and about to leave them, He would let His heart speak out freely. Twice He repeats, "Whither I go ye cannot come;" and if we would see where He was going, we must read the end of chapter xiii. and the beginning of xiv. together. "I go to prepare a place for you." "I am going really to My Father's house, but I am going to prepare a place for you." How? "Ah, you cannot go there yet; I must go first." He still has the Cross upon His mind. There is no way to the Father but by Christ, by the Cross of Christ, by death and resurrection. He must go alone. He must bear all that lay in that path by Himself, unaided and alone. Unaided in a sense;

but God says about Him, "I will put My Spirit upon Him." Jesus was Man, and needed all the aid of God to support Him; and so, you remember, an angel was sent to strengthen Him. Beloved, we call ourselves disciples; but do you not think that if we came really before our Lord, to sit before Him and study His dying love, we should learn more experimentally than we do? We should not be the same thing week after week as we are. We should get more into the grandeur, the solitariness, the *penetralia*, the inner sanctuary of these mysteries than we do; and get more overpowered with the love of Christ, hanging there for wretches such as we. He, the Son of Man, alone, dying. Why do we sit here week after week but to be broken down more and more? If we repeat His dying command, "Remember Me," may it be a more pathetic appeal to remember what it cost Him. But at least we have this comfort, that if we do not get into His love as we should do, we have eternity to study it in. With what feeling shall we drop at His feet and sing, "Thou art worthy, for Thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by Thy blood."

Then He beckons us to follow Him. "Not now, for there is wrath to be borne, and you cannot endure that, not a drop of it; it will crush Me, it would wither you up." But, mark it, "Thou shalt follow Me afterwards." "When I have borne all the indignation and the wrath, and sunk down into atonement, into death." Then He beckons us to follow. Alas, we seek to please ourselves too much, to make ourselves comfortable in the world that cast Him out, where there was no rest for Him; and instead of taking up His Cross, seek rather to avoid it. Little we do of what we ought in following Jesus, in daring to encounter opposition, to be out and out for Him. When Jesus went to the Cross God turned His face away; when we dare take up our Cross God smiles upon us; a tremendous difference! Yet, oh how little as a matter of experience of the love of Christ in going to that Cross and enduring all for us do we

know, and how little do we dare to be right out upon His side. But have you been a poor faltering follower, so prone to deny your Lord? "Let not your heart be troubled," He has gone to prepare a place for you, and very soon you will be with Him there. Then, dare to be holy, dare to be out and out for Him now.

CHAPTER XIV.

This is peculiarly the children's chapter. There are two ways of looking at it: to pause now and again at its precious things as we look down it; or to endeavour to find out its drift as a whole. This we often miss. There are so many beautiful and precious things in it that arrest our attention separately that we let our minds fasten upon each severally, and fail to see the line of teaching as a whole. But it is well for us also to get a grip of the chapter in its entirety; to see its bearings and surroundings; its general line of thought, and that our souls are brought face to face therewith. This is God's way of sanctifying us; to show us His truth and His Christ that our souls may be moulded and fashioned thereby. So I ask you thus to ponder it this morning, and at some other time to look at its several precious things one by one.

In chapter xiii., the Lord Jesus takes His place in glory; in chapter xiv., He gives us various grounds of comfort whilst He is away; in chapter xv., what we should be doing whilst He is away; in chapter xvi., the work which the Spirit is carrying on in our behalf whilst He is away; and, chapter xvii., shows us how His heart still yearns for us whilst He is away.

In the chapter before us we have mainly these two points: first, it gives us a glimpse of a heaven in store for us; and, secondly, it gives us a view of the heavenly life now; the fulness of joy to be ours by-and-by, and the tastes of joy we get here, even as the Holy Ghost is the earnest of the inheritance.

The chapter really consists of three pieces, connected with the three questions which the Lord drew out of His inquiring people's hearts. And beautiful is it to notice that,

whatever they asked, He did not refuse to explain. The three questions are put by three different disciples, and upon them the whole chapter hinges. The first you will observe in verse 5, where Thomas asks about the way; the second in verse 8, where Philip asks about the Father; the third in verse 22, where Judas asks as to the manifestation of Divine love. A reply to Thomas about being with God; to Philip about seeing God; and to Judas about being like Christ. As our hearts know, and from Scripture, God cannot give us more than this; and this is what He is going to do for us, and love will then have had all its way with us, and we shall be satisfied.

Before we go further, I would like to correct the reading of verse 4. "Whither I go ye know the way." Put as it is, it almost makes as if Thomas directly contradicted the Lord. The difference is just this: the Lord is going Himself to take us to a glory to which no creature could ever soar; into a light Divine; into the immediate presence of God, where no angel ever drew nigh. They may stand in the distance, and God will let the light shine out to them; but to bring a creature into that presence is impossible, except by the Man Christ Jesus. Ye may not know whither I go, but ye know the way.

These three questions, with their answers, are again connected with these three words of our Lord, "I am the Way, and the Truth, and the Life." The Way, as to our being with God; the Truth, as to our seeing God; the Life, as to our feeling God, or being like Christ. And these three words again form the sum total of the chapter.

Now, let us look, in the first place, at the glimpse we have of the heaven in prospect. Look at the circumstances under which these things were spoken. Chapter xiii. ended with these words of Peter, "Lord, why cannot I follow Thee now? I will lay down my life for Thy sake." And then the answer of the Lord, "Wilt thou lay down thy life for My sake? Verily, verily, I say unto thee, the cock shall not crow till thou hast denied Me thrice." "I know what failing things I am come to save, and

that in the hour of need you will all leave Me. Peter, you will deny Me three times; but," "Let not your heart be troubled:" fail you may, but the chapter is yours still. But if the beginning of the chapter is full of comfort to the failing saint, the end is a solemn word for the obedient saint.

But why are we not to let our hearts be troubled? The reason He first assigns is, "Ye believe in God, believe also in Me." What does He mean? I think this: When you think of God, if you do not want your heart to be troubled always think that I am there, a risen Man with God for you. A High Priest, having taken the blood within the veil for you. Your Saviour, your Lover, with God for you. Put Me along with God in your thoughts, as I am in fact. He who has undertaken our case is God, the Son of God; and has gone through with it triumphantly, and into the presence of God for us.

Next. "In My Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you." Many mansions, or many abodes. This is in allusion to such a chapter as Leviticus xvi., where the high priest is seen going into the Holy of Holies with the blood. With a moment's thought you must see that there must be a vast gulf between the Creator, as such, and the creature; and which no creature can bridge, great as God may make him. Christ has bridged that gulf. "You do not know where I am going quite, for it is light and glory and bliss which no creature ever penetrated to. And I am going to get that highest glory, that fulness of bliss fit for you, lost ruined sinners, to dwell in; and then I will come in glory to receive you to Myself." It devolves upon Him to do it. "I will come and introduce you there." In John xvi. it is, "I will come and see you;" here it is, "I will come and fetch you, and carry you right up there, that where I am ye may be also."

Thus have we set before us the way to being with God. If any would reach these glorious heights, far beyond where angel ever soared, Christ says, "I am the Way;" and "no man cometh unto the Father but by Me."

Revised Readings.

FROM VARIORUM BIBLE.

COLOSSIANS II. 23.—"Which things have indeed a **show** [so Dr. De Wette (died, 1849), Dr. Olshausen (died, 1839), Dr. Wordsworth]; **the reputation** [Dean Alford (died, 1870), Dr. Bengel (died, 1752), Dr. Ellicott, Dr. Lightfoot, Dr. Meyer (died, 1873)] of wisdom in **will worship** [*i.e.*, *self-imposed worship*—Lightfoot, Meyer] and humility, **and** [omit Codex Vaticanus (in the vatican library at Rome, of the 4th century), Dr. Lachmann (died, 1851), Lightfoot, Westcott-Hort] **neglecting of** (or *punishing, or not sparing*), **dealing hardly with** (so Ellicott, Lightfoot, Meyer) the body; **not in any honour to the satisfying of the flesh** [so De Wette; **not in any value** (*i.e.*, their show of wisdom does not come from anything of real value), *for they serve only the satisfying of the flesh*—Dr. Bengel, Ellicott, Meyer; . . . **not any honour** (*i.e.*, in neglecting the body and not doing it any honour); *why are ye subject to them only to satisfy your flesh?*—Alford, Olshausen, Wordsworth (nearly); *yet are not of any value to subdue indulgence of the flesh*—Lightfoot.]

The Revised Version renders it thus: "Which things have indeed a show of wisdom in will-worship and humility and severity to the body; but are not of any value against the indulgence of the flesh."

We think this is an instance in which the Revised Version throws light upon the meaning.

2 THESSALONIANS II. 1, 2.—"Now, we beseech you, brethren, **by** [in regard of—Alford; so Bengel, Dr. Davidson, De Wette, Ellicott, Dr. Lünemann, Dr. Winer (died 1858)] the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and **by** (same as before) our gathering together unto Him. That ye be not soon shaken **in mind** (from your mind) or be troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter as from us, as that the day of **Christ** (so Codex Bezae, probably added by later hand; in the University Library at Cambridge; belongs to 6th Century. **The Lord**—Codex Sinaiticus; now at St. Petersburg; most ancient manuscript; belongs to 4th Century; discovered by Dr. Tischendorf in 1859, in the convent of St. Catherine on Mount Sinai; contains a large part of the Septuagint and the whole New Testament. Codex Alexandrinus, British Museum, 5th Century; Codex Vaticanus, Vatican, at Rome, 4th Century; Codex Bezae, Cambridge, 6th Century; also, Lachmann Tischendorf, Tregelles, Ellicott, Westcott-Hort).

It will thus be seen that the three greatest authorities—the three most ancient manuscripts—and five of the most important critical authorities favour "the day of **the Lord**" as the most correct reading "Is now present," not "is at hand"—see Revised Version.

N.B.—Any hint as to which verses thus treated will be most helpful to the correct understanding of the precious Word of our God will be carefully considered.—ED.

THREE-FOLD LOVE.

"FOR God so loved the world," of rebels lost,
Sin-cursed and ruined, sunk in misery.
Broken His laws, all crossed His purposes,
His fair earth marred by man, whom He had made
To bear His image; yet, Oh mystery!
"God loved the world and gave His only Son."

The circle now draws nearer: oft we see
How in the wondrous wisdom of God's grace
Man's failure only leads to better things!
Paradise lost, the Father's heart devised
A plan to bring His banished home again
To nobler, higher blessing than before.
From out the fallen sons of Adam's race
He chose a people formed for His praise,
His own "peculiar treasure" now to be
One with the blessed co-eternal Son.
"Bought with a price," even His precious blood,
To be His own, His spotless one, His bride!
"Christ loved the Church, and gave Himself for it."

Nearer, and nearer still, even to me,
The wondrous word of love and mercy comes!
To me, the chief of sinners; me, in whom
"There dwelleth no good thing." In deepest depths
Of sin and misery I wandered long,
Dwelling in folly in the far-off land;
Feeding with swine, seeking in vain to fill
With bitter husks of earthly vanities
The heart which God had formed for Himself.
Yet, even there, His love came forth to me,
And gently, tenderly, He drew me home;
Then ran to meet me with a kiss of peace,
Clothed me with robe of spotless righteousness,
With royal dainties fed my hungry soul,
And in His house for ever bid me dwell.
For Him, henceforth I live; and yet not I,
For "I am crucified with Christ," and now
Living by faith in Him, the "Son of God,
Who loved me, and gave Himself for me."

A. H.

Correspondence.

QUESTION 255.

WHAT DID THE APOSTLE PAUL MEAN BY EPH. III. 1.—
"THE PRISONER OF JESUS CHRIST FOR YOU GENTILES?"

To the Editor of *The Witness*.

The answer given to above seems to charge Paul with—First, Leaving his proper work, to which God had called him, in order to carry out a purpose of his own; and, Secondly, With refusing to heed the Spirit's voice in the matter. These things in themselves are grave; but when what is involved in them is considered, they are doubly so. To suppose the Apostle out of the path in which the Lord would have him at this time, is to take away the point and the savour of Christ from his solemn, faithful, and Christ-like charge to the elders of the Ephesian Church (Acts xx.). Again, in Rom. xv., he refers, I suppose, to the same journey to Jerusalem, and from thence to Rome, and he says he is sure that it will be in the fulness of the blessing of the Gospel

of Christ. He beseeches, also, for the Lord Jesus Christ's sake, and for the love of the Spirit, that they strive together with him in prayers to God (Rom. xv. 30-32). It is difficult to read such words and suppose them to have been written by one who was ignorant of the mind of God, or was heedless of that mind.

It is particularly to be noticed that while Paul was called to go to the Gentiles, he invariably seeks the Jew first. It is God's order. And even when entirely rejected by them, and given into the hands of the Gentiles, as soon as he reaches Rome he first calls the chief of the Jews; afterwards he turns to the Gentiles. Rom. ix. 1-3 shows his heart toward the Jew: chap. xv. 23, 24, agreeing with Acts xix. 10, shows how that same heart continued to enlarge towards the Gentiles. He stretches out to the regions beyond, and in obedience to the word, "I will send thee far hence to the Gentiles," he takes in far-off Spain.

Then, surely the words, "purposed in the Spirit" (chap. xix. 21), mean something more than in his own spirit. (A capital S might be used here as well as in chapter xxi. 4: in some versions it is so.) He knows that after Jerusalem he must also see Rome; and in chapter xx. 22-25, he says he goes *bound in the Spirit*, and knows not what will befall him in Jerusalem, save that the Holy Ghost witnesseth in every city that bonds and afflictions abide him. But knowing that the journey is of God, he sets his face steadfastly to go up.

The express words of the Spirit are found in chap. xxi. 11. Thus saith the Holy Ghost, "So shall the Jews at Jerusalem bind the man that owneth this girdle, and shall deliver him into the hands of the Gentiles"; which testimony had been given in every city; nor is there any proof that more was added: verse 12 shows what was of the brethren. In verse 4 there is not this distinction. It was only right, and according to a general principle, under ordinary circumstances, in the New Testament, that the brethren should advise him not to go up. Hence, the disciples, in the 4th verse, did so, understanding about the bonds, but not understanding so clearly as Paul did, the will of the Lord. Paul had, on different occasions before, acted on this principle, and so had escaped the hands of his enemies. The words of verse 13 can never be fitted to the lips of a self-willed person; but it is the language of one intent on pleasing God, and who has counted the cost. Therefore the brethren cease persuading, with the memorable words, "The will of the Lord be done." His companions in travel increase in number, which is a proof of their fellowship and brotherly love.

That he accepted the counsel given by James and all the elders also proves that he was ready to yield wherever he could, and is perfectly in keeping with his general course and with the inspired words, "Unto the Jews I became as a Jew." Of course, he always distinguished between the commandments of God and the traditions of men. So, in the temple he is seen with the Jews as a Jew, and in the city

with Trophimus. By the same rule he circumcised Timothy, whose mother, doubtless, was a Jewess, because of the Jews in those quarters; but he would not circumcise Titus, who was a Greek, that the truth of the Gospel might remain with the Gentiles.

As to the results of the journey, Paul might have been tempted to be disheartened, considering the enraged populace. But the following night the Lord stood by him, and said, "Be of good cheer, Paul; for, as thou hast testified of Me in Jerusalem, so must thou bear witness also in Rome." This is like the Lord, never to be behind in rewarding His faithful servants—see Isa. xlix. 4, 5. Surely we must be slow in finding fault where there is such approving testimony from the Lord.

Perhaps it is helpful also to remember that the time was drawing near when wrath was to come on the Jew, to the uttermost. They had crucified the Lord, had heard the testimony of the apostles, and had stoned Stephen. They had witnessed the life testimony of the disciples, and had scattered them everywhere. But God would cause the testimony concerning a crucified and risen Christ again to sound in the ears of all the rulers, as well as of the people; and who so fitted for this work as Paul? one brought up in their city, at the feet of Gamaliel; one known to the high priest, and to all the estate of the elders; he must tell it out ere the wrath can come. This winds up the New Testament history of that people.

HENRY PAYNE.

Referring to Question 255 in *Witness* of February, you state that it was not of the Lord that Paul went up to Jerusalem at Pentecost. Would you kindly explain Acts xxi. 14? Does it not mean that, from a natural point of view, it was dangerous for Paul to go to Jerusalem, but they thought it was the will of the Lord that he should go, by saying, "The will of the Lord be done"? The prophet Agabus merely predicted what was waiting for him at Jerusalem, he did not tell him it was wrong to go.

Also, chap. xxiii. 11, after Paul is taken prisoner, the Lord stood by him and said, "Be of good cheer, Paul; for, as thou hast testified of Me in Jerusalem, so must thou also bear witness at Rome." Does not this imply that the Lord approved of his going up to Jerusalem?

H. WILSON.

[We hope to refer to the subject of these letters in our next.—ED.]

Questions and Answers.

QUESTION 262.—Is there any direct reference to the Church, the body of Christ, in the Old Testament; or to this dispensation at all? Is the Church to be found in Psalm lxxx.?

We must distinguish carefully between things plainly spoken of and revealed in Scripture, and things *hidden* under type and shadow, so carefully and purposely *hidden* by God that no man could possibly discover them until the light of a new revelation discloses them, and, like a key, unlocks their secrets.

They are hidden, that no man may know them till God's time for unsealing them arrives; but they are *there*, though veiled in mystery, in order that faith may see in due time how all the ways of God throughout the ages are the working out of a plan and purpose dating from "before the foundation of the world."

Many are the types and shadows of Christ and the Church. God begins human history with one of the plainest and most glorious. Nothing can be plainer, now that God has revealed it, than the typical character of Adam and Eve; but we should never have discovered such a meaning in the Creation record had we not been shown it in Eph. v., 1 Cor. xv. 45, Rom. v. 14.

And this, again, becomes a key to many other like types and shadows, full of instruction to those who have the anointed eye to see and the opened heart to receive.

Any Old Testament prophecy, which covers this dispensation, or any part of it, deals with it only as related to the people of Israel.

The sphere of Old Testament prophecy is the earth. The spirit of it is Christ. But it is Christ, not as the Son of God in heaven and a redeemed and chosen people with Him in His heavenly glory, but Christ as Israel's Messiah, as the promised seed of the woman, of Abraham and of David, and consequently the Saviour of the World, the Heir of the promises, the King of Israel and of all nations.

In the Old Testament, the gap between the sufferings and the glory of Messiah is not filled up, from some Scriptures (such as Ps. xxii., Is. liii., lxi. 1, 2, &c., &c.) it does not appear as if there was to be any such interval.

Nor could it have been supposed, unless by light given in the New Testament, that between the 69th and 70th week (or period of seven years) in Dan. ix. 25, 26, there should intervene *this whole dispensation*; nevertheless, so it is, and so thoroughly has God, in His wisdom, *hidden* this mystery.

The destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans is referred to in verse 26, and a continuance of war and desolations, but the purposes of grace God had to work out during those desolations of Jerusalem are not hinted at.

Again, in Hosea iii. 4, 5, a lengthened period is predicted during which Israel is denationalised; but not a hint is given of the gathering out of a people during that period, from both Jew and Gentile, to form the "One New Man" of Eph. ii.

As in the parable in Matt. xiii. 44, the man who discovered the treasure *hid* the fact until he had secured the field and the treasure, by legal purchase, for himself, so the Spirit of Christ kept the secret of the present mystery until Christ, by His blood, had obtained a legal title to the world, and to the treasure it contains. Thus was it "kept secret since the world began" (Rom. xvi. 25, Eph. iii. 9).

We do not believe there is any allusion whatever to the Church in Psalm lxxx. It is a beautiful poetic allegory describing Jehovah's dealings with Israel.

SCRIPTURAL HOLINESS.

BY A. STEWART.

(Continued from page 67.)

I WISH to read a verse or two in that connection with reference to the Lord Jesus. It does not matter what aspect of truth we are considering, we find the exemplification of it in Him, and everything is clear when Christ is brought into the matter. All the lights converge in Him, and shine forth from Him. Read John v. 30—"I can of Mine own self do nothing; as I hear I judge." That is a simple word, but think of it for a moment. Jesus Christ, the Son of God, by Whom all things were made, and by Whom they consist or are held together, He says, "I can of Mine own self do nothing"—He would not step over a straw without God—"As I hear I judge." What does that mean? He had been speaking before of exercising judgment, but what does it in principle imply? A matter arose in His daily life calling for decision. What did He do? The first thing that He did was to hold up His ear to God; He stood in God's counsel that He might know what to do. Is that the habit of your life and mine? When we have to act, do we first stand still in God's presence and get His mind? Read also John viii. 40—"But now ye seek to kill Me, a man that hath told you the truth, which I have heard of God." He only spoke that which God had just spoken into His obedient ear.

If there is anything more wonderful in that connection in the Gospels, it is that passage, John xvi. 13—"When He, the Spirit of Truth is come, He will guide you into all truth; for He shall not speak of Himself; but whatsoever He shall hear, that shall He speak." The Holy Ghost is a listener before He is a speaker. Let us specially observe this, that even the Holy Spirit of God will not communicate to us God's Truth without first of all having heard it from the Father. This is our example and pattern. We see from such Scriptures how appropriate it was that by the blood and the oil God first of

all laid claim to the ear. What comes in there commands the whole man.

The next thing that was touched with the blood was the hand. Any child might tell you what that symbolises. It is the hand that executes what the brain plans. The workman, in his trade, carries out with his hand what has been designed by his mind. The work contrived cannot be carried out except the hand handle the tools, and bring it, to perfection. Look to the state of your hand. There is a verse to which I would call your attention, Isaiah liii. 11—" . . . Touch no unclean thing; . . . be ye clean that bear the vessels of the Lord." A Christian is one that bears the vessels of the Lord. In the Epistle of Jude we read of "the faith once delivered to the saints," that is, to the holy people. All Christians are God's priests, and to them—to the saints—He has committed the whole range and sum of His Truth concerning His Son Jesus Christ. If they do not preach the Gospel, who can preach it? If they do not intercede for sinners, who shall make intercession? God has delivered to His saints "the faith," but God allows no man to handle it with unholy hands. Before we engage in His work, let us see that our hands are clean. To-morrow, dear brethren, you and I are to have the privilege, often renewed, of gathering together in the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ that we may take the bread and wine, and show forth His death. That is as free to us as the air we breathe, or the blessed Gospel we have believed in; but there is always a fence round the table, and that fence is the character of God. Over the table this is written—"I will be sanctified in them that come nigh unto Me." "Let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread and drink of that cup." What have you been doing with the hands that are to handle the bread and the wine to-morrow? It is not, let a man examine himself and stay away, but it is, let a man examine himself, and so let him eat. You would have no other God than that—no other kind of God than the God that is so holy that He will be sanctified in them that come nigh unto Him. And

He has attached a penalty to the breach of that, as in the case of Nadab and Abihu, and those saints at Corinth, of whom many were weak and sickly, and many slept. His hand was upon them in judgment. And yet we do not want a God that is less holy than that for our God.

Turn now to 1 Chron. xv. This is the chapter that tells us how David repented and mended his ways concerning the bringing up of the ark. The 13th chapter tells us how the ark was brought up in the wrong way, and the 15th how it was brought up in the right way. David said, "None ought to carry the ark of God but the Levites; for them hath the Lord chosen to carry the ark of God, and to minister to Him for ever" (xv. 2); and again, "Ye are the chief of the fathers of the Levites; sanctify yourselves, both ye and your brethren, that ye may bring up the ark of the Lord God of Israel unto the place that I have prepared for it" (v. 12). And then we read—"So the priests and the Levites sanctified themselves to bring up the ark of the Lord God of Israel" (v. 14). I read these verses as an illustration of what I have been saying, that those who serve God should be holy. "Be ye clean that bear the vessels of the Lord."

I wish to refer now, shortly, to the foot. It is lowest down, and comes in contact with the earth. It does the humblest service, and is perhaps that which is most constantly in exercise. The foot typifies our walk here below; our daily goings in and out as the children of God, as holy and separated men in the defiled and defiling world which we have got to go through. There are two ways through—a clean and a dirty one. The Word of God says, "Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way? By taking heed thereto, according to Thy Word" (Ps. cxix. 9). That is scriptural holiness. The Word of God sheds a holy light upon the path, revealing the foul places that we may avoid them, and the clean places that we may walk in them, and thus our way be clean. We read again "Concerning the works of men, by the

word of Thy lips I have kept me from the paths of the destroyer" (Ps. xvii. 4). A needed word to remember. It refers to the Lord Jesus. He kept Himself, as a man, from the paths of the destroyer by the Word of God—by practical obedience to the precepts of His Father.

That sums up the whole man. God claims all; He will have you all by-and-by; but how much is He getting now? By the precious blood, and the anointing of the Holy Ghost, He says, "You are mine"—first the ear, then the hand, then the foot—and the man who responds to that, he alone is the practically holy man. We bless God there are such men, and we know when we come in contact with them that they are living near the Lord. Holiness is like the ointment hid in the hand that bewrayeth itself (Prov. xxvii. 16). When a man like that comes into a room where carnal Christians are gossiping, the gossip stops. He is walking on a higher plain, and breathing a purer atmosphere, and they feel it. His presence is like the salt that stays corruption. Such is the power of holiness in a man of God. Do you think we can be mistaken about it? Do you think that the Pharisee or mere monk could impose upon us? There is a savour about it that cannot be imitated; it is produced by the Holy Ghost. Have we this? Do we know anything of it? It is all the gift of God. No man can adorn himself with his own holiness. True holiness is beautiful, and one word sums it up—Christ.

A few words with reference to what the leper did for himself. Turn again to Lev. xiv. 8—"And he that is to be cleansed shall wash his clothes, and shave off all his hair, and wash himself in water that he may be clean." There were two things that he did for himself; he washed himself, and he shaved off all his hair. By his own hands he rid himself of the defilement affecting him, and he also shaved off that which, as Absalom and Samson may teach us, indicates the strength and beauty of the flesh. The lesson for us is, that we are not only to cleanse ourselves from outward defilement, but to judge the

strength of our nature; to lay the axe to the very root of that. There are servants of God, and he is blessing and using them; but the strength of nature is seen in their service. There are eccentricities and excrescences in which the natural strength of the man is manifested. Some may say that we ought not to judge the Lord's servants thus. We ought not to judge them, but we can't help discerning them. If I say, "That wall is green," I am not judging the wall. No one with proper eyesight can fail to see that it is green. The same chapter that says "Judge not," says "By their fruits ye shall know them." We must not get upon the judgment-seat; but every day we are discerning the characters of men, and being ourselves discerned.

There are two words, "sanctify" and "mortify." What about that word "mortify"? "Mortify (make dead) your members which are upon the earth." We are called not only to wash off the defilements which all men can see, but also to bring the strength of our nature under the Word of God, as this man brought his hair under the razor. It is hard sometimes for a preacher to keep back things which might tickle people's ears, but which are not of the prompting of the Spirit. As one said, in effect, when remonstrated with regarding such manifestations, "If you knew how many I keep back you would not be so ready to judge me." But, after all, it is a want of faith in God to bring in the strength of nature to help His Gospel.

Turn to 2 Cor. vii. 1—"Let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God." It is not simply, let the filthiness of the flesh go, but the filthiness of the spirit also. As we have it in Eph. ii. 3—"The desires of the flesh and of the mind." Are there not at this hour many men of outwardly blameless life, immersed perhaps in books and study, whose sin is the insubjection of their minds to God? The gross sins of the flesh cannot be laid to their charge, but they take an evil liberty in mental matters. If the fear of God will keep a Christian from drunkenness, it

should also keep him from exercising his mind in things concerning which God says "Thou shalt not."

Let me sum up what I have said: Scriptural holiness is the holiness revealed in the Word of God; the true image is there, and only there, and it is the holiness produced by the Word of God, for He sanctifies us through His Truth. The cleansing of the leper is a great Old Testament illustration of it. God claimed the whole man by the blood and the oil—the ear to hear from God, the hand to work for Him, and the feet to walk in His ways. And the man was not merely passive in the matter; he washed himself from his defilement and shaved off his hair, even as we are called to cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.

THE FIRST EPISTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS.

NOTES OF AN ADDRESS BY J. R. C.

CHAPTER XI.

THE concluding part of Rev. iii. gives us a view of the final stage of the Church's history on earth.

God's dealings with the people of Israel resulted in such development of evil that, as a nation, they were "cut off," and ceased to have any national standing in the earth.

Even so, God's dealings with Christendom, that huge development of a Christianised world and a worldly church, result in the solemn verdict, "I am about to spue thee out of My mouth."

Nevertheless, in the midst of all the confusion, His eye is upon those that are His own, and He says of them, "As many as I love I rebuke and chasten."

Mark, it is not here the Father who chastens, it is the Lord Jesus Himself, to Whom the execution of judgment has been committed. He it is Who thus, in faithful grace, deals with His own loved ones.

Now, that word "chasten," as we saw before, belongs to *the family*. It contains in it the idea of instruction. It occurs in

2 Tim. iii. 16—All Scripture “is profitable for . . . instruction (or discipline) in righteousness.” Also in Titus ii. 11—“For the grace of God that bringeth salvation unto all men hath appeared teaching us,” that is, “disciplining us,” dealing with us as a parent with his children. Thus, God’s dealings in providence are linked with His Word in the work of instruction. It occurs again in 1 Tim. i. 19, 20—“Of whom are Hymeneus and Alexander; whom I have delivered unto Satan, that they may learn (or be disciplined) not to blaspheme.”

It is of the utmost importance that we, as children of God, should learn the lessons that, in His loving, faithful discipline, He designs to teach us.

This verse (1 Cor. xi. 30) shows us that bodily weakness and early death are, in many instances, the chastening of the Lord for allowed sin. But we must be careful here. It is not for us to judge concerning the Lord’s dealings with others.

It is not for us to say, “So and so is sick, and, therefore, he must have been doing something very wrong.” We read of Timothy’s “often infirmities,” and instead of the apostle judging him to have been unfaithful, he exhorts him to “take a little wine.”

We read of Paul having a thorn in the flesh, not as the Lord’s judgment upon sin committed, but as a preventive discipline, lest he should be exalted above measure, and that so he might be the better fitted to serve the Lord. Paul thought it was an hindrance, but God saw it was needful for him.

In writing to Timothy Paul says, “Trophimus have I left at Miletum sick.” He evidently could not in this instance exercise miraculous power for his recovery; but why, we are not told, and where God is silent we must be also.

“Epaphroditus was sick, nigh unto death,” evidently through over-work in his zeal for the Gospel. These are instances of weakness and sickness which, so far as we know, were not due to any previous wrong-doing. Therefore, it is not for us

to judge *others*, but rather to help them, and to relieve and comfort. Nevertheless, as to *ourselves*, it is our business to regard *all* the trials and afflictions which come upon us in this life as the discipline of the Lord for our blessing, and the evidence of His love.

“As many as I love I rebuke and chasten.” Mark the difference between “rebuking” and “chastening.” A rebuke is by the voice: chastening is by the rod. First, the Lord rebukes by His Word. If we give heed to the rebuke of His Word, we shall not need the chastening of His hand. “If we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged.”

Some say, “We do not see this manifest judgment of the Lord carried out in the Church now.” That may be so. I believe that if God had continued in the Church to “mark iniquity,” and to judge, as in the case of Ananias and Sapphira, it would well-nigh have been swept away.

If God had judged the priests in Israel as He did the two sons of Aaron when they offered strange fire before the Lord, how many priests would have remained in Israel?

Miriam was smitten with leprosy for speaking against Moses. If God thus continued to judge all malicious evil-speaking, alas, where would we be?

But God, in His infinite mercy, is dealing tenderly and sparingly with his people.

In Heb. xii. the object of discipline is shown “that we might be partakers of His holiness.” In this passage, observe the difference between “chastening” and “scourging.” As a father, with the ingenuity of love, finds many ways of disciplining his children, so does the Lord deal differently with each. With one it may be sickness, with another worldly circumstances, with another relative affliction. Thus Moses was forbidden to enter Canaan. Jacob, the deceiver, was again and again deceived by Laban. David is a solemn example of how the Lord sometimes deals with His people on account of their sin.

It is said of Moab, “Moab hath been

at ease from his youth and he hath settled on his lees and hath not been emptied from vessel to vessel" (Jer. xlviii. 11). God will not thus allow His people to settle down at their ease. He loves them too well to permit this.

This method of making us "partakers of His holiness" is very different from the modern doctrine, whereby a man steps into a condition of perfect holiness by a single act of faith. Scripture shows the child under the constant discipline of the family, that thus he may become practically a partaker of that same divine holiness which judged sin at the Cross of Christ.

It is "*afterward*" that the chastening yields the peaceable fruit of righteousness "to them that are exercised thereby."

How solemn, to pass under the chastening hand of God, and not to be "exercised" about it!

The only way in which we are sometimes exercised about it is to get rid of it!

And so we fight, and struggle, and weary ourselves, and we don't get rid of it. And why? Simply because we won't learn the lesson.

If we would set our hearts on knowing the meaning of God's dealings with us, we should not fail to be learning some new and precious lesson continually. May it be the fixed desire of our hearts to obtain the blessing that is designed for us in all the Lord's discipline, that so we may better glorify Him.

We must not confound suffering under the chastening hand of the Lord with suffering that is the consequence of faithfulness to God and His Truth. The one who suffers thus can glory in the suffering. You cannot glory in chastening; though you may be patient under it, and even thankful for the grace that so takes part with the new man against a corrupt self.

May we know more of this honourable suffering for conscience' sake, for righteousness, for the Truth, for Christ.

But if we suffer under the chastening rod, be it ours to hear the rod and Him who appointed it (Micah vi. 9).

"THE CHURCHES REST," AND HOW THEY USED IT.

ACTS IX. 31.

I NEED not remind you that the great object for which we meet on the Lord's-day morning is worship and praise; the worship of the heart, which may be in silence, the heart bowed in the presence of God, a God sitting on the throne. That is worship. And this fits us to join in the common expressions of gratitude, and in the song of praise; therefore praise, strictly speaking, is the result—the fruit of a worshipping state of soul. We gather in the simplicity of obedience to Christ, without priest, without altar, without robes, without a victim, to worship the Father in spirit and in truth; our hymns and Scriptures all tending to further the object of worship. There are, however, two reasons why, I think, that *after* the breaking of bread is just the time for a word of instruction or exhortation, as the Spirit of God may guide.

In the first place, a worshipping state of soul fits us to listen. You are familiar with your Bibles, and, therefore, with the fact that in all the instances of remarkable communications from God to man, the person to whom the communication has been made first worshipped and then listened. Abraham, when God spoke to him, fell to the earth, and God continued to speak. Moses before he could hear, when he was about to be sent back to Egypt, was brought upon his face as a worshipper. Daniel, Ezekiel, John in the isle of Patmos, were all brought to bow, and then listen to hear the Word of God. Therefore, if we have, by the grace of God, been enabled to worship, God may now speak to us just a few words through this Scripture.

Then there is another reason. It so happens, wherever I go, that the gathering around the Lord's Table is almost the only opportunity to meet the assembled saints in full numbers, for during the week so few of God's people seem to be able to gather together. Therefore I judge, for these two reasons, that when we have by God's grace

secured the ear, it is a fitting occasion for any simple, brief word from God to His people. I find, beloved friends, as I meet with Christians, that the conviction is deepened in their minds, and is deepening in my own, of the perfections of God's Word; that it is exactly adapted to us, from the time of the inquiry, "What must I do to be saved?" to which it furnishes the answer, "believe, and thou shalt be saved," on to the bright and blessed day of the coming of the Lord. Every step of the way, as individuals, as assemblies, the Word of God furnishes us with all the instruction, exhortation, admonition, warning, encouragement, that our souls need; and, I suppose, if ever we are at fault, it is because we are not acquainted with Scripture as we ought to be, or we do not really believe it. But I am sure of this, that if we should live to the age of Methusaleh we should find that for every circumstance the Scriptures will suffice us. The Lord deepen this conviction in our souls, and increase wisdom and grace to us through the Scriptures. You will all say "Amen" to that. Now, with regard to this portion of Scripture, "Then had the assemblies rest." This implies that there had been a time of persecution, distress, and unrest; and we know how the saints had suffered through that arch-persecutor, who had been the first to test the patience of Christ. Many had tested the patience of Jehovah by their violent opposition to Him, His Truth, and His people; but Saul of Tarsus was the first who tested the patience of Christ at the right hand of God by persecuting His members on earth; and therefore, he says, that "In me first Jesus Christ might show forth all long-suffering for a pattern to them which should hereafter believe in Him to life everlasting." Now this life-persecutor had been turned into a preacher of the Gospel. He came into contact with Jesus of Nazareth. A light above the brightness of the sun blinded him, a power superior to his iron will prostrated him in the dust, and a voice had accused him of persecuting the speaker. In answer to that charge he made the inquiry, "Who art Thou?" and again he heard the

voice saying, "I am Jesus Whom thou persecutest," and there Paul learned the "mystery" which it was his service to unfold—the declaration that the Head in heaven and the saints on earth, Jew and Gentile, were one body. And when he had been comforted, transformed, created anew, and God had revealed Christ to him, he began to preach. The storm was lulled, the persecutor became the edifier, and that of the assemblies which perhaps used to gather on the first day of the week in terror lest they should be disturbed by this persecutor, of them it might be said, "Then had the churches rest." This blessed, precious change from persecution to rest having taken place, is there any instruction how it was used by them, and how we should use ours? "Then had the assemblies rest, *and were built up.*" This reminds me of the words of Jude, "Building yourselves up." Whatever changes take place in the world, whatever development there may be of evil character or doctrine by fellowmen within the so-called church, it is still our business to build ourselves up in our most holy faith. If we all practised it more, even when we greet each other in the street, where Satan often succeeds in inducing a spirit of foolish, unprofitable talk; if we remembered at that moment that our duty and our privilege is to "build ourselves up," and if we were to interchange some thoughts about Christ, we *should* build ourselves up, if we were together but five minutes; and when we come together we should have the common benefit of the assembly at heart; not only my growth, but my brother's growth; not that I may have the occasion to show myself, but that I may have occasion to help my brothers and sisters. During this, our time of rest, may we build ourselves up in our most holy faith. Now, what was the result of all this? "Walking in the fear of the Lord and the comfort of the Holy Ghost." They were not only edified, each assembly in itself, but numbers in each assembly, and the assemblies themselves were multiplied. It is very cheering in these days to hear of threes or twenties being gathered

together in places where, two or three years ago, the Gospel was not preached.

Then let us pray that all these small assemblies may themselves use this time of rest walking in the fear of the Lord—a fear taught by love; for who is the person who fears the Lord most? He who believes most simply, deeply, and thoroughly the love of God to him, and as he believes the love of God, he will fear to grieve that love. He won't be afraid of being cast into hell, he won't be afraid of the rod of the Father, but he will fear to pain or grieve such tender, deep, and mighty love as the love of God our Father, and such fear is always accompanied by the "comfort of the Holy Ghost." If Christ said that husband and wife becoming one should not be separated by man, shall I say, with reverence, God has wedded these two things—His fear and the comfort of the Holy Ghost—and who can separate them? You will find you are violating the law of God if you seek to separate them. How often we pray that our assemblies may be marked by power and worship and praise and instruction, but this is the pathway to it. We know it by experience, happy when we have walked in it, till we have stepped out of it we have learned by a painful and sorrowful experience that this is the path of the fear of the Lord. And, oh, what a comprehensive word "walking" is! Of few letters, a little child could remember it, and yet it covers the entire life of a Christian, the entire life of an assembly. "Walking." It comprehends the closet, the family, the business, the church. The fear of the Lord in the closet, the fear of the Lord in the family, behind the counter and in front of it, buying or selling. The fear of the Lord in our church assemblies, and in our intercourse and fellowship with the children of God. I hope to learn something from this Scripture even to-day, and perhaps God may help us all through it.—*From an Address by HENRY HEATH.*

OUR place of worship is "inside the veil," for Christ is there (Heb. x. 19-22); our place of testimony is "outside the camp," for Christ was there (Heb. xiii. 12, 13).

NOTES ON THE PROVERBS.

PART XII.

PROVERB.

PARALLEL.

Chapter xvi., verse 1. "The preparations of the heart belong to man: but the answer of the tongue is from the Lord."—R.V.

Ahithophel—2 Sam. xvii. 1-14.
Balaam laid his plans, but could not utter save what God permitted.
Man plans, but God only can give him the answer which his tongue desires.

Verse 2. "All the ways of a man are right in his own eyes: but the Lord weigheth the spirits."

Saul's conduct—see 1 Sam. xiii. 15.
Ananias and Sapphira—Acts v.
The Pharisee—Luke xviii.

Verse 3. "Commit thy works unto the Lord, and thy thoughts shall be established."

See Prov. viii. 5, 6.
Esther and Mordecai—Esth. iv. 14-17; chap. viii. 15-17.
"Give me the eye which can see God in all, the hand which can serve Him with all, and the heart which can bless Him for all."

Verse 4. "The Lord hath made everything for its own end; yea, even the wicked for the day of evil."

—i.e., so that one thing corresponds to another. Thus His natural laws suit and correspond to our nature—"Meats for the body," &c. Even the wicked is connected with and adapted to the day of evil.

Verse 6. "By mercy and truth iniquity is purged" (attuned for), &c.

See Dan. iv. 27; Matt. xxiii. 23.
This is evidently intended as a warning to those who misuse Divinely - appointed

sacrifices, supposing that these might exonerate the offerers from personal holiness.

See James ii. 14-26.

Verse 7. "When a man's ways please the Lord," &c.

Seeking to please God will ensure all things co-working for good, and even the turning of our enemies towards us . . . when needful for His glory.

Verse 9. "A man's heart deviseth his way," &c.

Joseph's brethren —Gen. xxxvii. 18-28 ; Gen. xlv. 5.

Saul (Acts ix. 1) goes to Damascus—bent on persecution—and is changed of God by the way.

Verses 10-15. "A divine sentence is in the lips of the king," &c.

These verses, while declaring the appropriate qualities of a king in judgment, recall the principles of the Blessed and only Potentate—the King of kings. They may be paraphrased thus: True judgment is the way in which God judges. He loveth equity. Judgment and justice are the habitation of His throne. His wrath abideth on the evil doer; but the wise understand that in Christ is peace.

Truly the light of His countenance is life eternal—His favour refreshing as the latter rain.

Verse 16. "How much better is it to

This is fully explained in the book

get wisdom than of Ecclesiastes, and gold," &c.

Verse 17. "The highway of the up-right is to depart from evil," &c.

Verses 18, 19. "Pride goeth before destruction," &c.

1 Cor. i. 30 shows us what true wisdom is.

Consider the case of Daniel and his three friends.

Herod's case (Acts xii.) proves this, and Nebuchadnezzar's (Dan. iv. 29-33).

The pride of Peter led to his fall; the lowliness of John ensured his standing.

Verse 20. "He that handleth a matter wisely shall find good," &c.

Or (R.V.) "He that giveth heed unto the Word shall find good."

Compare David's way in 1 Chron. xiii. 15 as to bringing up the Ark.

Verse 25. "There is a way that seemeth right unto a man," &c.

See Chapter xiv. 12.

Verses 27-30. "An ungodly man diggeth up evil," &c.

These verses describe the various ways of the wicked.

Ziba—2 Sam. xvi. 3.

The Chaldeans—Dan. iii. 8-13.

Herodias—Mark vi. 19, 20.

Verse 31. "The hoary head is a crown of glory; it shall be found in the way of righteousness."—R.V.

There is no "if" here.

The way of righteousness leads to revered old age. Jacob, Samuel, Elisha show this.

Verse 32. "He that is slow to anger," &c.

Self-conquest is the greatest of victories. Moses—Num. xii. 3.

David, provoked by Shimei, shows himself far more noble than his followers.

Verse 33. "The lot is cast into the lap," &c.

That is into the folds of the dress. God overrules all, as in Haman's case (Esther iii. 7), for His people's good.

God disposes second causes so that they unconsciously do His will while carrying out their own.

Chap. xvii., verse 3. "The fining pot is for silver," &c.

As silver and gold are tested by the fire, so the hearts of men are alone truly tested by the Lord.

Abraham — Gen. xxii. 1.

Judas — Matt. xxvi.

The rich young man — Matt. xix. 16-22.

Verse 4. "A wicked doer giveth heed to false lips," &c.

Ahab — 1 Kings xxii. 6.

Verse 5. Whoso mocketh the poor reproacheth his Maker," &c.

The princes of Judah — Isa. iii. 14; x. 1, 2.

See Job's conduct — xxix. 11-13; xxxi. 13-15; xxxiv. 19.

Verse 6. "Children's children are the crown of old men," &c.

Illustrating ch. xvi. 31.

The glory of children is that their fathers are honoured of God to live to old age.

Verse 8. "A gift is as a precious stone," &c.

If a gift delights the receiver whenever he thinks of it, how much more should God's "unspeakable gift" stir every power and emotion within us. Surely, whatever way we look at it, it is excellent. — 2 Cor. ix. 15.

Verse 11. "An evil man seeketh only rebellion," &c.

"An evil man seeketh only rebellion," &c. Shimei, Absalom, &c. (2 Sam.), illustrate this.

"The wages of sin is death."

Verse 16. "Wherefore is there a price in the hand of a fool to get wisdom," &c.

It is no use his attempting to get it, for he has no capacity to get wisdom," &c.

Pilate — John xviii. 38.

Agrippa — Acts xxvi. 28.

Verse 17. "A friend loveth at all times," &c.

A true friend so loves, and is born to befriend in adversity. Such are rare. In the Lord Jesus Christ have we one pre-eminent.

Verse 19. "He loveth transgression that loveth strife," &c.

A quarrelsome man is sure to err, and the proud man becomes the object of attack.

Shebna — Isa. xxii. 15-19.

Jehoiakim — Jerem. xxii. 13, &c.

Verse 23. "A wicked man taketh a gift out of the bosom," &c.

—i.e., secretly out of his dress, to pervert the judge. See Felix's wish — Acts xxiv. 24-27.

Verse 26. "Also to punish the just is not good," &c.

It is equally wrong to punish the just as to rebel against the authority of true nobles.

Verses 27, 28. "He that hath knowledge spareth his words," &c.

Moses' silence and perfect command of himself in Norah's case, and Miriam's; his meek and quiet spirit showed his understanding.

Even a fool shows he is not altogether lost to reason if he hold his tongue.

THE JUBILEE.

Nor this the jubilee, though statesmen meet
Where the wine circles in the lamp-lit hall ;
To lay their homage at our Lady's feet.

Though cannon thunder from the castle wall ;
Though trumpets sound in the long, crowded street ;
And floats the nation's banner over all.

Nor this, nor thus, although she fills the seat
Of Britain's majesty, between the seas,
With fruit of fifty summers at her feet :—

Our widowed Queen, in whom her people sees
The dayspring of the maiden monarch rise
To noon of foreign power, domestic ease.

And blessings numberless of bounteous skies,
And fatness of the fields we cultivate,
And fulness of the deep that round us lies.

* * * * *

Not this the jubilee for which we wait :—
That jubilee is coming, sure though slow ;
That jubilee is coming, long though late !

* * * * *

The jubilee is coming, with the glow
Of Sabbath sunrise on the hills of God ;
Earth's rest from six millenniums of woe.

The jubilee is coming ! All abroad
Fountains shall issue in the wilderness ;
The forest trees shall clap their hands to God !

The Kingdom cometh, when in righteousness
A King shall reign, Whom all His hosts adore ;
Great King of kings, Whom all His people bless,

And slavery shall cease from shore to shore,
Nor voice of war be heard from age to age,
Nor pestilence destroy, for evermore.

The nations shall go up on pilgrimage
Unto the high place of His glorious throne,
And in His service all the tribes engage.

The golden grain in billows shall roll on
Over the mountain summits, and shall wave
I' the wind, as cedars do in Lebanon.

The children of the people He shall save ;
The poor man's blood be precious in His eyes.
To keep his soul from famine and the grave.

For He shall reign, long as the sun shall rise,
Or moonlight lie along the sleeping lands,
Or the twelve signs go circling round the skies.

Great peace shall then be known, unfettered hands
Shall wield the crook, or guide the plough aright,
Or draw the silver fish to silver sands.

* * * * *

Arise, O Lord ! arise in this Thy might
And let Thy foes be scattered ! Cause to flee
Before Thy face, the shadows of the night.

Bring in the true, the joyful jubilee.
Smite from th' oppressor's hand the lifted sword,
And magnify Thy Name from sea to sea !

Till then our myriad voices lift, O Lord,
To Thee the last prayer found within the roll—
The sacred roll that holds Thy written Word.
A. P. M.

HOW TO DEAL WITH INQUIRERS.

IN dealing with inquirers we must retain our own confidence in God, and remember that we have *facts* to lay before them—facts which cannot be gainsaid. The Word of God clearly sets forth this one great fact, that every believer stands in Christ acquitted before God, through the blood of His one sacrifice for sin. Therefore, however much the inquirer may question the power of God to save him, you are bound, because of this truth—your own acceptance—to declare that God is more than sufficient for these things, and will save even those who seem hopelessly lost.

See the ground of our confidence, in what the Word declares concerning our sins. They have been put away :—

1. Our sins have been Borne by another—Isaiah liii. 12, 1 Peter ii. 24.
2. Our sins have been Removed—John i. 29, Ps. ciii. 12.
3. Our sins have been Covered—Psalm xxxii. 1, 2, Rom. iv. 7.
4. Our sins have been Remitted—Matt. xxvi. 28, Isaiah xliii. 25, Isaiah xlv. 22.
5. Our sins have been Forgotten—Heb. x. 17, Heb. viii. 12, Isaiah xxxviii. 17.
6. Our sins have been Buried—Micah vii. 19, Jer. l. 20.
7. Our sins have been Purged away—Heb. i. 3, Heb. ix. 14.

Whatever the difficulty, see that you always bring the inquirer face to face with the Word of God, asking this question—But what does God say about these things? By this means you will bring the mind of the inquirer to the fact that it is God he has to deal with, and His Word he has to believe.

J. N.

OUR strength in Christ is not to be measured by the way we met any former trial, but by the way we meet the present one.

SICKNESS AND HEALING.

CHRISTIANS of modern times seem inclined to fall into the same mistake as did Job's friends, supposing that the Lord's rules of action are invariable. They thought that because temporal affliction was sometimes suffered by the wicked for their wickedness, therefore affliction always pre-supposed guilt. In like manner, it is supposed by some that as sickness is sometimes a rod in the hand of the Lord for His disobedient children, therefore sickness is always proof of disobedience. When reproof failed to have the required effect, the New Testament instructs us that the erring one was delivered "unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh," so that many became weak and sickly, and even death might be the penalty (1 Cor. v. 5, xi. 30). Satan invariably uses his power for destruction, producing sickness of body to the utmost limit, as in the case of Job. Death does not always result, for the Lord is long-suffering and His mercy great. The sinning child is sometimes brought to repentance, and is then commanded to send for the elders of the church, probably the same who before exercised discipline upon him; and their prayer of faith shall save him, so that he may rise healed and forgiven (Jas. v. 15).

But while the Lord causes sickness thus sometimes to follow sin, it is distinctly stated that, in Job's case, the affliction was "without cause" (Job ii. 3). And this points out to us another motive for sickness. While not merited by iniquity, Job's afflictions became means of blessing; and thus may it be to-day. Many times sickness comes not to whip the naughty child, but to make the pleasant child more pleasing. It is not the fire to destroy the fruitless branch, but the purging which shall make the fruitful one more fruitful. It is sometimes the Lord's way of enforcing, "Come ye apart," when He wants the ear and heart more entirely for Himself. Or it is to teach the precious lesson of sympathy, which is learned so much more easily in weakness

than in strength. It may bid the busy worker not be over anxious, because, precious as he and his work are to the Master, all is not depending upon him.

But apart from such considerations, the cases mentioned in the Epistles should suffice to teach us that the Lord has other purposes besides punishment in sending sickness. Epaphroditus was nigh unto death, not for his sin, but for the work of Christ (Phil. ii. 30). Timothy had frequent infirmities, but he was not told to cure them by abstaining from sin. That Paul does not mention these or other cares with anything like condemnation, is sufficient to prove, in a book so honestly disclosing men's faults, that he had nothing to condemn.

Holiness and godliness, without doubt, contribute to physical health by purely natural means; also, the Lord is sometimes pleased specially to increase the strength of devoted labourers who are spending themselves for Him, to proportion it to the work to which He has called them. But to suppose that holiness of spirit secures perfect immunity from weakness of body, is to forget that we are still waiting for the redemption of the body (Rom. viii. 23). He "shall change this body of humiliation and make it like unto His own" when He comes (Phil. iij. 21). Till then "we groan," even we who have the first-fruits of the Spirit, the earnest of our inheritance, until the redemption of the purchased possession. Paul made this confession with no appearance of shame; taking for granted he was right in speaking for his readers as well as for himself, that the groan was universal, because of the universal burden. What burden? That body with its weakness and its temptations, which he was forced to keep under so strictly lest it should hinder him in his race. No resurrection body this, surely!

There are some who dare to say that, at the time of writing some of his Epistles, Paul had not reached the high platform on which they stand to criticise and pity him. They who think that imperfect, uneducated Christianity, requiring to be modified and

corrected by subsequent experience, has been included in the dogmatic writings of the New Testament had better go a step further, to be logical, and deny the inspiration of the Epistles, and class them henceforth with their own fallible writings. True, Paul wrote according to his own experience, but so guided and over-ruled by the Holy Spirit, that only that remains which is according to the mind of God—the rest is lost. That which has been allowed to be incorporated with “The Scriptures” is that which may be received not as the word of man, but as the Word of God.

The Scriptures, then, lead us to conclude that the Christian’s body remains a natural body till he leaves it, or the Lord comes to change it, and that natural body is the scene of natural cause and effect. When attacked by disease, the child must seek his Father to know whether it comes for punishment or instruction.

This, too, must be his course with respect to healing. Is immediate healing the Lord’s will for all His children, only waiting for them to claim it? Some premise that the Lord can heal, and thence deduce that He will. But that does not at all follow. That He can, none will deny; that He does, in some cases, is also true; that He will, in any individual case, no one has warrant to assert. In this thing, as in others, when the request is made known to Him, He may give such confidence of success that prayer is emboldened to become supplication. But there is no definite promise upon which faith may rest that in every time of sickness the Lord is willing to give immediate healing; and the blessings which have resulted from continued sickness lead one to conclude this is not His rule. Faith is a great means of blessing, but faith must have sure ground to rest upon. “All things are possible to him that believeth,” but there must be something to believe. Without this, what is called faith is but presumption, and will meet with disastrous disappointment. When exhorted to exercise faith, or accused of unbelief, let a clear word

of God be sought bearing on the point. When this cannot be found, wait on Him in diligent, earnest prayer for guidance and instruction. His ways are often found to be wiser and more successful than those man would prescribe for Him. M. M. A.

A BREAKDOWN.

FAITH has its mountings up, but it has often its breakings down. Human experiences teach us little; few can tell the whole tale. God’s biographies teach us much; for He can tell the whole.

Asa’s history is one of those records written by the finger of God that cannot fail to instruct. (Read 2 Chron. xiv. xv., xvi.) How brightly his reign begins; and ten years of peace and quiet are connected with an activity of faithful service which show that Asa was walking before God. Altars were taken away, and Judah taught to seek the Lord.

He rested not, however, in his security; he said not, “My mountain stands strong.” God gave him rest, but he prepared for war; he built fenced cities, and he had an army of mighty men.

Now comes the test of faith. Zerah appears on the scene, and Asa goes out to Mareshah to meet him; but he leans (relies or “rests,” *v. 11*) on God. There are few more beautiful prayers in trouble than the firm, confident cry of Asa, who says, “Lord, it is nothing with Thee to help, whether with many, or with them that have no power; help us, O Lord our God; for we lean on Thee, and in Thy name we go against this multitude. O Lord, Thou art our God; let not frail man prevail against Thee.”

God answered the prayer, and smote the Ethiopians before Asa; and the people “carried away very much spoil.” Chapter xv. tells the result of this glorious victory; but even in victory God sends a note of warning by Oded, “The Lord is with you while ye be with Him.”

Twenty-six years pass over Asa, and now chapter xvi. opens with another scene. Baasha comes against Asa, and he who met Zerah in the name of the Lord goes to meet Baasha in the name of Benhadad, king of Syria, and he robs God's house and his own house to bribe the world's power to help him against his enemy. What a breakdown have we here! He who was strong as a lion against the Ethiopian with his thousand men, and three hundred chariots, quails before the ungodly king of Israel.

Why this change? God was the same; circumstances were less critical; but *Asa had changed*. He had taken another staff to lean on, and therefore God had left him to his own devices; and, after the shame and dishonour have been reaped, He sends Hanani the seer, who says, "Because thou hast leaned (or relied, the same word as in chap. xiv. 11) on the king of Syria, and hast not leaned on the Lord thy God, therefore is the host of the king of Syria escaped out of thy hand," and winds up with the following precious word of promise, "The eyes of the Lord run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to show Himself strong in the behalf of them whose heart is perfect toward Him,"

Alas, that thirty-six years should so end! But these things are written for our admonition, and are profitable for our teaching, for conviction, for setting straight what has gone crooked, and for discipline in righteousness (2 Tim. iii. 16).

The backsliding soul is slow to hear the voice that reproves, and Hanani is put in prison. Has Asa fallen so low, and his conscience become so seared? Yes, so it is!

For three years God's forbearance waits, and then again His hand is on the wayward child, and he is smitten with disease in his feet. But, unhumiliated still, he seeks not to the Lord in his extremity, but to the physicians, and so he dies after two years of suffering, and his sun sets amidst clouds and gloom.

Man may bury with all honours, and may

make a great burning of sweet odours and spices, but his old age was not borne witness to by God; and we may conclude, as we are not told to the contrary, that he died leaving God's servant, His faithful seer, in prison. Deeply sad is all this. He who ran so well and so long broke down at the end, and passed away as one saved by fire.

We are only safe as we enter into Paul's experience and say, "Not as though I had already attained or were already perfect; but I press after, if that I may apprehend that for which I am apprehended of Christ Jesus." As if to give emphasis to what he says, the apostle adds, "Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended but this one thing, forgetting the things that are behind, and reaching forth to those things that are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus."

Herein lies our only safeguard against those most terrible breakdowns which we see in Solomon, in Asa, in Demas, and in others who once ran well, and were hindered by the world, the flesh, and the devil. "Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life."

ACTIONS AND WORDS.

THE life of divine truth is better expressed in actions than in words, because actions are more living than words. Words are nothing but dead resemblances, and pictures of those truths which live and breathe in actions; and the kingdom of God consists not in word, but in life and power. Sheep do not come and bring their fodder to their shepherd and show him how much they eat; but masticating and inwardly digesting it, they make it appear by the fleece which they wear upon their backs, and by the milk which they give. . . . Let us manifest that we are Christ's sheep indeed, by that fleece of holiness which we wear, and by the fruits that we daily yield in our life and conversation.

WALLETS AND PANNIERS.

MARK VIII. 19, 20. *

TWELVE *wallets* filled with fragments were taken away by the disciples from the first feeding of the thousands, doubtless to teach them the lesson that *their own* "daily bread" would be provided them whilst they were following their Master, and were seeking His glory and serving Him (see Matt. vi. 33).

Seven *panniers* (much larger baskets than in the former case) were gathered up from the second time of similar service, to teach them, no doubt, that however many they had already fed, the mighty fulness that was in their Master for hungry multitudes was by no means exhausted; for a single one of these last baskets probably held much more in quantity than all the twelve wallets of the former miracle.

What teaching we have here for the faith of labourers in God's blessed work, and in Christ's precious gospel work everywhere and always! As Peter, or John, or James satisfied his hunger that day from his wallet thus wondrously supplied, what food for his faith as well as for his body! Their meals that day were of bread, the supply of which depended on no earthly kneading-trough nor oven; it came as straight to them from the mighty hand of their Master (who had Himself come to earth to be broken for them) as the manna of old came to the omer of the Israelite (Exod. xvi.), or the meal into the widow's barrel to provide Elijah his daily cake. What reverent joy might the disciples have as they did eat of their heaven-filled wallets!

And is it not so now? Have not servants of Jesus who hang on Him for their daily supplies, as in His blessed service they

follow Him from place to place—from England to China, it may be, or Spain, or some other even less known parts—a joy in their Master's love and care of them when they find their daily need supplied from Him direct?

From this precious lesson Jesus leads them on to another.

Again they are feeding multitudes with bread supplied through His wonder-working hands; and now they gather up, of the same precious bread, baskets so large that their very weight would make them glad of more hungry ones to whom to deal it out. Like the lepers of Samaria in the famine of Elisha's time (see 2 Kings vii.), they had more than enough for themselves; "the windows of heaven" had been opened, and they could only say to each other, "This day is a day of good tidings: . . . now therefore come, that we may go and tell the king's household."

In each gospel the lesson of the wallets precedes that of the panniers. A simple faith in God for our own souls' spiritual bread, and for our temporal wants, is our loving Master's way of making us happy to aid each other in proclaiming and carrying the bread of life to perishing multitudes around us.

May-be it needed *two* to carry each of those heavy panniers, or perhaps three of the disciples carried two between them (a lesson to them, if so, of how their Master's love also sent them out in fellowship to the towns and villages); but each disciple, having already learned how his gracious Master could fill his own wallet, was meant to have no care, except as to how he might best help in speeding onward the kingdom of God and His righteousness. How they failed in this, and in the boat forgot the teachings, the verses above quoted too well show.

Oh for help then to the faith of all now living labourers for Jesus, whether in this or other lands, that they may without distraction give themselves to proclaiming the unsearchable riches of Christ!

H. D.

* The word rendered "baskets" in verse 19 is the ordinary Jewish wallet or travelling bag used for their food, to preserve it from legal uncleanness by unlawful contact; but the word in verse 20 means a larger kind of basket, used for storing up grain. Its greater size is shown by its being the "basket" in which Paul was let down through a window over the Damascus wall, and thus escaped his persecutors.

Correspondence.

A CONSIDERABLE time ago some remarks appeared in *The Witness* as to Satan's quotation from Psalm xci., in the temptation of the Lord Jesus. Compare Psalm xci. 11, 12 with Matt. iv. 6 and Luke iv. 10, 11.

It is a fact that Satan did not quote the passage as it stands in the Old Testament, but omitted the important words, "in all Thy ways," which occur in the Hebrew, and also in the Septuagint.

In all probability Satan had an object in view in withholding these words; but it does not seem to us that herein lies the real point of the temptation, for our Lord did not reply to him by rectifying his misquotation, but by showing, in His divine wisdom, that a counter principle necessarily qualified the promise of protecting care, viz., "Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God."

The thought of putting one's-self in jeopardy, without any call to do so as a matter of duty, obedience, or faithfulness to God, but simply in order to test whether God would keep His word or not, was Satanic in the fullest sense of the word, and could find no response in the *believing* heart of the Lord Jesus. Israel are said to have tempted God when they said, "Is the Lord amongst us or not?" (Exodus xvii. 7.)

It has often been remarked that "Satan can quote Scripture"; and we believe the point of the instruction in the Lord's temptation, as recorded in Matt. iv., etc., will be missed if it is hastily concluded that the danger lies only in his *misquoting* it. He may quote it quite correctly, and yet succeed in leading us astray by *misapplying* it. Whilst fully realising the importance of the *correct* quotation of Scripture, we nevertheless would seek to show that Scripture *misapplied* is as misleading as Scripture *misquoted*.

How many souls have been kept in darkness and cast into despair by texts of Scripture such as Matt. xii. 31; 1 Cor. ix. 27; Heb. vi. 4-6, etc., etc., not because they were misquoted, but because they were misapplied, and that through being misunderstood? Satan always takes advantage of ignorance and of weakness.

QUESTION 255.

We are not surprised that some should find it hard to receive the thought that Paul could possibly have erred in so important a step as his journey to Jerusalem; but we need to be reminded again and again that the only One who never erred was the blessed Master Himself. He, when smitten unjustly, so spake as to silence His adversaries. Paul spake unadvisedly, and had to apologise. Compare John xviii. 23 with Acts xxiii. 3-5.

No argument or consideration adduced by the two correspondents in our last seems to us to outweigh the plain statement of Acts xxi. 4. It seems as plain as Acts xiii. 2. The Holy Spirit "said";

but none will surely question that His instruction came through the "certain prophets" referred to in the previous verse. So here, the disciples "said through the Spirit." This, we take it, can mean nothing less than that it was a prophetic utterance as directly from God as that of Agabus in chap. xxi. 11.

We do not for a moment suppose that the apostle was "*heedless*" of the mind of God; but it appears to us that his overpowering love for his own nation so influenced him that his apprehension of the Lord's will was, in this instance, clouded, and that which was the purposing of his own spirit, he acted upon as though it had been the communication of the Spirit of God.

Neither could we admit that the teaching of the apostle to the Ephesian elders is in the slightest degree invalidated by his failure in this matter. He spake to them with the authority of an apostle. He spake the Holy Spirit's words, and they are recorded for us in the Scriptures, and that is sufficient. The teachings of the apostles are inspired, but there are many instances which could be adduced to prove that their *acts* were not. They were but men, subject to infirmity and failure. We need not refer to more than one passage on this point. See Gal. ii. 11-14.

We could not question the integrity of Paul, as he says, "Herein do I exercise myself to have always a conscience void of offence toward God and toward men" (Acts xxiv. 16.) His *sincerity* was evinced by his whole self-denying behaviour. It is therefore perfectly consistent that he should seek the fellowship and prayer of the saints, and that he should anticipate coming unto them, at Rome, "in the fulness of the blessing of the Gospel of Christ." But he expresses no such assurance with regard to his journey to Jerusalem.

We find in Mr. Newbery's Englishman's Bible that in Acts xix. 21 and xx. 22, the word spirit is printed with small "s"; whilst in xxi. 4, it is capital "S." It is the same in the R.V. and in Alford's N.T. Authorities therefore seem sufficiently agreed on this point.

Had the testimony of Agabus *preceded* that of the disciples at Tyre, we should then have felt there was room for regarding his prophecy as a Divine sanction of the journey; but, coming as it does after the Spirit's previous definite prohibition, we cannot so regard it. There are many instances in Scripture of the Lord *appearing* to sanction a course which did not originate with Himself, and of which He had expressed his disapproval. Compare Deut. i. 22 with Num. xiii. 1-3; see also *1 Sam. viii.*

The words of the brethren as they ceased to press him further, "The will of the Lord be done," do not at all prove that they were at last convinced it was his duty to go on. Their conviction evidently was that he should not go. But being the outcome of their personal love for him, and not now an utterance of the Spirit, he almost resents it. They then appear to waive their own conviction, and leave the

whole matter in the Lord's hands, desiring that His will be done.

The tender mercy of the Lord to him throughout the whole journey is just what we should be led to expect from the God of Abram and the God of Jacob. His zeal, his love, his willingness to suffer and to die for the Lord Jesus, at Jerusalem, could not but be pleasing to Him, however mistaken he was as to the leading which took him there.

It may be asked—How did Paul not recognise the Spirit's instruction in chap. xxi. 4? We would not dogmatise on such a point as this, but would suggest that his very true-heartedness and readiness to suffer and to die for the Lord may have led him to attribute what was really the Spirit's utterance to the natural, loving solicitude of the disciples.

Ed.

To the Editor of *The Witness*.

In the reply to Question 255 it seems to have escaped observation that the words, "I must by all means keep this feast that cometh in Jerusalem"—in Acts xviii. 21—are omitted by the best authorities (see R.V.). Hence, perhaps, it is not correct to suppose that in Acts xx. 16, Paul's object was to keep a feast; it may have been, or he may merely have said, "The day of Pentecost," to fix the date by which he wished to arrive.

But, in reference to the comments on the reply which appeared in May number, whatever may be said as to verse 11 of Acts xxi., it appears that verse 4 is unequivocal. "Who said to Paul through the Spirit that he should not go up to Jerusalem" (see R.V.). No one would seek to convince by the use of a capital "S" or otherwise, because there is no authority whatever for the use of capitals except as the text itself supplies it. But let these two passages be compared—in Acts xix. 21, either "purposed in the Holy Spirit," or "purposed in his spirit," gives a reasonable sense; but in Acts xxi. 4, what should "said through their Spirit" mean? It is unreasonable, and therefore, I think, we have a definite reason for reading, "through the Spirit"—i.e., the Spirit of God. That God overruled, and brought glory to His own holy name as ever, is blessedly true; but if Paul had swerved from the right path, could this make wrong right?

Moreover, it seems dangerous in the extreme to infer from verse 13, that *because* Paul was willing to suffer, *therefore* he was right.—C. M. LUXMORE.

Questions and Answers.

QUESTION 263.—Is it the mind of the Lord that a believer should be yoked in business with a father or a brother who is an unbeliever?

We fail to discover any such qualifying clause in favour of natural relationships in 2 Cor. vi. 14-18.

A father or a brother may be unconverted and yet kind and upright, or they may be the reverse. The principle of the "yoke" is that one is committed to the action of the other. This is the case

in "*partnership*" in business. If one incurs debt, the other is committed to it. If one secures profit for the concern by unlawful or questionable means, the other shares the profit, and so far consents to the means whereby it was gained. A kind father may be guilty of avarice in the conducting of his business. An affectionate brother may be capable of sharp practice in business, of which a Christian should be ashamed.

The only safe course is that prescribed by the Lord—"Be ye separate."

QUESTION 264.—What is the difference between Ex. xv. 1, 2 and Joshua v. 8-10?

Israel in Egypt were under cruel bondage and groaned for deliverance. But they were also where their wants were supplied, where they had great variety of food (Num. xi. 4, 5); and they had become conformed to Egyptian ways, worshipping Egyptian idols (Josh. xxiv. 14; Ezek. xx. 7, 8), and setting at nought the ordinances of the Lord.

In Exodus xv. they celebrate deliverance from Egypt's thralldom. They are no longer Pharaoh's slaves but Jehovah's redeemed people. But, although delivered from Egypt's bondage and set free, they are by no means freed as yet from conformity to Egypt's ways. So much so that, during all the 40 years of their wilderness wanderings, they had neglected to circumcise their children, and consequently had never been in a fit condition to keep the Passover (see Exodus xii. 48).

All this was shame and reproach in the eyes of Jehovah. He had loved and delivered, but they had not with true hearts responded to His love. They were "uncircumcised"; they lacked the token of the covenant with Abraham in which they were elected as his seed to blessing.

But the 40 years of discipline was bearing its fruit, and here at Gilgal they submit to the ordinance which marked off the seed of Abram, according to the flesh, from all other peoples, and so they fit themselves to be Jehovah's guests and to keep His feast.

Col. i. 12-14 is our Exodus xv., and Romans xii. 2 and 1 Peter iv. 1, 2 are our Gilgal.

QUESTION 265.—Can we infer from the action of "the impotent man" (John v. 15) that he showed the spirit of ingratitude to the One who had befriended him?

The charge of the Pharisees against Christ in this case was that He had told a man to carry his bed on the Sabbath-day.

The answer of the man to their inquiries is not that it was Jesus who told him to carry his bed—this would have indicated a disposition to be informer against Christ—but that it was "*Jesus who had made him whole.*" He, doubtless, supposed that the very mention of such a miracle would have led them to regard the One who was able to perform it as worthy of their regard.

Nevertheless, the moral character of this man is, in certain respects, a contrast to that of the blind man in John ix.

THE FIRST EPISTLE TO THE THESSALONIANS.

CHAP. ii. 4-10.

NOTES OF AN ADDRESS BY J. R. C.

WE were considering last Lord's-day the first part of verse 4—Being put in trust with the Gospel. We saw that this important and responsible trust was committed to all God's children, and that we are, therefore, by God's grace, called to make it known.

We shall now consider the latter part of this verse—"Even so we speak; not as pleasing men, but God, which trieth our hearts." The Gospel will never be pleasing to men, nor will the truth of God be pleasing to the flesh. If we would be faithful to God we must give up the idea of trying to please men. We may be thankful if the truth gains acceptance to any extent. Where there is real life in the soul, any truth in the Bible will be the joy and rejoicing of the heart that is in fellowship with God; but the flesh ever kicks against the truth of God.

The apostle sought to please God, who trieth the heart. "Man looketh on the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh on the heart" (1 Sam. xvi. 7). We may for a time keep up a profession, and please men and fellow-Christians, but God knows our hearts. He sees through it all. God alone knows the motives which actuate us in all our service to Him. If we speak and act in the consciousness that we are under the eye of Him who trieth the heart, we will not be afraid of men; and we shall act straight, perfectly heedless of what they may think or say. It is that which gives boldness, constancy, and stability to the life. God said to Abraham, "Walk before Me, and be thou perfect" (Gen. xvii. 1). "Moses thought that his brethren would have understood that God by His hand would deliver them" (Acts vii. 25). One day he smote an Egyptian, but before he did so he looked all around him to see if anyone was observing him. He was not fit to deliver Israel in

that condition of soul, therefore God had to discipline him forty years in the desert, and during that time he learned many a lesson in the school of God. When God had trained him for the great work of leading His people Israel, He sent him to Pharaoh with His message, and he stood fearlessly in the presence of that mighty monarch and told him Jehovah's will. Let us ever abide in the presence of God, who trieth our hearts; and let us see that our hearts are kept right with Him. "Keep thy heart with all diligence, for out of it are the issues of life." The heart is like a well-spring, out of which the life issues constantly. Let God's eye search it continually; never seek to shut it up from Him. How many of us have a secret chamber in our heart which, it may be, has never been thoroughly opened up before God. It will be manifested some day. God is going to judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ (Rom. ii. 15). Then everything will be brought to the light and judged. May our prayer be, "Search me, O God, and know my heart, try me and know my thoughts; and see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting" (Ps. xxxix. 23, 24). Although that exercise won't be very pleasing to the flesh, it will be wholesome and good for the soul.

Verse 5—"For neither at any time used we flattering words, as ye know, nor a cloak of covetousness; God is our witness." Notice in this verse that he appeals to them and to God. In so far as they could judge he appeals to them. They could not read his heart, therefore they could not tell if he was using his religion as a cloak of covetousness. There are many references in the Word of God to this spirit of covetousness, let us turn to a few.

Jude, verse 16—"These are murmurers, . . . walking after their own lusts, . . . speaking great swelling words, having men's persons in admiration because of advantage." This is one of the great sins of Christendom. Let us beware of the spirit that says to the rich brother, "Sit thou here," and to the poor brother, "Stand thou

there." We have to be on our guard against these ways—they are not of God. Because of the advantage or gain to be derived from certain rich or influential men, therefore servants of God are tempted to have the persons of such in admiration. This is a subtle snare, and paralyses all real service for God.

Turn to another passage in this connection (2 Peter ii. 1-3)—"There were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you . . . many shall follow their pernicious ways; by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of. And through covetousness shall they with feigned words make merchandise of you." Although the way of truth may be evil spoken of, it is the way of truth after all. It is the ungodly and worldly ways of those who profess to walk in God's way of truth that brings it into disrepute. Thus, many who might be led out of error and bondage are hindered and stumbled. If the eyes of disciples were on God and His Word alone, they would not be stumbled. They would not confound the truth of God with the failure of those who profess to hold it but do not act it out. On the other hand, how sad it is and how grieving to the Lord that His way should for such reasons be evil spoken of! We see the spirit of covetousness in much of the preaching that professes to be in the name of the Lord. The money element is considered to be the main thing in worldly religion. They cannot get on without securing large sums of money in order to procure grand buildings and eloquent preachers. The rich worldly man's patronage and money is sought. He gets the highest honour, apart from conversion, in many cases. And the funds of the church are reckoned to be its pulse. Man's ways of judging are different from God's; He weighs things in the balances of the sanctuary. Let us beware of falling in, in any degree, with the covetous spirit of the age.

Verse 6—"Nor of men sought we glory, neither of you, nor yet of others." Here is a very subtle snare. We may have got above

seeking glory from men of the world, but there is another snare that we are in danger of falling into, and that is seeking to be honoured by those who may see with us. Let us watch our hearts lest we be found seeking glory from one another. A man who has got a reprieve from the gallows has nothing to boast about. We are just poor reprieved criminals that ought to have been condemned to eternal punishment in hell, but through the mercy of God we have been forgiven. Therefore we have nothing to boast of, but to give glory to Him who hath redeemed us. God will honour those who are faithful to Him. Those that do not seek honour from men shall get it from God at the right time. Paul was one who was honoured in God's way, although he got very little honour from men. There is a time coming when God will reward him abundantly for all that he did and suffered for the name of the Lord Jesus.

"When we might have been burdensome as the apostles of Christ." He might have claimed honour and support from them as the messenger of Christ, but he did not do so.

Verse 7—"But we were gentle among you, even as a nurse cherisheth her children." The word here used does not mean a hired nurse, but a *nursing mother*. There ought to have been put in here the words "young children." Paul was to those young converts at Thessalonica both a father and a mother, spiritually. What a large and loving heart he had. He exercised towards them the tender affection and gentleness of a mother, as well as the wisdom and experience of a father; counselling, instructing, and directing them as to their conduct in life, and in service to the Lord. Thus the excellencies of the Lord Jesus are seen in measure in His servant Paul, who walked closely after Him.

How tenderly and carefully a nursing mother attends to her child! With what constant and unwearied solicitude she watches over it! Night and day she attends to its wants, giving such food as will strengthen and nourish it. That is how the apostle cared spiritually for those whom he

had been the means of bringing to the Lord. I have seen nurses who did not seem to have a spark of affection for the children that were committed to their charge. There are some servants of God not a whit better. They have not the bowels and compassion of Christ. If we would be made a blessing to one another, the love of Christ must be filling our hearts. Whilst we pray for the conversion of sinners, and those who preach the Gospel and teach the saints, let us not forget to pray for those who seek to tend the flock of God. Let us ask of God to give them love, gentleness, and tender care, like that of a nursing mother.

Verse 8—"So, being affectionately desirous of you, we were willing to have imparted unto you, not the Gospel of God only, but also our own souls, because ye were dear unto us." You will see how that is borne out in Phil. ii. 17—"Yea, if I be offered upon the sacrifice and service of your faith, I joy and rejoice with you all." This is probably an allusion to the drink offering referred to in the book of Leviticus, which was presented along with, and poured upon, the sacrifice. He says, "If I be poured out as a drink offering, I joy and rejoice with you all."

In connection with these words, "Because ye were dear unto us," turn to 2 Cor. vii. 3—"Ye are in our hearts to die and live with you." There is the spirit in which the apostle sought to serve the saints. He realised in his heart that these saints were his own spiritual children, begotten through the Gospel, and he cared for them as a nursing mother cares for her child. Whilst he would be faithful to them, he would not expose their faults to others. How often the faults and failings of Christians are brought before the world. Shame on us if we dare do such a thing. May God make us jealous of the honour of the Name that is named upon us.

Verse 9—"For ye remember, brethren, our labour and travail night and day, because we would not be chargeable unto any of you, we preached unto you the Gospel of God." You will find a corresponding

passage in Acts xx. 33—"I have coveted no man's silver, or gold, or apparel; yea, ye yourselves know that these hands have ministered unto my necessity, and them that were with me." You will find the same thing referred to in 2 Thess. iii. 7-9. Whether the apostle is speaking to the saints at Corinth, Ephesus, or Thessalonica, he speaks in the same way. In the one place or the other, we find him labouring with his hands that he might not be burdensome to them, and that they might have an example in him which they might follow. This was the man so much used of God in preaching and teaching; a pattern of true service. And yet the doctrine of Christendom is that no man can effectually preach unless he is educated specially for it, wholly devoted to it, and receives a salary for it. This constitutes the clerical order. He must spend much time in preparing his sermons; in some cases writing them out, committing them to memory, and then delivering them; making a laborious task of what God would have to be the outcome of a heart in fellowship with Himself. We are speaking of the principles, not of the persons. We would not speak disparagingly of any one. We see around us a huge system, from the Church of Rome to the Baptists. They all agree in this, that a man must be set apart specially to preside, preach, and tend the flock, to the exclusion of others, however gifted or godly they may be. The clerical system is an essential part of all. Some may say, "Are we not to have ministry?" Yes, we must have ministry; it is the communication of the Head to the members of the mind and will of God, therefore we must have ministry. But what sort of ministry? That which every joint supplieth for the edification of the members of the body; each one according to their own measure ministering that which is needful for the building up of the whole. That is God's principle of ministry, and we must not depart from it. This is a deeper and more important subject than it is generally supposed to be. I believe that the clerical system lies at the very root of

denominationalism. God is able to raise up in our midst men fully competent to handle His Word, not merely eloquently but effectually. But we must seek unto God for this. We should make earnest and united prayer to God that He would do for us what we cannot do for ourselves, viz., "raise us up pastors according to His own heart," who will truly feed and tend the flock of God.

Verse 10—"Ye are witnesses, and God also, how holily, and justly, and unblameably, we behaved ourselves among you that believe." Holiness chiefly characterises the life Godwards; whilst justice rather refers to its manward aspect. The apostle was concerned that fellow-saints should bear witness to the holy, just, and unblameable life he lived, knowing how the truth for which he testified would be furthered or hindered by the witness of his daily life. But he could also appeal to God. "Ye are witnesses, and God also." He was careful that the way of truth should not be evil spoken of on his account. And it is the privilege of every believer thus, in a holy, just, and unblameable life, to commend the Gospel, and to "adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things." But we must begin with God. We shall not long be right before men if we are not right with God. Nothing shines out more conspicuously in all the apostle's testimony than the fact that he made it always his first concern to be pleasing to God.

HALF-HOURS with a CONCORDANCE.

III.—Body and Members.

THE word "body" being used in Scripture firstly of the literal body, and thereafter applied to that of which it is the figure, it is proposed in this paper briefly to see within what range it is so used by holy writers in the New Testament.

Of about 140 occurrences of the word, the allusions to the literal body of the Lord Jesus before and after resurrection, and the allusions to the bodies of men and women,

make, with one mention of the body of a horse and three of a plant, a total of about 121 occurrences. Then, what is a "body" as in these passages? The body of man; what is it? Is it an accidental or temporary aggregation? Is it an agglomeration of separable parts? Ask the members of that body. Ask the blood coursing in unhindered passage through the unbroken, undivided veins, from heart to extremity and back to heart again. Ask the nerves; are they joined like telegraph wires, because, forsooth, there is a limit to the length which can be produced in one? Ask the head, as—the foot stumbling—the body is precipitated to the earth, but in a moment out have stretched the hands to catch the weight of the fall and save the precious head. Ask, I say, the members, and hear the one unanimous answer of each and all: "The body is ONE, having members indeed, but they so fitly framed and knit together through that which every joint supplieth, that the body is *one indivisible whole*." And no one, I suppose, will suggest that this real, organic, vital oneness is less true of the resurrection body of the Lord Jesus, or of the resurrection bodies of the saints, whether they be saints who receive celestial bodies or saints who receive terrestrial bodies.* In 1 Cor. xv. 37, 38, a plant is spoken of as a body; and a plant is like the human body in this, that it is truly one, for it is fitly framed and knit together, and the sap flowing through it from root to leaf and leaf to root unites the whole in a real living unity.

There remain about twenty other occurrences of the word body, namely, in Rom. xii. 5; 1 Cor. vi. 16, x. (16) 17, xii. 13, 27; Eph. i. 23, ii. 16, iii. 6, iv. 4, 12, 16, v. 23, 30; Col. i. 18, 24, ii. (17) 19, iii. 15. Most

* The word "celestial" of 1 Cor. xv. 40 is the usual word "heavenly," as in verse 48; and the word "terrestrial" of verse 40 is the word "earthly," *i.e.*, on the earth, corresponding to Rev. v. 10 "on the earth" (see R.V.); but the word "earthly," in verses 47, 48, 49, is derived from the word "dust" in Mark vi. 11 and Rev. xviii. 19; that is to say this latter word, describing our present bodies, compares them to the dust of the earth as to their origin and character; whereas the former word, as in verse 40, simply signifies the place for which they are suited, and unto which they are destined, namely, "on the earth."

of these clearly and without all controversy refer to one and the same thing, namely, the body of which Christ is Head, which is His fulness. This body these passages testify to be ONE; emphatically and repeatedly it is called ONE. Turning to 1 Cor. xii. some find a difficulty in verse 27. Look first at verse 12, "As the body is one . . . one body, so also is the Christ." That is, the Head and His members together are here called "the Christ." Verse 27 does not read, "Ye are the body of Christ," but, "Ye are body of Christ" (see Newberry), not "Ye are A body of Christ." And for this reason: a body implies other bodies (*i.e.*, a body at Corinth, a body at Antioch, a body elsewhere, &c.). Now we may not so read, for there is no scriptural warrant for assuming a plural. We may say in our English tongue, "A church," that is, a church of God. Why? Because God uses the plural of church (1 Thess. ii. 14, 1 Cor. xi. 16). But God never expressly or impliedly uses the plural of body, except as to a literal body. Never! The word here is used characteristically; that is, as to the standing of those addressed, who were of the Body and members in particular. In these scriptures that which is called the Body is so called in virtue of certain points wherein it is like the natural body: as to its oneness, as to the absolute needfulness of each member to each other member, especially of each member to the Head, and of the Head to each member, &c. (see passages above cited); and no other company of Christians, be they man-gathered or be they God-gathered, have the smallest warrant from the Scriptures to call themselves a "body," nor can others so call them who desire to use words which the Holy Spirit teaches, for they cannot have the characteristics of a body. For example, if the Church of God at Corinth was "a body of Christians" how could they put away "a member" from among them? Thereafter it must have been a maimed body, or a lame body, or a blind body! Moreover, they received this same "member" back again! Was the like ever heard

of in a natural body? Let it be noted that the engrafting of members into the one body of Christ differs essentially from the receiving into fellowship into an assembly of God. The being in one or another assembly depends on the place in which a believer resides; and, in the providence of God, this, apart from any question of evil doctrine or practice, leads to a constant change of individuals in a given church, hence we never read of members of a church. In 1 Cor. xii. 13, the former is described as a VITAL process; and the immersion in Holy Spirit into the Body finds a definite analogy in the way in which *organic growth* proceeds, which is distinct from the way in which, *e.g.*, a *crystal* increases in size; in the latter, particle is laid on to particle as bricks in the building of a wall; in the former, growth is by intussusception, that is by new particles being conveyed right into the midst of the older particles. In the growth of the cells of which a plant is composed, for example, what occurs? The whole growing part is bathed in water; in this water or sap the new particle begins its existence; in it, it is immersed; by it, it is carried right into the midst of all the other particles, which have had a like origin, and have been in like manner conveyed each to its several place. There in the water, and saturated by the water, they are all united together thereby; and so really and truly have they become one, that the severance of any particle is an absolute impossibility, except as the whole is broken up. And so is the Body of Christ. Each member as he or she becomes quickened by the Spirit is in the same Spirit immersed (1 Cor. xii. 13, R.V.), and not only immersed in the Spirit, but immersed by the Spirit into the Body.

The scriptural use of the word "member" exactly corresponds to that of "body." We read of members of the natural body, members of the Body of Christ, and members one of another, but we never read of members of a family, or members of a household, or members of a church. Indeed in Eph. v. 29 we read, "For no man

ever hated his own flesh, but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as Christ also the Church, because we are members of His Body." Why not say, "because we are members thereof"? The Church here is the Body, and the Body is the Church, but the expression "members of the Church," or "members of a church," is *definitely and invariably avoided*; and the words "of His Body" are here introduced, because in Scripture it is ever kept clear that the word "members" belongs to and is connected with the word "body" and never with the word "church."

No allusion has been made above to 1 Cor. vi. 15, 16, which seems to teach how intimate and how permanent is the marriage tie in the sight and purpose of God. At least it in no way invalidates the conclusions arrived at, which will lead us to a correct and scriptural discrimination in the use of the words "body" and "members."

C. M. L.

THE GOSPEL OF JOHN.

CHAPTER XIV.—(CONTINUED.)

NOTES OF ADDRESSES BY W. LINCOLN.
Communicated by J. S. H.

SECONDLY, to see God; God as God, God in glory. The only way possible to see God is in Christ. Of course Christ is not the Father, and the Father is not Christ; but Christ reveals God to the sight, as the Holy Spirit does to the heart. What is to be seen of God is in Christ. Christ is God visible, as the Holy Spirit is God felt. That is the meaning of the word, "I am the Truth." We never read of God being called "the Truth," though we do both of Christ and of the Holy Spirit. The Truth is the discovery, the manifestation of God. What is not of God is a lie. This world is passing away, and its glory; it seems real; it is a sham. It is the things not seen which are eternal. God is real, and Christ tells out all the character of God, God's love, God's heart. Hence, when Philip says in verse 8, "Lord, show us the Father, and it sufficeth us,"

Christ replies, "Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known Me, Philip? he that hath seen Me hath seen the Father; and how sayest thou then, Show us the Father?" and so on. Only we might add from the Epistle of John that God goes further, and not only is seen to be in Christ, but comes into us too; we dwelling in God, and God in us. Only, alas, we do not live out the life of God much, so that we testify very little to the truth of God. Observe Christ in any moment of His life, and you will see the mind and heart of God.

We thus see, then, that what is before us is to have God revealed to us; as we have it in the epistle, "We shall be like Him, for we shall see Him *as He is*"; that is, nothing behind, nothing undiscovered, nothing kept back. God in all His glory, and the church all eyes to drink in that sight of God (Rev. iv. 6).

Then, thirdly, we have the third question. Judas asks Him as to His manifesting Himself; about *feeling* God, feeling His love. Therefore, he begins to speak of the Holy Spirit. This is as to Christ as the Life. And we see what a life lies before us. "He that hath My commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth Me: and he that loveth Me shall be loved of My Father, and I will love him, and manifest Myself unto him." That is life; is it not? When God reveals His love to the soul, when God discovers His love so that the heart is brimful of joy in consequence.

"Oh this is life, oh this is joy,
My God to find Thee so."

"Judas saith unto Him (not Iscariot), Lord, how is it that Thou wilt manifest Thyself unto us, and not unto the world?" That Judas is the same as he who wrote the Epistle of Jude. And the writer of the Epistle of Jude was led by the Holy Spirit to preserve a very old prophecy, that of Enoch. "And Enoch also, the seventh from Adam, prophesied of these, saying, Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousand of His saints." Now, if the Lord comes

with His saints, it is certain that He must have taken them away first; have done with them as He did with Enoch. Now it is this same Judas who says, "Lord, how is it that Thou wilt manifest Thyself unto us, and not unto the world?" That is what is before us—for the Lord to come again as the Bridegroom and snatch us all away in a moment, spirit, soul, and body, and manifest Himself to us, so as He cannot unto the world, which could not bear His glory. It is a very singular corroboration of this, that in another passage we have another line of thought very like to it. I refer to Rev. iii. 8-10, "Because thou hast kept the word of My patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth." And I believe this will be in the way of Judas' inquiry and that Enoch prophesied of. It does not say from the trial, but from the hour, and to do that He must take us to a region where the sun never shone. "You have kept My Word, and I will make men to know that I have loved you; and I will keep you from that hour, and manifest Myself to you as I do not unto the world."

Now let us look again at these questions which refer to the heavenly life here below. These are things to which the child of God instinctively turns, for they are his own property in a peculiar sense. So we find that the way to be with God is to associate Christ with God. Christ who has gone to the Cross, and by His own blood gone into the highest heavens. "Having boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, and having an High Priest over the House of God." That just explains those words, "Believe also in Me." Not only God, but a God in Christ, and a Christ in God; and you have that claim upon God in Christ—boldness through the blood—and may come close to God, because He, your High Priest, has gone there, and the whole way is paved with His blood. And in that uncreated glory of God is a Man, your risen Head. "I am

the Way;" the whole Way from just where you are now; poor, needy, sorrowing, bewildered saint, the whole Way to God in a moment. Christ, who has hung upon the Cross, is the whole Way to glory, right up to the heart of God for you.

Then, secondly, about seeing God. When you seek communion first come close to God; always begin with coming to God, getting up to God. Begin the heavenly life by getting right up to God, and the Way is, "Believe also in Me." Never forget for a moment that there is that Blessed One, your Friend, your Lord, your Advocate, your Intercessor, your High Priest upon that throne; He who shed His blood for you and for me. "Lord, show us the Father, and it sufficeth us." Jesus saith unto him, "Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known Me, Philip? he that hath seen Me hath seen the Father; and how sayest thou then, Show us the Father?" When you draw nigh to God the next point is, be sure to look up and see Him; be sure, with the eye of the spirit, to see Christ. Scripture is not without meaning when it says, "Look"; not without meaning when eight times, at least, it directs us to be occupied with that Risen One. But, further, "Believe Me that I am in the Father, and the Father in Me: or else believe Me for the very works' sake. Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that believeth on Me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto My Father. And whatsoever ye shall ask in My name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son." Now, when you have got your eye upon Christ, mark the order: let your heart be free, tell Him everything, whatever is weighing down your heart. You will never begin properly to worship God until you have told Him all that is upon your heart; for you will not enjoy God as you ought. Tell out your cares first, and then be alone with the Lord to enjoy Him, and for Him to see you and to hear you. And see how it

goes on. "And I will pray the Father, and He shall give you another Comforter, that He may abide with you for ever." After you have told Him what is upon your heart, launch out in spirit to enjoy the consciousness of Christ being yours, and of you being Christ's, of that Christ upon God's throne, your High Priest.

Then, thirdly, "He that hath My commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth Me: and he that loveth Me shall be loved of My Father, and I will love him, and will manifest Myself unto him." This does not mean that God loves us first when we keep His commandments. But there is such a thing as a whisper from the Spirit, and a smile from the face of Jesus, when we are keeping His commandments, and can look up with a good conscience. God testifies His approbation often by His whisper through the Spirit, and then you begin to feel the presence of God. It is not all sight. Religion is not all objective, nor yet all subjective; not all sight in Christ, nor all in the heart in feeling. It is both; objectively—Christ is the revelation of God; subjectively—the Holy Spirit is in your very soul to reveal the love and heart of God as you keep His commandments.

So that of these three questions, the first refers to Christ, the second to the Father, the third to the Holy Spirit. By the Spirit of God will He convey those whispers and tokens of His love as shall make you to brim over with joy. God loves us so as that He would have us to get sips of heaven now, and not to leave it all in the distance; and as you walk with God and please God, you will find it is not all future. When the Lord Jesus comes to receive us to Himself, what is the power that is to lift us up? Rom. viii. tells us, "By His Spirit that dwelleth in us." The very same power by which you enjoy God now, by which in spirit you are lifted into His presence to enjoy His whispers and His love now, is the power that shall change your body and lift you into His presence then.

NOTES ON THE PROVERBS.

PART XIII.

PROVERB.

PARALLEL.

Chap. xviii., verse 1. "He that separateth himself seeketh his own desire, and rageth against all sound wisdom."—R.V.

"Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is," &c.—Heb. x. 25. "These be they who separate themselves, *sensual*, having not the Spirit."—Jude 19.

Verse 2. "A fool hath no delight in understanding, but that his heart may reveal itself."

His vanity leads him to talk instead of to listen. Read Eccl. v. 1-7, x. 2, 3, &c.

Verse 3. "When the wicked cometh," &c.

—*i.e.*, contempt follows wickedness; and reproach, ignominy. &c.

Ananias' and Sapphira's action thus ended. See Acts v.

Verse 4. "The words of a man's mouth," &c.

As a flowing brook or wellspring of wisdom, so are the words of a wise man's mouth. —Job. xxix. 7-10, Prov. xviii. 4.

Verse 5. "It is not good to accept the person of the wicked," &c.

Pilate chose rather to yield to the chief priests and rulers than to the wisdom of God—the Righteous One—who stood accused before him.

Verses 6, 7. "A fool's lips enter into contention," &c.

A fool, ensnared by his own talk, quickly rushes into trouble, and the words of his mouth call for (deserve) stripes. See how Nabal thus acted. —1 Sam. xxv. 10, &c.

Verse 8. "The words of a whisperer are as dainty morsels," &c.—R.V.

See the mischief Jonadab did.—2 Sam. xiii. 3-32.

Verse 9. "He Sloth and waste are that is slack in his brothers; both lead to work," &c.—R.V. ruin.

"Not slothful in business" of any kind.—Rom. xii. 11.

Verse 10. "The name of the Lord is a strong tower," &c. "They that know Thy *Name* do put their trust in Thee."

Compare the various meanings of the name Jehovah in the Old Testament, and the use of the names of the Lord Jesus Christ in the new.

His Name — His revealed perfections.

Verse 11. "The rich man's wealth is his strong city," &c. Contrast this with verse 10.

"Lo, this is the man that made not *God* his strength!"

Verse 12. "Before destruction the heart of man is haughty," &c. Rather, "before affliction or loss of temporal sources of aid, man is apt to be proud," as in verse 11; but true humility of spirit leads to true honour.

Verse 13. "He that answereth a matter before he heareth it," &c. David—2 Sam. xvi. 4, xix. 24-30. Darius—Dan. vi. 9, 14-18.

Verse 14. "The spirit of a man will sustain his infirmity," &c. —*i.e.*, of body. Job bore his bodily pains well, but shrunk under the wounds of his spirit.

Verse 16. "A man's gift maketh room for him," &c. —*i.e.*, his gift or bribe secureth favour, and audience of the ruler.

Verse 17. "He that is first in his own cause seemeth just," &c. Saul's self-pleading —1 Sam. xv. 13-26. Ziba—2 Sam. xvi. 1-4.

Verse 19. "A brother offended is harder to be won than a strong city," &c. Jacob found this with Esau. The rule of Matt. xviii. 15-17 is the safest and best.

Verse 21. "Death and life are in the power of the tongue," &c. Read James iii. 6, &c. They that *indulge* it must smart for it.—Eccles. x. 11-13. Compare Ps. cxli. 3.

Verse 22. "Whoso findeth a wife findeth a good thing," &c. See Prov. xix. 14. A true wife is a favour from God. For choice of such be guided by Prov. xxxi., and 2 Cor. vi. 14-16.

Verse 24. "He that maketh many friends doeth it to his own destruction. But there is a Friend (lover) that sticketh closer than a brother."—R.V. This rendering quite alters the old reading, and shows that many nominal friends are only a source of misplaced confidence, but that there is a true friendship closer than any bond of relationship.

Surely, too, of Him we may say, He loveth at all times; He sticketh closer than any brother.

Chap. xix., verse 2. "Also, that the soul be without knowledge it is not good," &c. "This is life eternal, that they might *know* Thee, the only true God," &c.

"He that sinneth hath not seen Him, neither *known* Him."

"Ponder the path of thy feet, and all thy ways shall be ordered aright."—Prov. iv. 26 (margin).

Verse 3. "The foolishness of man perverteth his way," &c. Balaam so acted. Ahab also. Adam charged the Lord with Eve being

the cause of his fall.
—Gen. iii. 12.

Cain—Gen. iv. 14.

Verses 5-9. "A false witness shall not be unpunished." The Amalekite — 2 Sam. i. 15.
See Ps. cxx. 3, 4.

Verse 11. "The discretion (or prudence) of a man deferreth his anger," &c. David listens to Abigail's counsel, and thereby gains greater glory than he would have by taking vengeance on Nabal.—1 Sam. xv. 30, 31.

"Be ye angry and sin not."

See Rom. xii. 18-21.

Verse 12. "The king's wrath is as the roaring of a lion," &c. Better God's favour than God's anger. "The wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness," &c., but "In His favour is life," &c.

Verse 13. "A foolish son is the calamity of his father." So was Absalom to David.

"The contentions of a wife are a continual dropping;" "Wives, submit yourselves to your own husbands, as unto the Lord."

Verse 14. "House and riches are an inheritance from fathers."—R.V. Fathers lay up for their children.—2 Cor. xii. 14. *Illustrating* the Fatherly provisions of God for His children in the future.

"A prudent wife is from the Lord."

"The prudent wife."
"As the Church is subject to Christ, so the wives to their own husbands in everything."—Eph. v. 24.

Verse 17. "He that hath pity on the

"Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one

poor lendeth to the Lord," &c.

Verse 18. "Chasten thy son while there is hope," &c. of the least of these My brethren, ye have done it unto *Me*.
"Give—and it shall be given you—*good measure*," &c. Heb. xii. 5-7. — "Whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth."

Verse 21. "There are many devices in a man's heart," &c. Isaac's desire (contrary to God's declared purpose) to bestow on Esau the blessing.

Joseph's brethren—Gen. xxxvii. 19, &c.; Ps. lxxvi. 10.

Ahithophel — 2 Sam. xvii. 1-23.

Verse 22. "The desire of a man is his kindness," &c. Naaman's little servant.

Mary—Mark xiv. 8. The widow's mite.

The Macedonian Church—2 Cor. viii. 2.

It is the comfort of poor folks to know their affections are valued, not their presents.

Verse 25. "Smite a scorner and the simple will beware," &c. The effect on Israel of Pharaoh's destruction.—Ex. xiv. 31.

The effect of Korah's punishment.

Of Elymas.—Acts xiii. 6-12.

If you attend to the Lord's whispers you will not need His rod.

Verse 27. "Cease my son to hear the instruction that causeth to err from the words of knowledge." "Take heed *what* ye hear."
"Take heed therefore *how* ye hear."

Take heed of itching ears that dislike sound doctrine and turn to fables.

"Who is deaf as My servant."

A. O. M.

"HE LOVED ME, AND GAVE HIMSELF FOR ME."

(GALATIANS ii. 20.)

SAVIOUR! Thy boundless love to me
I ne'er on earth can fully know;
'Twill take an endless life to learn
Why Thou, O Lord, shouldst love me so.

'Twas only love like Thine could reach
So low, and lift me to Thy throne;
'Twas only love like Thine could take
My sins, and bear them as Thine own.

What was I, Lord, that Thou, in love,
Shouldst die, from death to rescue me?
So lost in guilt and wretchedness,
So blinded that I could not see.

For many years Thy hand outstretched,
Fain would have drawn me to Thy breast;
But my deaf ears heard not Thy voice,
That bade me come to Thee and rest.

Until a ray of light divine
Pierced my dark soul, whose quick'ning power
Brought light and everlasting life,
Where death and darkness reigned before.

Blest moment when my raptured soul
With love and wonder felt the power
Of God's great love, revealed in Christ,
And manifest in me that hour.

From henceforth, Lord, while life shall last,
And through eternity, shall be
My theme, the Saviour's matchless grace:
The wondrous love of God to me.

M. P.

THE TWO NATURES.

THE term, "two natures," though not in the language of Scripture, is yet in accordance with Scripture statements. These two natures are mentioned in the third chapter of John. "That which is born of the flesh is flesh" (born in sin, shapen in iniquity), "and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit" (created in righteousness and true holiness). To be born of the Spirit is to be a "partaker of divine nature" (2 Pet. i. 4), and this divine nature is pure and holy, corresponding to the nature of "Him that begat"; hence it is written, "Whosoever is born of God sinneth not" (as to the divine nature), but bears the fruit of the Spirit.

On the other hand, the "works of the flesh are manifest," and a fearful list follows these words in Gal. v. 19. Moreover, the Lord Himself said, "From within, out of the heart of man proceed evil thoughts" (Mark vii. 21); and, as these scriptures point out, it is the root of all evil actions too; so, if a Christian gives way to any of these things, he proves himself still to be a possessor of the "flesh," the "nature" of the "old man," which he had as an unbeliever. Some in these days are denying this truth. It is not possible for these evils to have their origin in the divine nature which God has given believers, and Scripture only recognises, as the other alternative, that they are the "works of the flesh," the carnal mind, which is enmity against God.

But, judicially, in the sight of God, who sees the end from the beginning, this old nature, the flesh, is already dead, and its penalty paid in the Cross of Christ. Just as God, in Eph. ii., already sees us risen and seated in the heavenlies in Christ, so He reckons this nature to be dead and done away. "Our old man [our old standing as unconverted persons] was crucified with Him, that the body of sin [the flesh, the root of all sin] might be made of none effect, destroyed"; and just as *actually* we are *not* yet in the heavenly places but down here on earth, so actually the old nature is not yet dead within us, though the sentence is passed upon it and we are only waiting for its execution. In the same sense Satan is already "destroyed," or "rendered powerless" (Heb. ii. 14), though we know he still is in existence and doing his work.

We are dead to the law (Rom. vii. 4).

We are dead to the world (Gal. vi. 14).

We are dead to sin (Rom. vi. 2).

None of these has *dominion* over us, but neither is any one of them dead or done away with. And we are capable of yielding ourselves servants to all, though we need not, and should not. Hence the exhortations—

"Ye desire to be under the *law*" (Gal. iv. 21).

"Be not conformed to this *world*" (Rom. xii. 2).

"Neither yield ye . . . to *sin*" (Rom. vi. 13).

We are not in the *flesh* (Rom. viii. 9), but the flesh is in us (Rom. vii. 19-24). "When I would do good evil is present with me"; and we find this to be a "law" as unchangeable as any of God's laws in nature. But, mark, though it is ever present, "sin shall not have dominion over you." Just as we are told to resist the devil and he will flee, so also there is a Saviour from this evil. "Who shall deliver me? *God*, through Jesus Christ our Lord." "For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death." Why, then, has God left this enemy within? Is it not, as in the case of Israel of old, that through the enemies, subdued, but not exterminated, in the land of Canaan, He might both "prove Israel, whether they will keep the way of the Lord or not," and also "teach them war" (Judges iii. 1-4). It is written, "If they obey and serve Him they shall spend their days in prosperity and their years in pleasures"; but if we forget to obey the Lord, and serve "other gods," how quickly we find ourselves delivered into the "hands of spoilers," and sold into the "hands of enemies," till we turn again to the Lord, and find, as we might have known before, that He alone is our life and strength and sanctification, and that to be the Lord's servant is to sing for joy of heart. Counting on His fulness to supply our need, we may be Joshuas and Calebs in the land of "corn and wine," not suffering continual defeat, but enjoying continual victory, while our experience and testimony shall be "in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him that loved us."

"And every step leads on to more and more ;
From strength to strength Thy pilgrims pass and
sing

The praise of Him who leads them on and on,
From glory unto glory even here."

Till the coming of the Lord Jesus, "who shall change the body of our humiliation that it may be fashioned like unto His glorious body, according to the working whereby He is able to subdue all things unto Himself."

H. C.

SCRIPTURAL PRINCIPLES OF UNITY.

REMARKS BY J. R. C.

THE tendency of all sects has always been to consolidate themselves on the principle of confederation. Each sect as it extended sought the amalgamation with it of all who adopted the same views or principles. Then arose the necessity for a constitution and rules, and a definite membership. These might be largely, or not at all scriptural; but compliance with such rules became the bond of union, and thus, practically, the way is barred in each community or sect against further knowledge of many truths.

Outside of all such we have been led, in order to be where one authority only is owned, that of the Lord Jesus Christ; where one final standard alone is appealed to—viz., the Word of God; and where there is liberty for the Spirit of God to minister by those whom He has qualified and set in the body for the edification of the whole.

Had these denominations, sects, or communities been God's assemblies, it would have been schism to leave them.

If those assemblies, of which we form part, be not assemblies of God, it is schism to be identified with them.

Whatever be our relationships as individuals with the children of God in the various denominations or sects of Christendom (and these must never be ignored), relationships with the sects as such we can have none.

The truth that demanded separation at first, demands that the separation be maintained; otherwise the sacrifice of the truth must follow. Therefore, in speaking of the relationships of assemblies one toward another, it is implied that they are indeed entitled to be called "assemblies of God." That it is possible for Christians to form assemblies under the leadership of carnal, though influential men, and probably men of note as possessing gifts capable of being used for the edification of the church, is seen in Acts xx. 30, and 3 John.

The fact that they are Christians and that they assemble themselves together on the first day of the week, according to Scripture example, "to break bread," is not of itself evidence that they, as an assembly, are God-gathered. If formed by the leadership of men who have arisen, and who have spoken perverse things, and have succeeded in drawing away disciples of the Lord Jesus after themselves, how can such a gathering be owned as an assembly toward which we have relationships any more than the sects from which the truth has separated us?

But the results of all attempts to form a unity of assemblies have been so sad and dishonouring to the Lord, that many of us have naturally recoiled to the other extreme, and the consequence is that attempts at united action and fellowship among assemblies, which are perfectly right and scriptural, are opposed and suspected of being a beginning to drift back again into organised sectarianism.

If unity be made an object instead of Christ, then the end must be disaster. Some have made it the object, and have taken the exclusive position, and God has blown upon it. Others have made it an object, and have in their zeal for union of all Christians consented to sacrifice their testimony as to distinctive truth, thus purchasing the wider fellowship at the expense of unfaithfulness to that which God has taught them. Thus, whether it be the rallying cry of the "unity of the body," or "fellowship with all saints" (both truths of the highest importance if rightly understood), it is equally making unity an object, and the result is disaster to the truth.

Properly, unity is a result, not an object.

In building the wall of Jerusalem, each man with his family built opposite his own house, and built upon the old foundation. Thus acting, there was no need to be concerned about unity. When the building advanced far enough, each portion would meet with and join on to the next. Thus, in time, *unity* was the *result*.

Again, in warfare each soldier is con-

cerned about obeying the orders of his captain. This is all the soldier's concern; he need not trouble himself about the unity of the army, essential though that may be. Each captain with his company is concerned only with obeying the orders of the colonel of the regiment; and, again, each colonel with his regiment is concerned about obeying the orders of the general of the division; then, finally, the generals are concerned about fulfilling the orders of the commander-in-chief. Thus, *subjection to authority* is the principle that secures practical, effectual unity. The forces are one in action, because all subject to one supreme will.

That they have all enlisted under one sovereign is one aspect of unity, but important though it be, it of itself affords no guarantee of practical unity in action.

That saints are all redeemed by the same precious Blood, and all indwelt by one Spirit, and all members of one body, are precious truths. But these do not suffice to secure practical unity or practical fellowship. The object must be Christ alone: the exaltation of His Name, as the Name that claims the allegiance of every heart, the subjection of every will; the exaltation of His Word as the only statute book whereby His will is made known; the unhindered liberty for His Spirit to unfold its treasures and put each individual in possession of the mind of Christ. Those who were of one heart to make David king were able to keep rank. There was no wavering purpose, no double heart, therefore unity was the result.

It mattered not that few at first identified themselves with the cause of the rejected king; the host increased in numbers and in fervour, and in effectual unity, for David was its centre and its object. Let Christ be our centre and our object, and subjection to Him in all things our rule, and unity will surely be the manifest result.

Let each assembly exalt Him and build upon the old foundation, and according to the Divine pattern and plan, and then, like the walls of Jerusalem, there will come in time to be a joining together of all that are so acting out the will of God. Fellowship

between assemblies will be the natural outcome of individual and united subjection to the will and word of the Lord.

The word that separates from one assembly will separate from all, not because all are confederate, but because all acknowledge the one authority. The word that introduces to one, will introduce to all, not because one is bound by the action of another, but because each is acting in obedience to the same word and will.

It is noticeable that in the New Testament all the believers in one city, though doubtless too numerous to meet stately in one place, are referred to as one church; for example, the Church at Corinth, at Jerusalem, &c.; but if it be a wider area, and a district be referred to, it is the Churches (plural) of Galatia, of Macedonia, &c.

Is it the mind of the Lord that the united oversight in each city acting together should constitute the assemblies in each city practically one? This may be borne out by the fact that elders were ordained in every city. Paul sent for the elders of Ephesus, as though distinct oversight in each little gathering were hardly recognised, if at all, but the shepherds in the city recognised as connected with God's assembly in the city.

From 3 John may it not be gathered that great patience is required and much wrong to be endured (though not consented to), before that which has been an assembly of God is to be separated from or disowned? The apostle John evidently looked forward to visiting the city where the sorrow was, rebuking the evildoers, comforting and restoring to the fellowship those cast out, and so setting the assembly right before God.

Had those who were suffering for the truth's sake gone out and formed another "church" he could not have so written; and, doubtless, godly ones would have been left with Diotrephes, whilst through patience they would never have been separated from.

I write these things chiefly by way of suggestion, feeling deeply the importance and the difficulty of the subject, and the heartrending perplexities that are spreading like a net around us.

GETTING WATER.

WHEN the little army under Sir Herbert Stewart marched away from Korti, to the relief of General Gordon at Khartoum, their way lay through a desert where water was very scarce. A determined enemy opposed them, and the battles fought were literally for possession of the wells, as whichever party held them was virtually conqueror.

In all countries where water is scarce, its possession is coveted, and, if need be, fought for. The remnant who returned from Babylon had this difficulty, among others, to face. Hence we read (Nehemiah iv. 23, margin)—“Everyone went with his weapon for water.” The enemies watched by the wells to hinder their drawing, so the need of their weapons.

Whatever the special object which brings believers together, it is the purpose of God that our assemblings should be times when we would be refreshed with draughts from the well of salvation. When going to remember the Lord in the breaking of bread, to a prayer meeting, to a Bible reading, to a conference, or other such-like gathering, our hopes are high because we count on being watered. How is it, then, that returning from such meetings we have often come parched and withered, instead of refreshed? The reason is not far to seek. We forgot the wily enemy would be there to contend with us for the water, and we, being unprepared, were defeated. To judge ourselves must ever be preliminary to drinking at the stream from the throne of God. This requires a free use of the *inside edge* of the two-edged sword (Heb. iv. 12). When the weapon is thus used, we are truly humbled, therefore dependent on God, and we shall surely be satisfied. Many an one by thoughtless levity, foolish talking, and jesting, after having filled his vessel, has it spilled to the ground ere even he has quitted the spot where water has been flowing freely. Ofttimes the refreshing has been missed, because we are not willing to receive from the vessel out of which the Lord would pour for us—our eyes, it may be, on a silver

goblet (alas! it was dry), when a plain vessel running over was before us, but we were too proud to drink thereat. "He that hath ears to hear, let him hear." P. H.

"DELIVERED UNTO SATAN."

(1 TIM. i. 20; 1 COR. v. 5).

THE person mentioned in these scriptures was *under* the power and *in* the service of Satan, though he professed to be converted; that is, delivered from "the power of Satan and translated into the kingdom of God's dear Son," to be subject to and a servant of Him. So he goes on in fellowship with the saints in the church (which is the visible expression of the kingdom of Jesus Christ), but by-and-by he begins to "yield his members as instruments of unrighteousness unto Satan;" and so much so, that the saints in fellowship with the Lord excommunicate him from their fellowship, and put him out into the world; or, into that which is the expression of Satan's kingdom, that he may again get a taste of the bondage and service of Satan. We have this in type in Israel. They were groaning under the bondage of Pharaoh in Egypt, but God delivered them and brought them out; while they *promised* to be "all for God," who had granted them such deliverance, and said, "Whatsoever He saith unto us we will do." But soon we have them turning against the Lord, and murmuring and complaining at His ways; then we have Him giving them over for a time to their lusts, that they might again feel for a time the bitterness and slavery of sin, as we read in Jer. ii. 18, 19, "And now what hast thou to do in the way of Egypt, to drink the waters of Sihor? or what hast thou to do in the way of Assyria, to drink the waters of the river? Thine own wickedness shall correct thee, and thy backslidings shall reprove thee: know therefore and see that it is an evil thing and bitter, that thou hast forsaken the Lord *thy God*, and that My fear is not in thee, saith the Lord God of hosts."

A man who has professed to turn from

the service of sin and Satan, and from the fellowship of the world to the service of Jesus Christ and to the fellowship of God's saints, and turns back again to the service of sin and Satan and to the fellowship of the world, professes by that act that the service of sin and Satan and the fellowship of the world are better than the service of Jesus Christ and the fellowship of His people. For his action speaks thus:—"I have tried the service of sin and Satan, and I have tried the service of Jesus Christ, and I prefer the former to the latter." What a testimony for a child of God to bear before all Heaven, Earth, and Hell! Yet this is the testimony he bears when he "yields himself" to sin and the fellowship of the world. A. S.

SAVIOUR AND DESPOT.

THE word *despot* has come to be applied in a sense expressing the aversion with which men regard their fellow-men, when seeking to grasp at such authority; but this very word is used on two occasions, in direct address by faithful saints in the chosen nation, to express the happiest confidence in the infinite One, towards whom they stood in the relation of servants, and the Lord Jehovah as their absolute Master. In the first instance, Simeon, that aged servant, ere he closed his eyes on the temple of Jerusalem, and on all its ritual glories, and ere he took leave of the yet more vast and expanded glories of this present creation, the footstool of the Lord, was permitted to behold with his eyes, and to sustain in his arms, the very temple in which dwelt all the fulness of the Godhead bodily, even that blessed "child, Jesus," whom when his aged eyes beheld he could exclaim, "Lord, now lettest Thou Thy servant depart in peace, for mine eyes have seen Thy salvation."

The other instance was when this salvation was fully revealed, and the work of redemption accomplished, and the servants of Christ (called to stand before kings and rulers for His name's sake) find the world

arrayed in arms against them; they then fall back on this safe resort of faith, and in confiding trust rest in the arms of the Sovereign Disposer. "They lifted up their voice to God with one accord, and said, Lord, Thou art God, which hast made heaven and earth, and the sea, and all that in them is. . . . Who by the mouth of Thy servant David hast said, Why did the heathen rage, and the people imagine vain things? The kings of the earth stood up, and the rulers were gathered together against the Lord, and against His Christ. For of a truth, against Thy holy child, Jesus, whom Thou hast anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles and the people of Israel, were gathered together, for to do whatsoever *Thy hand and Thy counsel determined before to be done*. And now, Lord, behold their threatenings, and grant unto *Thy servants* that, with all boldness, they may speak Thy word, *by stretching forth Thine hand* to heal, and that *signs and wonders* may be done in the name of Thy holy child, Jesus."

Thus, the very truth which is so distasteful to the sinner, and so appalling to the natural mind, becomes *the very tower of strength* to those whose faith could lean upon this almighty arm for defence.

No wonder that the very place was shaken where they were assembled, and the presence of God was immediately made manifest, and the Holy Ghost filled all their hearts.

"Tell them I AM, Jehovah said
To Moses, while earth heard with dread:
And smitten to the heart,
At once above, beneath, around,
All nature, without voice or sound,
Replied, O Lord, Thou art!"

Questions and Answers.

QUESTION 266.—What is the most scriptural way of distributing the gifts of assemblies?

Where no rule is laid down in Scripture we must be careful not to make one. At the same time there are constantly arising occasions and circumstances in which there may be no definite scripture to guide, but as to which, action must be regulated by Scripture principles. The scriptural principle

of fellowship indicates that assembly contributions should be appropriated to purposes in which all the assembly can concur. In this way only can there be true fellowship in the gifts, in the love that contributes, and in the prayers that follow them. "That your prayers be not hindered" (1 Pet. iii. 7) is a principle of wider application than merely to husbands and wives. Whatever constitutes a breach of fellowship is a certain hindrance to prayer. If this be so, then surely it follows that whilst those who are "the guides" (Heb. xiii. 7, margin) may *consider* what object is most fitting, and *suggest* to the assembly; they ought also to give the whole assembly an opportunity of expressing their minds freely, in order to ascertain whether their suggestion commends itself, or whether (as might be the case) some other object with more pressing claim was in the minds of others. Love and humility will smooth the way in all such matters. Bitterness, envy, and pride will raise difficulties by the bushel at every turn. We believe it is a great help to the enlargement of the hearts of gathered saints, if regular contributions are made by the assemblies, not only for current expenses, which in righteousness demand the first place, but also for the poor; and not stopping there, but going out to the Lord's work in the Gospel, and to the Lord's servants labouring in the Gospel according to His will, whether near or far off. We have been greatly surprised to learn that there are assemblies, not a few, in which collective gifts are never made to the Lord's servants, but all that is contributed goes to pay rent, and possibly to aid some poor in the midst. If such there be, they little know the blessing they are missing. Of late years, we solemnly believe that for lack of this grace, real gifted, devoted servants of Christ have been literally starved into resuming business, and labouring with their hands for their support. There may be cases where this is just what ought to be; but there are cases, we believe, in which guilt remains at the door of assemblies that "seek their own," and reach not forth to the wider interests of the Lord's service. Is it not the case too, that individuals and assemblies communicate more abundantly with the *popular* than with the *faithful*? The only "sin" laid to the charge of some, is that they consent not to secure "open doors" by withholding unpalatable truths, or that they reserve their labours for those openings in which the fruit of their service will be gathered into scriptural fellowship. Such are left to labour with their hands, whilst those who secure popularity by compromise with clerisy and sectarianism are allowed to lack for nothing. We know that God works in various ways, and that He sometimes acts almost miraculously on behalf of those who truly serve Him and trust Him; but it is evident from many scriptures, that the liberality of the assemblies (Phil. iv. 16) and of individuals (3 John 5-8) was the channel through which the Lord designed that His servants should be supported, and there can but be loss and barrenness where this appointment of the Lord is disregarded.

THE APPOINTED PATHWAY OF THE SON OF GOD.

NOTES OF AN ADDRESS BY ALFRED J. HOLIDAY.

LUKE xxiv. 25-47.

IN calling attention to these scriptures, my thought was to ask you to consider for a little while, the Lord Jesus as going over, with His disciples, the Word of God, and pointing out to them the things concerning Himself; and how all these things had their fulfilment in His own life.

The Scriptures are the guide God has given to direct us step by step along the whole pathway appointed for us down here, and the Lord Jesus is our example, who trod from first to last an appointed pathway.

Turn to Ps. xl. 5-8. In Heb. x. 5, the Spirit of God gives the exact time when the Lord Jesus spake these words—"Wherefore when He cometh into the world, He saith," &c. The very moment when He stooped down from the place of equality with the Father, when he emptied Himself and took the form of a servant, just at that moment he said, "Lo, I come: in the volume of the Book it is written of Me, I delight to do Thy will, O God." From the very beginning He came to fulfil the pathway that was written for Him in the Book. The Scriptures were ever to Him the writing out of all that God had appointed concerning Him; not only what He was to do, but all the thoughts of God about Him. We see this in Psa. xl. 5—"Many, O Lord My God, are the wonderful works which Thou hast done, and Thy thoughts which are to us-ward: they cannot be reckoned up in order unto Thee." We get here, put side by side, the works and the thoughts of God concerning us. When the Lord Jesus came into the world He had the thoughts of God concerning Him set down in His Word, and He had the will of God written down there too. As the Lord Jesus would take up the Old Testament Scriptures and read them diligently day by day, they were to Him the unfolding of the

thoughts of God concerning His appointed pathway. The Scriptures were not to Him a book of mere generalities, but one that clearly showed Him the Father's will concerning Himself as Jehovah's servant. That is just what the Scriptures are meant to be for you and me. They tell us the thoughts of God concerning us, and His works on our behalf, and they tell us the will of God concerning our pathway down here.

Turn now to John xvii.—"These words spake Jesus, and lifted His eyes to heaven and said," &c. This word "heaven" has special force in the original. "The kingdom of heaven," which occurs repeatedly in the Gospel of Matthew, should be "the kingdom of the heavens," which means the lower heavens where God exercises His government. That word "heaven" in John xvii. is above the heavens where God rules, and is the place of blessed intimacy and fellowship with God.

We have here the Lord Jesus in spirit passing through the heavens right into the presence of His Father. That stamps its character upon this chapter. All these blessed words of the Son's communings with His Father are spoken as though the Cross and the grave were past, and He raised from the dead, gone right back again to the throne, and there speaking out in the Father's presence that which He claimed as the result of His finished work. "I have finished the work which Thou gavest Me to do." Why did He say that before the work was finished? If there was no other reason, I believe this one was enough. He purposes that they should know what was the character of His intercession on their behalf as He appears in the presence of God for us. It was not to be given to any one to enter into the presence of God and hear Him. But while among His disciples He anticipates in His heart that moment when He would go back to the Throne of God, the work of the Cross being finished; in spirit He passes right into the Holiest and speaks to God on our behalf. We seem to see Him as High Priest, bearing our names on His

shoulder and breast-plate before God. He speaks about us, and tells out just what the character of His intercession on our behalf before God is.

I like to look at the pathway of the Lord down here as just embraced between these two words—the one in Ps. xl, when He cometh into the world—“Lo, I come to do Thy will; in the volume of the Book it is written of Me,” &c.; and this other one at the close of it all, when He goes back to the right hand of the Majesty on high—“I have glorified Thee on the earth, I have finished the work Thou gavest Me to do.” O what a wonderful pathway that was. He had to find out in the Book all the pathway He was to walk in, every detail of His work, every step He was to take was written for Him in the volume of the Book. And so we read these words repeatedly—“That the Scriptures might be fulfilled.” The Lord fulfilled the will of God daily; He learned His will daily; it was a will that He found written out for Him; and step by step He was accomplishing that will. You remember these words in John xix. 28—“After this, Jesus knowing that all things were accomplished, said, I thirst.” Notice the soldier that filled a sponge with vinegar, and put it upon hyssop, and put it to His mouth, was fulfilling the Scriptures, though he knew nothing about the Scriptures. Herod and Pilate, the Gentiles, and the people of Israel were fulfilling the Scriptures. It was all written in the Psalms. Peter, whilst addressing the Jews on the day of Pentecost, said—“Ye men of Israel, hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you by miracles and wonders and signs, which God did in the midst of you, as ye yourselves also know; Him being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken and by wicked hands have crucified and slain” (Acts ii. 22, 23). They did not know that they were fulfilling the Scriptures; neither had they any heart to fulfil the Scriptures. See that Blessed One hanging on the Cross, enduring such agony and suffering as no human heart

could conceive, and yet His whole mind is concentrated upon doing the will of His Father. See! He addresses some one below His Cross. Is He asking for help or sympathy? Oh, no! He is thinking of others—His mother was on His heart, and He commends her to the care of John. Turning from His mother to this last act in that terrible scene that He was passing through: “Jesus knowing that all things were now accomplished, that the Scriptures might be fulfilled.” That word in Ps. xxii. was not yet accomplished. He knew it was there. How He dreaded that 22nd Psalm; but the time was come, and nothing must be left out. When *we* come into circumstances of trial, how much do we seek deliverance for ourselves. The Lord Jesus was sustained on the Cross by the knowledge that He was doing the will of God. He forgot Himself, and thought only of doing the will of His Father.

Turn to Ps. xxii. 7, 8—“All they that see Me laugh Me to scorn; they shoot out the lip; they shake the head, saying: He trusted in the Lord that He would deliver Him; let Him deliver Him, seeing He delighted in Him.” Beloved, what a terrible trial this was for the Son of God, in the midst of the agony and suffering that He was enduring, to hear such words. They were taunting Him that the Father whom He professed to trust had deserted Him. You remember how that in the wilderness the Devil came to Him and said, “If Thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread.” It was the same thing here while He hung on the Cross. Satan had been withdrawn for a time, and not allowed directly to assault the Lord Jesus. Now, the whole of his malice is concentrated upon Him; and he uses the mouths of every one of that multitude for that purpose. It does not matter how varied the thoughts of each one, or how they might be opposed to each other on other things, they were all united that day. How one after another said to Him, “If Thou be the Son of God.” The Pharisees taunted Him,

saying, "If Thou be the Son of God, come down from the Cross." The very thieves cast the same in His teeth. He was nailed to the Cross because He said He was the Son of God. That gave point to all their taunts. I am persuaded that many participated in the shame and fear that Pilate felt, and would rather have had nothing to do with this wicked deed. "Pilate took water and washed his hands before the multitude, saying, I am innocent of the blood of this just person; see ye to it"; whilst the multitude shouted, "His blood be upon us and our children." You may be sure that they were not easy until they saw Him nailed to that Cross. How often the Pharisees made to lay hold upon Him, but were afraid. At last Satan urges them on to that point, and now they want to know if help will come from God. But when they see Him nailed to the Cross and no appearance of help coming to deliver Him they are no longer afraid. I think that is what is meant when He says, "I am a worm and no man." If a man has had a conflict with some wild beast and has overcome it, but not killed it, he is not free from fear until it is dead, as it might even in its disabled state turn upon him. But if a man treads upon a worm he is not afraid of it turning to hurt him. It seems as if that hour had come to Him. They had their fears of Him before, but now their fears are all gone. "If Thou be the Son of God." They did not in their hearts believe that He was the Son of God. Up to this time they had fears regarding Him, but they were all gone when they saw Him in perfect weakness hanging upon the Cross, and none coming to His help. In the midst of all this is His confidence in God shaken? Does He ask His Father to give some manifestation of His power? When Peter used His sword to defend His Lord, what does he say? "Thinkest thou that I cannot pray to My Father and He shall presently give Me more than twelve legions of angels, but how then shall the Scripture be fulfilled that thus it must be?" "But Thou art He that took Me out of the womb;

Thou didst make Me hope when I was upon My mother's breast." Is that not wonderful? This is "the great mystery of godliness." We cannot understand it, but let us bow in reverence and thankfulness in the presence of this wonderful sight—"God manifest in the flesh." Think of Him as a little babe hanging upon His mother's breasts. It was there that He learned to trust God. A little babe upon its mother's breasts is just a picture of complete dependence. It cannot do a thing for itself, but is wholly dependent on another to give it all it needs. When the Lord Jesus emptied Himself He came right down to be a little babe, hanging upon His mother's breasts; and there He learned to trust God. And when His mother's breasts were exchanged for the Cross, when instead of hanging on that place of sweetest refuge and perfect rest and peace, He hung on that terrible Cross, every fibre of His body wrung with agony, and the whole load of our sins made to meet upon Him, and the face of God hidden from Him, and these awful words uttered by Him—"My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" "Thou didst make Me to hope when upon My mother's breasts," He brings to bear upon present circumstances the lessons that as a babe He had learned when hanging in perfect helplessness upon His mother's breasts. Every thought in His heart and every word He spoke were from One who came to do the will of His Father.

Turn again to Ps. xl. 3, 4—"He hath put a new song into My mouth, even praise unto our God. . . Blessed is that man that maketh the Lord His trust." That is the song of triumph that the Lord will sing in the midst of the Church when He leads their praise. That is just a description of Him; He made the Lord His trust, and He had no regard to the proud in their boastful opposition to Him, because His soul was relying on God. He came to do His will, and He never swerved one step to the right or the left till He could say, "I have glorified Thee on the earth, I have finished the work which Thou gavest Me to

do." And remember that this descended to the minutest particular of His pathway. What do you and I long for as to our pathway down here? Do we desire to be conscious, intelligent fulfillers of God's Word: like the Lord Jesus, hiding the Word in our hearts, and step by step consciously doing the will of God. The apostle Paul, the very moment he came in contact with the Lord Jesus, said, "What will Thou have me to do?" Don't you want that to be the attitude of your heart toward God every day and all day long?

God has a pathway for you and me to walk in. Every step is known to Him, just as He knew every step in the pathway of Christ.

God's Word is perfect, and it is a sufficient guide for us in the pathway marked out for us. If we make mistakes in the pathway it is because we have not learned to use the Word as God meant us to use it. It is not sufficient that we know the will of God; we must have a heart really subject to that will. The Lord Jesus could say, "I delight to do Thy will, O God." It was not merely that He had to do it, but it was His greatest joy to do it. The Scripture says that "the carnal mind is enmity against God, for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God" (Rom. viii. 7, 8.) But through God's infinite mercy we are not in the flesh; but though we are not in the flesh the flesh is still in us. The flesh in the believer is just the same as the flesh in the unregenerate sinner. Let us seek to be subject to the will of God whatever it may cost us. We often ask God to show us His will, but how seldom we ask God to make us willing to do His will.

Turn to 2 Tim. iii. 13-17—"Evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived." What have we got to set over against that? "But continue thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them." God never leaves His children to anything less definite than that. Whatever position of

life we may be in, or whatever difficulty may arise as to any step that God would have us take, the Word of God will assuredly give us clear guidance concerning it. If our path is not plain, if we honestly seek His guidance and grace we shall get it.

"All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine (teaching), for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works." What wonderful resources every child of God has in the perfect Scriptures! The God of wisdom, power, and grace has given us therein His entire will concerning us as to our path down here. He has also given us the Holy Spirit to teach us His will through the Scriptures. We should not look to the Scriptures apart from God, but let us go to God to give us whatsoever we need out of them. The God who has given us His Word is always ready to give light upon it and power to obey it. The Scriptures are profitable for everything, that the man of God may be thoroughly furnished unto all good works, enabling him both to apply them aright and to carry out the will of God revealed in them. Every step of our way should be a fulfilling of the Scriptures. When we gather together on the Lord's-day to show forth the death of our Lord Jesus Christ, it should be to each one of us a fulfilling of the Scriptures, just as when Jesus submitted to be baptised by John, "Thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness."

We hear people say that the Church is in ruins, and that there is no corporate testimony for Christ now; therefore we need not be particular about individual obedience. It is not so. The Lord said, "Where two or three are gathered together unto My name, there am I in the midst." That is enough for corporate testimony—His word holds good for the "two or three." We read in Psa. cxix. 126—"It is time for Thee, Lord, to work; for they have made void Thy law." That is how the Church is in ruins, and corporate testimony

has failed. Does this make Him indifferent about carrying out the will of Jehovah? He says, "Therefore I esteem *all* Thy precepts concerning *all* things to be right." The more failure and confusion abounds, the greater is God's claim upon us as to individual obedience to His Word.

If we have a heart for doing the will of God, how blessed to know that God's testimony concerning us will be what it was concerning His Son—"This is My beloved Son in whom I am well pleased."

In the temptation in the wilderness Satan said, "If Thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread." He had just heard the testimony of His Father—"This is My beloved Son in whom I am well pleased." He walked along the pathway set before Him in the continual consciousness that His Father was well pleased with Him. So long as He walked in perfect obedience to His Father that testimony went with Him, it sustained and comforted Him all the way, and when He came to the Cross it was there still, and never more than at the Cross.

Do you and I want to have that testimony? Turn to 1 John iii. 21—"Beloved, if our heart condemn us not then have we confidence toward God." If we want to have that testimony from God, let us seek grace to walk in the steps that Jesus walked in, and along the pathway of obedience in which He walked; doing this we shall never fail to have His commending voice and approving smile. There is no other pathway in which the soul can be sustained in unbroken peace and joy. That pathway of obedience is as much open to you and me as to the Lord Jesus; and God is well pleased in those who seek through grace to know and do His will.

To Voltaire the saying has been ascribed that a century after his death the Bible would be found only in antiquarian libraries. Last year the British and Foreign Bible Society, the American Bible Society, and the National Bible Society of Scotland, in their combined issues, put into circulation no fewer than 1,355,677 complete Bibles.

IS GOD IN EVERYTHING?

ONE of the greatest obstacles to living a life of peace and rest, is the difficulty of seeing God in everything. People say, "I can easily submit to things which come from God; but I cannot submit to man, and most of my trials and crosses come through human instrumentality." Or they say, "It is all well enough to talk of trusting; but when I commit a matter to God, man is sure to come in and disarrange it all, and while I have no difficulty in trusting God, I do see serious difficulties in the way of trusting men."

This is no imaginary trouble, but is of vital importance, and if it cannot be met, does really make the life of faith an impossible and visionary theory. For nearly everything in life comes to us through human instrumentalities, and most of our trials are the result of somebody's failure, or ignorance, or carelessness, or sin. We know God cannot be the author of these things, and yet unless He overrules the matter, how can we say to Him about it, "Thy will be done"?

Besides, what good is there in trusting our affairs to God, if, after all, man is to be allowed to come in and disarrange them? and how is it possible to live by faith, if human agencies, in whom it would be wrong and foolish to trust, are to have a predominant influence in moulding our lives?

Moreover, things in which we can see God's hand always have a sweetness in them which consoles while it wounds. But the trials inflicted by man are full of bitterness.

What is needed, then, is to see *God in everything*, and to receive everything directly from His hands, with no intervention of second causes.

The question here confronts us at once—But *is* God in everything, and have we any warrant from the Scripture for receiving everything from His hands, without regarding the second causes which may have been instrumental in bringing it about? I answer to this, unhesitatingly, YES! To the children

of God everything comes directly from their Father's hand, no matter who or what may have been the apparent agents. There are no "second causes" for them.

The whole teaching of the scripture asserts and implies this:—"Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing? and one of them shall not fall on the ground without your Father. But the very hairs of your head are all numbered" (Matt. x. 29, 30). We are not to be careful about anything, because our Father cares for us. We are not to avenge ourselves, because our Father has charged Himself with our defence. We are not to fear, for the Lord is on our side. No one can be against us, because God is for us. We shall not want, for the Lord is our Shepherd. When we pass through the rivers they shall not overflow us, and when we walk through the fire we shall not be burned, because He will be with us. He shuts the mouths of lions, that they cannot hurt us. "He delivereth and rescueth: He changeth the times and the seasons: He removeth kings and setteth up kings" (Dan. ii. 21). "A man's heart is in His hand, and, as the rivers of water, He turneth it whithersoever He will." He ruleth over all the kingdoms of the heathen: and in His hand there is power and might, so that none is able to withstand Him. (2 Chron. xx. 6.) "He ruleth the raging of the sea; when the waves thereof arise He stilleth them." He "bringeth the counsel of the heathen to nought; He maketh the devices of the people of none effect" (Ps. xxxiii. 10). "Whatsoever the Lord pleaseth, that does He in heaven, and in earth, in the seas, and all deep places."

"If thou seest the oppression of the poor, and violent perverting of judgment and justice in a province, marvel not at the matter; for He that is higher than the highest regardeth; and there be higher than they" (Eccle. v. 8).

"Lo, these are a part of His ways; but how little a portion is heard of Him? But the thunder of His power who can understand?" (Job. xxvi. 14.) "Hast thou not known, hast thou not heard, that the ever-

lasting God, the LORD, the Creator of the ends of the earth, fainteth not, neither is weary? There is no searching of His understanding" (Is. xl. 28).

And this "God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. Therefore will not we fear, though the earth be removed, and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea; though the waters thereof roar and be troubled; though the mountains shake with the swelling thereof" (Ps. xlvii. 1, 2, 3). "I will say of the LORD He is my refuge and my fortress, my God; in Him will I trust. Surely He shall deliver thee from the snare of the fowler, and from the noisome pestilence. He shall cover thee with His feathers, and under His wings shalt thou trust. His truth shall be thy shield and buckler. Thou shalt not be afraid for the terror by night, nor for the pestilence that walketh in darkness, nor for the arrow that flieth by day, nor for the destruction that wasteth at noonday. A thousand shall fall at thy side, and ten thousand at thy right hand; but it shall not come nigh thee." "Because thou hast made the LORD, which is my refuge, even the Most High thy habitation, there shall no evil befall thee, neither shall any plague come nigh thy dwelling. For He shall give His angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways" (Ps. xci. 2-7, 9-11).

To my own mind, these scriptures, and many others like them, settle for ever the question as to the power of second causes in the life of the children of God. They are all under the control of our Father, and nothing can touch us except with His knowledge, and by His permission. It may be the sin of man that originates the action, and therefore the thing itself cannot be said to be the will of God; but by the time it reaches us, it has become God's will *for us*, and must be accepted as directly from His hands. No man or company of men, no power in earth or heaven, can touch that soul which is abiding in Christ, without first passing through Him, and receiving the seal of His permission. If "God be for

us," it matters not who may be against us ; nothing can disturb or harm us, except He shall see that it is best for us, and shall stand aside to let it pass.

An earthly parent's care for his helpless child is a feeble illustration of this. If the child is in its father's arms, nothing can touch it without that father's consent, unless he is too weak to prevent it. And even if this should be the case, he suffers the harm first in his own person before he allows it to reach his child. And if an earthly parent would thus care for his little helpless one, how much more will our Heavenly Father, whose love is infinitely greater, and whose strength and wisdom can never be baffled? I am afraid there are some, even of God's own children, who scarcely think He is equal to themselves in tenderness, and love, and thoughtful care; and who, in their secret thoughts, charge Him with a neglect and indifference of which they would feel themselves incapable.

The truth really is, that His care is infinitely superior to any possibilities of human care; and that He who counts the very hairs of our heads, and suffers not a sparrow to fall without Him, takes note of the minutest matters that can affect the lives of His children, and regulates them all according to His will, let their origin be what they may.

The instances of this are numberless. Take Joseph. What could have seemed more apparently on the face of it to be the result of sin, and utterly contrary to the will of God, than his being sold into slavery? And yet Joseph in speaking of it said, "As for you, ye thought evil against me; but God meant it unto good" (Gen. i. 20). "Now, therefore, be not grieved, nor angry with yourselves, that ye sold me hither, for God did send me before you to preserve life" (Gen. xlv. 5).

(To be continued.)

It cost many of us very little to *get* the truth we now have, but it will cost us more to *keep* it.

"LET us be clear that we are separate from all that disown Christ, yet let us ever have a heart for all that are Christ's."

LETTERS OF COMMENDATION.

[We have pleasure in reprinting the following from *The Missionary Echo*, of March, 1877. The intervening ten years only lending additional force to the truth expressed.]

IN the early Church, when Christians went from one place to another, they carried with them letters of commendation. To this godly custom the apostle alludes when he says, "Need we, as some others, epistles of commendation to you, or letters of commendation from you?" (2 Cor. iii. 1.) Christians were not received on their own testimony, much less were ministers and teachers. In the present day, when the need is far greater, and the probability of deception increased a hundredfold, Christian brethren move about in their own country, and sometimes set out for fields of labour in other lands, without even thinking it needful to carry with them the necessary credentials of Christian *character*, if as simple Christians they seek fellowship with fellow-believers, or of Christian *fitness* for their work, if they go claiming to be evangelists, pastors, or teachers.

This want of consideration has sometimes resulted in much trouble and sorrow. Unproved men have pressed themselves into places of service, and thereby brought dishonour to the Lord, to the Church, and to themselves. "Lay hands suddenly on no man" is one of God's words to all who desire to know how to behave themselves in the Church of God in these days, when profession is so easy, and a steady, consistent life so difficult.

An impatient one may ask, "Am I to wait till my brethren commend me, when I feel sure God would have me go?" We read of being subject one to another, and we say to such a one, "Wait." If, however, this be not accepted as the will of God by the one anxious to go forth, by all means let him go; and, if left alone with God, it will soon be seen whose judgment was right—his of himself, or his brethren's of him. If the former, God will stand by him; if the latter, God will make it manifest.

We are responsible to God not to help

unproved and unaccredited messengers; and even if accredited, still not to help them when they do not commend themselves to our own conscience before God.

In bursting the trammels of man's systems in these matters, there has sometimes been a breaking loose from God's principles of service, which are fellowship together, and mutual subjection; and this has ended but too often in men doing what was right in their own eyes, while claiming to be guided alone by God. When such claim is real, it stands the consequences; it looks to God alone, and expects nothing from the creature, or from fellow-Christians. But to claim to be directed alone by God, and then to be looking to the Church of God for support, and to feel grieved if that support does not come, is surely a serious mistake—a mistake which has grieved and wearied willing helpers, and has often tended to shut up their sympathy towards humbler and wiser labourers whom God would have had them aid.

Timothy did not start of his own accord uncommended to the work to which he consecrated his life. Paul found him at Lystra, one who had probably been converted on the occasion of his previous visit. He found him "*well reported of by the brethren* that were at Lystra and Iconium"; and only after this double commendation does Paul decide to propose to him to go with him in his missionary service. Timothy did not volunteer to go; and Paul did not propose his going with him, apostle though he was, except as having the testimony of his fellow-believers as to his character and fitness. Well would it be for most if they waited thus to be led into service, and those previous waiting years would not be lost.

We need probably a threefold witness for most service. (1) An inward conviction of God's will; (2) a collateral fellowship with our brethren in it; and (3) the evidence of God's outward providences; though the latter will need spirituality to read aright. But where these three witnesses agree, we shall not be far wrong in following, "assuredly gathering" that God has sent us.

THE GOSPEL OF JOHN.

CHAPTER XIV.—(CONTINUED).

NOTES OF ADDRESSES BY W. LINCOLN.
(Communicated by J. S. H.)

WE have already looked at this chapter according to those three divisions, under which the Spirit has arranged it, by the three inquiries of the disciples, and corresponding with the three characters under which the Lord reveals Himself, as the Way, the Truth, the Life. But there is another way of looking at the chapter, though the first, no doubt, is the main idea; but if we look at the other, which is also designed, and bear the two in mind, it is the way in which our souls are sanctified by the presentation of the fulness of truth in the Word revealed in Christ, and as we drink it in, beholding through the Spirit His glory and His love.

As the chapter treats of these two points, of the fulness of joy which shall be ours, and of the tastes which we get here,—for heaven is not all future,—so, also, we may look at the chapter more in detail, and shall find seven distinct grounds of comfort offered by the Lord whilst He is away.

The Lord commences with, "Let not your heart be troubled"; and here we may tarry for a moment, for these words of His are kind, and evidently He regards them so, for He repeats them in verse 27. And He tells us that the great way to preserve our hearts from being troubled is, always in mind and spirit to associate Him with God. Not to think of a Deity in the abstract, but of a God in Christ. Then we shall find seven precious words from the Lord Jesus as to why we are not to let our hearts sink; and yet not our *hearts*, for He speaks of our *heart* as if He would view us all as one in the presence of these good things. So, too, in Luke xxiv. we read, "Did not our heart burn within us while He talked with us by the way, and while He opened unto us the Scriptures"; as we get to glow with the Spirit our hearts get fused into one.

The **first** great ground of comfort is contained in that well-known promise—"I am

coming again"; and mark that He puts it first, as if in His account it was the grandest. "I will come again, and receive you unto Myself, that where I am there ye may be also."

There is *the* promise, and in Hebrews x. it is distinctly quoted as such. He had said, "I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you I will come again and receive you unto Myself." I would not have led you out to Me, and called you to give up all for Me, if I could not give you an equivalent, and something more. So that we have a home in prospect to which Jesus Himself will see that He brings us; our getting there devolves upon Him, so that we are not to be sad because we are not yet there; there is no uncertainty about it. Observe where He begins, at the very acme of grace—"I will receive you unto Myself." Beyond that He could not go, nor could we wish to get beyond it. The very highest, most absolute, and perfect grace possible. Other things there are which concern us in the future, also connected with grace. There is the Judgment-seat of Christ, where we shall be rewarded according to our work; that must be in grace, because we deserve nothing of God. Again, there will be the dispensing of crowns, and His coming again with us. But He begins at the very top of all, and beyond all these; and that must be because He has promised it. Join with it what we have at the end of chapter xiii.; all of you will desert Me, but do not let your heart sink, I will receive you unto Myself, "that where I am there ye may be also." Evidently there is not the thought of our gratification, but of His own, as we have in chapter xvii.—"Father, I will that they also, whom Thou hast given Me, be with Me where I am."

Then, observe the **second**—Whilst I am away you will be able to come to Me, and to My Father. Jesus as the Way. "Whither I go ye know the way." We know the way now; but we do not know, or very faintly, its ultimate end. We may enjoy the grapes of Eshcol before we get there; but what an end it must be if Jesus Himself is the Way.

Notice that the first two, the second two, and the last three are connected; the sevens of Scripture are sometimes divided into three and four, or into four and three, as here. You know I am with you, but you want to be with Me, and I will come again; still, whilst I am away you can come to My Father, and "I am the Way." And so, whilst I have not received you to Myself, My Father wants you, and I am coming to bring you to Him, and until I bring you to Him bodily, you can in spirit come to Him, as I am "the Way" all through. You cannot get to God except by Christ, the Truth, the Revealer of God.

The **third** and the fourth are in like manner connected. Meanwhile, whilst I am away, anything you have to ask of Me you shall have. But a difficulty, perhaps, arises here. I may ask many things that I do not get. It is "in My name." Whatever you ask you are to represent Me. We are told in James that, "Ye ask and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your lusts." You cannot ask in the name of Jesus for something that would not glorify Him. And then, again, His word about prayer is in that part of the chapter which is about seeing God. Do you see why? Because, as from many scriptures, the Lord always tell us, His children, to be sure that when we would pray, we are consciously under His eye. It is such a precious confirmation of what the Lord would have us always remember, to be sure of all things, even when we pray, and much more when we worship, that we are in very deed before Him; happy under the glance of that tender, loving eye. But observe the way in which the subject is introduced: "Believe Me that I am in the Father, and the Father in Me: or else believe Me for the very work's sake. Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on Me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto My Father. And whatsoever ye shall ask in My name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son." Now, I ask your careful attention to

the conjunction of verses 12 and 13. In verse 12 we who believe are to do certain works; in verse 13 He will do a certain thing. First, observe the works referred to. The Lord parallels them with His own. He had opened the eyes of the blind; He had called the dead to life; what greater works could be done? It is greater to open the eyes of the spiritually blind, to call souls from spiritual death to life and liberty. It is assumed that if you have got anything to pray about, the first thing upon your heart is the salvation of others. Let not your heart be troubled about the salvation of those dear to you; greater works than these shall ye do. When we seek to live out the life of faith, blessing flows out to others through the works we do; or, from verse 13, from what He does. "Because I go unto My Father. And whatsoever ye shall ask in My name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son." The two combined certainly teach us how that the Lord would have us bring our unsaved friends before Him. And it is according to your faith. You are contemplated in verse 12 as ministering the Word to your unsaved friends; in verse 13, as on your knees before the Lord about them. Of course it takes in other cares. We should have none upon our hearts; the care of cares should be—Oh, that such an one might live before Thee. "If ye ask anything in My name, I will do it. If ye love Me, keep My commandments." Now is the time to show our obedience, and delight the love of His heart.

The **fourth** ground of comfort is—Whatever you may ask you will find that I shall ask something far beyond all your petitions. "And I will pray the Father, and He shall give you another Comforter, that He may abide with you for ever." Here attend, please, to another important point. The word for "pray" is always a very different word when used concerning the Lord Jesus to what it is when used concerning us. For example, the word "ask," in verse 14, about our petitions, is a very different word to what the Lord uses in this verse 16. Here

it is rather "request." We are to take the place of reverence, and feel how good He is to let us draw near the throne of grace. And always is this distinction maintained in Scripture; and only one place is there where it appears to be neglected, that is by Martha in chapter xi. But Martha was not up to the truth about Christ, and to His glory. He has but to say, "Father, I will," and it is done. "And I will request the Father, and He shall give you another Comforter." Whatever you ask you shall have; but then there is a great deal you will never think of asking. You will never rise to the greatness and grandeur of His love; I must speak to the Father too. Beyond all the blessing you think you want I will ask a blessing which transcends all. You would never have thought of asking for God to give His Spirit to dwell in you; that was a thought so beyond your finite capacity. But, "I will pray the Father, and He shall give you another Comforter, that He may abide with you for ever." Therefore, the Holy Ghost is with us, even though the tongues, and gifts of healing, and the many things in 1 Cor. xiv. we cannot see. What is the mark of His presence? Not the speaking with tongues, but to be filled with joy and peace in believing. And here we see the heart of Christ. Having purchased us, He cannot let us be alone any longer, but deposes another to be our Advocate in His absence. The friend of the Bridegroom, to give us tastes of the Bridegroom's love.

But ponder that word "another." It goes to show us that there is a relation between the work of Christ and of the Holy Ghost. As if Christ Himself were one, as in 1 John ii., "We have an Advocate (or Comforter) with the Father"; and then here, "I will send you another Comforter" (or Advocate). The word implies, too, that Christ is the first. It properly has a legal meaning, and indicates one who identifies Himself with our cause, and will carry it right through.

Thus these four correspond, two and two. "I am coming again"; what for? Not to

judge creation, not to consign the wicked to the lake of fire; that shall be by-and-by; but that is not your hope. To bring you to My presence, under My eye for ever and ever. Meanwhile you know the way continually to feel at home with My Father; and then ask what you will, and you shall have it, and I will ask still more for you.

The Rejection of God's Sent One.

(JOHN i. 10-12; v. 43.)

HE came into the world,
It knew Him not;
First from His hand forth hurled,
It soon forgot
Who made the solid land, the rolling brine,
And parted shade from shine.

He came unto His own
Possessions fair,
Of Israel's ancient throne
The rightful heir:
His people knew not when their Lord was
But led Him forth to die. [nigh,

He, in His Father's name,
His work began:
Emptied as God, He came,
Humbled as man:
His truth was hateful to the lawless race:
They spurned His proffered grace.

Another shall arise
In name his own:
Brute force, Satanic lies,
Surround his throne:
The nations shall his goddess advent greet,
Their kings shall kiss his feet.

Nathless, the Christ who died
Is risen and lives;
By God's hand glorified
With power, He gives
To such as Him receive, the dignity
Children of God to be!

A. P. M.

AIGLE, SWITZERLAND, 6th June, 1887.

INDIVIDUAL *versus* CORPORATE TESTIMONY.

EXTRACT FROM A LETTER.

YOU ask me if I believe in the "new theory of individual *versus* corporate testimony." No—a thousand times no! Other men may read, "*Forsaking* the assembling of ourselves together," but, when I open my Bible, I begin further back, and read "*Not forsaking*." Others may read, "exhorting (the word is literally 'encouraging') one another, so much the *less* as ye see the day approaching"; but I read, "and by so much the *more*." It makes all the difference how you read the verse, and where you begin it.

Consider 2 Tim. ii. 22; Heb. x. 23-25; Jude 20, 21; Rev. iii. 7-13. Why is it that warnings as to the last days are thus coupled with exhortations as to our collective responsibilities, if not to show us that right on till the end—until the Lord Himself comes to take us where we will be kept from the hour of temptation which is about to come upon the whole habitable world—there will still be those who keep His Word and do not deny His Name—there will still be Philadelphian assemblies, where the obedient disciple will find a scriptural fellowship?

If I wished to flee from my responsibilities as a Christian in the fellowship of the assemblies of God, these responsibilities would follow me to the uttermost ends of the earth. For, wherever I go, I preach the Gospel, expecting to make disciples; wherever I make disciples, I baptise them; and, wherever there are baptised ones, I am bound to teach them all things, whatsoever the Lord has commanded me. Thus, my individual witness-bearing leads me by the shortest possible road to the setting up of a corporate testimony, be its dangers, and failures, and perplexities what they may.

Far be it from me to desire to avoid these difficulties. If, in any place, there are three or four hundred who have been gathered unto the Name of the Lord Jesus

Christ, therein I do rejoice, and will rejoice. If there are only thirty or forty, I cast in my lot with them as their brother and fellow-partaker in their tribulation. If there are only two or three, I desire to be the second or the third.

Yes, I believe in individual testimony. But it is the testimony of an individual like Nehemiah that I believe in. He was found faithful among many faithless ones, and in a day of much feebleness. By his single-hearted faithfulness he beat back the enemy from without seven times, and he kept a whole people (and such a people!) positionally right for God. You are right in saying that the day has come in which individual testimony is specially owned by God. Behold, then, the manner of the testimony that meets with His approval!

"Give heed," dear brother, "to thyself and to the teaching; continue in them; for this doing, both *thyself* thou shalt save *and those that hear thee.*"

Remember, O my God, for good, as many as thus witness for Thee. A. P. M.

THE FIRST EPISTLE TO THE THESSALONIANS.

CHAP. ii. 11-13.

NOTES OF AN ADDRESS BY J. R. C.

WE have seen how tenderly and affectionately the apostle dealt with the Thessalonian saints—"Even as a nursing mother cherisheth her own children"; but in verse 11 he shows how he also fulfilled towards them the responsibility of a father—"Ye know how we exhorted and comforted and charged every one of you, as a father doth his children."

The words, "every one of you," seem to imply more than merely addressing them collectively; it shows rather that he had special dealings with each one of them.

This is the way God would have a Christian parent deal with his children; instructing, comforting, encouraging each one just as they needed. This is bringing them up "in the nurture and admonition

of the Lord." This can only be done as the parent is careful to have the Word of God dwelling in him richly. It is instructing them in the grace of God, the Gospel, and all that is included in God's unspeakable Gift. This is the "nurture," and then in the authority and claims of the Lord upon all, especially upon those who are so instructed. Thus "nurture" is accompanied by "admonition," and the "exhorting and comforting" are accompanied by the "charge" to give heed and obey.

And this is the mind of the apostle—a fitting illustration of the divine care to be exercised by the fathers in the Church of God.

Turn also to 1 Tim. iii.—Here any one desiring to exercise oversight must be one who "ruleth well his own house, having his children in subjection with all gravity; for if a man know not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the Church of God?" (verses 4, 5.)

Thus we are shown that the character of rule and care in the assembly is like that of the family, and not only so, but that the lack of this godly care and rule at home demonstrates the unfitness of a man for such service among the saints.

If a man does not possess these elements of wisdom, gravity, firmness, gentleness, which secure the respect and subjection of the family at home, is it any wonder that God does not honour him in his attempt to guide and rule in the assembly?

Saints who are spiritual, and desire to walk with God, can only acknowledge as overseers or pastors such as they can respect and look up to in the Lord as men of godliness, of uprightness and wisdom. It is no mere question of occupying a front seat and attending an "oversight meeting"—what is needed is *parental hearts*, with the tenderness of the mother and the love and wisdom and firmness of the father combined.

This, God only can bestow. Let us individually and collectively make it our prayer to God that He would raise up among us, and continue to us, this much-

needed and sadly lacking gift. Young ones coming into our midst ought to feel that they have come where godly, fatherly eyes are upon them for their good, where watchfulness and diligent care are exercised. Rule in the church is in order that the revealed will of God may be carried out.

As the king of Israel was to write out a copy of the law and to have it by him and to read in it all the days of his life (Deut. xvii.) so that his rule might be simply the administering of the law of the Lord, so in the assembly, those who rule ought to see diligently that all under their care are guided aright in the will of God in all things.

Verse 12—"That ye would walk worthy of God, who hath called you unto His kingdom and glory." There is a similar exhortation in Eph. iv. 1, 2—"That ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called, with all lowliness and meekness." In the previous chapter it is shown how high and glorious that "calling" is, then follows the exhortation to walk worthy of it. The first characteristic in worthy walk is "meekness and lowliness," for these virtues shine out most conspicuously in the character of the Son of God. He said of Himself, "I am meek and lowly of heart." How different from the heart of man, so proud and insubject to the will of God!

But, what is it to "walk worthy of God"? The walk of Jesus is the answer. His whole life was "worthy of God." His thoughts, feelings, desires, motives, were entirely and always worthy of God. In all things He was the very reflection of God's glory, therefore He could say, "He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father." That means that He exhibited the character of God. He did not at any time misrepresent God. His whole life from first to last was "worthy of God."

And there is such a thing as our walk also being worthy of God; our behaviour being so holy and blameless, so loving and lowly, so gentle and yet so separate from evil, so free from pride and self-seeking, that it is worthy of the Lord, yea, worthy of the very character of God.

Some may say "that this is a very high standard." Yes, it is; but God never sets before us any lower standard than the perfection of His own character. May God stamp those words on our hearts, that henceforth we may seek by His grace to walk worthy of our high and holy calling; worthy of the God who hath called us.

"Who hath called you *unto* His glory." We are in the kingdom of God now. He "hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of His dear Son" (Col. i. 13).

But although now in the family of God and in the kingdom of His Son, we are yet waiting for "the manifestation of the sons of God" (Rom. viii. 19), and also for the manifestation in glory of the kingdom of God.

The characteristics of God's kingdom are "righteousness, and peace, and joy, in the Holy Spirit." Just now righteousness suffers; things seem to be turned upside-down. Those who are called unto His kingdom and glory are in the meanwhile called to share in the sufferings and reproach of the rejected King. But when Christ reigns we shall reign with Him. "When Christ shall be manifested, then shall we also with Him be manifested in glory" (Col. iii. 4). That is what we are waiting for; not this world's glory, but the glory of that coming kingdom.

As David, when he came to possess the kingdom, honoured chiefly those men who had been true to him whilst he was the rejected one; who had shared his sufferings while hunted and persecuted by Saul; so the Lord Jesus, when He takes possession of His kingdom and comes forth to reign, will honour those who have suffered in fellowship with Him here. May this thought stimulate us to loyal-hearted deeds of valour for Him in this time, during which faithfulness to Him is costly. Verse 13—"For this cause also thank we God without ceasing, because when ye received the Word of God which ye heard of us, ye received it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth the Word of God, which

effectually worketh also in you that believe." How beautifully Paul stands aside here! He was just the instrument through which they had heard the Word of God. Like John the Baptist, who says of himself, "I am the Voice of One crying in the wilderness" (John i. 23). There is a great difference between the *Word* and the *Voice*. Long after the *Voice* has died away, the *Word* which was uttered remains with him who heard it. John was the Voice, Jesus the Word. Thus the apostle seems to say to the Thessalonians—"It was the Word of God which you received, although it was from our feeble voice you heard it." Faith lays hold of the Word of the living God. Theologians sometimes speak of various kinds of faith. Scripture does not. The difference between true and false faith is not in the act of believing, but in the testimony that is believed. Is it the Word of God? or is it the word of man? That is true divine faith which believes, or lays hold of, divine testimony, the Word of the living God, who "cannot lie."

The Thessalonians having received the Word of God, we read that it "effectually wrought" in them. This is illustrated by natural things. If you cast a living seed into the ground it "effectually works"; soon you see the green blade appearing. It is a living seed, and so it produces results.

So also with food. "Man shall not live by bread only, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God shall man live." If you do not take bread to sustain your body, soon you become weak and unable for work, but good food at suitable intervals "effectually works," supplying new life and vigour. If you take what is not bread, you will not be nourished. If you cast into the ground that which is not seed, nothing will spring up.

Just so it was with these Thessalonians. The Word of God was preached; they heard and believed, and the Word effectually wrought within them.

We have a right to expect results from the belief of the Word of God. If there

are no results manifest in the life, it is proof that the Word has not really been received by faith into the heart.

Scripture is very accurate. It does not say that it effectually works in those who *have believed*, but in those *that believe*. The Word of God will cease to work in us if we fail to believe in God. It is only in proportion as you and I are *feeding on the Word and living by faith* that the Word can effectually work in us.

You may be intelligent in the Scriptures, and able to preach and teach, and yet be unblest. If not living in fellowship with God, if not trusting in Him day by day, then the Word read does not profit, not being "mixed with faith"—the sense of the presence and favour of God is lost, and barrenness is the result.

If, on the other hand, we are day by day feeding by faith upon the living Word, thirsting and drinking in its reviving streams, then there will be spiritual growth, and it will be manifest to all that the Grace of God is not being received in vain.

(To be continued.)

ICELAND.

FAR north, nearer to the North Pole than the Faroe Isles by as much as they themselves are beyond Scotland, lies the large, one might almost say, continent of Iceland, for in extent it is larger than our own Scotland. Faroe has but 11,000 of a population; it has nearly 70,000.

In the pamphlet printed in 1884 on the Faroe Isles, Brother William Sloan writes saying that it was much laid on his mind to visit Iceland in the summer, and asking prayer that a labourer might be raised up to carry the Gospel testimony, as also about himself extending his labours thitherward. His interest in the thousands of fishermen that resort there annually, and the invasion of Mormon preachers with their pernicious doctrines, wrought this cry in his heart. Since then he has carried his visit into effect, and the appended extracts of letters which have lately been

received tell of his present sojourn in Iceland, and how the Lord has heard, and, in a measure answered, prayer. This, while calling for thankfulness, may well cause us to continue steadfastly in prayer on behalf of our brethren and their work.

T. M'L.

THORSHAVN, FAROE ISLANDS,
6th May, 1887.

My Dear Brother in Christ,

I had lately an interesting letter from Iceland. It was from an Icelandic brother called Laurits Johannesen. He is a sailor, and was converted in New York, and after a time, knowing the great spiritual need of his countrymen, he returned and spent a deal of his earnings in preaching the Gospel, but his means failing, he went to sea again, and last year he returned as a missionary from a Seaman's Friend Society in New York. He was in the end of last year in Reikjavik, and hired the Lutheran meeting-place on Lord's-day evenings for a number of times at eight kroner the night, but at last it was closed to him on account of opposition. He then had meetings in private houses, but they were too small, and at last when he was to have a meeting at a brother's house so many were pushing to get in that a tumult was made, and the police had to come and disperse the people. From this we can believe that he is an earnest man, although not clear as to much separation truth as yet. He says that several have professed conversion. I have written him explaining my position here, and pointing him to the Word for his guidance.—I remain, &c.,

WM. SLOAN.

REIKJAVIK, ICELAND, 9th June, 1887.

My Dear Brother in Christ,—

You will be glad to hear that I got here on the 7th. We had a good passage. On arriving I made inquiries and found out a Norwegian brother who lives here, and he introduced me to Laurits Johannesen. They were glad to see me, and, after making inquiries, they found a suitable lodging for me. I have taken a hall for a meeting on Lord's-day evening, and then we think to go out into the country for meetings, and he can interpret for me.—I remain, &c.,

WM. SLOAN.

REIKJAVIK, ICELAND, 28th June, 1887.

Psa. xxv. 4-7, prayer; Psa. xxv. 8-14, answer;
Psa. xxxvii. 3, 4.

My Dear Brother in Christ,

I think that since coming here I have seen more clearly that this is the Lord's leading at present. I will now let you know how I have been getting on. Laurits Johannesen had of late been speaking in the open air on Lord's-day evenings. He was thinking of leaving here,

only waiting on some papers he was getting printed. I went with Brother Halderson to see about hiring a hall, and the Lord opened up the way for us. I got one used by the Good Templars (which was also used as a theatre) for five kroner per night, that is about 5s. 6d., and I took it at the first for four nights, having the liberty to choose my own nights. So for the last three Lord's-days we have had meetings in the evening, and a good attendance, so the few who have been saved lately here are cheered, and there appears some interest to hear the Word. I have purposed a meeting for to-night, and will be glad to see how the people come out on a week-night, but this season is not so suitable for meetings on week-days, as now is the busy season for the poor people to make a living. I got five hundred hymn leaflets in Danish printed here. They cost 10s., and about one hundred and eighty were given in the meeting on Lord's-day evening; this will give you an idea of the numbers present. Brother Johannesen and I have scattered tracts, &c., among the sailors. He went out a short tour on horseback lately to the country, and got some good opportunities of preaching the Word. He asked a priest if he would allow him to preach in a church, and so he preached the Gospel after the priest had done. Also got the liberty of a church at another place, and one night he had to be out all night, as he could not reach a house till it was too late. He also hired a school-house for two kroner a-night, and had some meetings at another place, so he came back encouraged. Brother Halderson and I were out at another village, two to three hours' walk from here, called Havnefjord, and the first day tracts were scattered, and I inquired about a hall, and got the Good Templar Hall for four kroner a-night, so went out and had a meeting there the following week and had a good attendance. We walked both there and back, and the road the last time was not good owing to rain. We went over a part all covered with lava. It had a very rugged appearance, something like burned char. There are hot springs near here, where people go to wash clothes at, nearly like boiling water, I understand (I have not visited them yet). I am getting some lessons in Icelandic from a young man who attends the Latin School here, and have made some little progress. I find it is a drawback that I must speak in Danish, but I trust this difficulty will soon be overcome. Last Lord's-day I read some in Icelandic from the Word in the meeting, and we sung in Icelandic. Through the Lord's goodness I see my way to remain for five weeks or so more. There is a wide field here for effort if the Lord sees fit to provide the means; a deep, spiritual darkness seems to brood over the people, but a few of late have been saved, and confessed that they were so. A servant girl called on me on Lord's-day evening and said she was converted. She appeared happy, and decided for the Lord, and it has been through Brother Johannesen's

labours. On leaving she wished us to pray, and she herself prayed in a few earnest words. Another one this morning, who lives out from the town, brought me in a little milk as a present; she had also been lately saved. What is needed in Reikjavik is a suitable place for meetings under one's own control, hired or otherwise. Brother Halderson told of a large wooden house owned by a Norway company that they wish to sell. It is used for keeping wood. It would likely be had for £100, but would require fitting up for a hall, &c.; but, in the meantime, we must leave this matter of a place with the Lord, and see first if He is pleased to add some more spiritual stones to His Spiritual House here.—I remain, &c., WM. SLOAN.

Questions and Answers.

QUESTION 267.—Does the word “wages” in 2nd Cor. xi. 8 imply that between the apostle and “other churches” there was an understanding or agreement as to his temporal support?

We might as well infer that he literally “robbed” the other “churches,” as that he literally took from them stipulated “wages.” The language is altogether hyperbolic, and designed to shame the Corinthians, who neither recognised in him the *labourer* that might well have claimed “wages,” nor their responsibility to share with other churches the care for his temporal needs: so that an undue burden, here hyperbolically termed “robbery,” was thrown upon the Macedonian churches, Thessalonica, Philippi, &c.

The Lord could view with approval in His Father's house the casting into the treasury of the gifts of rich and poor; but the mercantile element, buying and selling, bargaining and making gain, He reprobated in the strongest manner.

So in the House of God now. As concerning “giving and receiving” the apostle can write approvingly (see Phil. iv.); but never have we a hint in the New Testament of a *contract* of any description being entered into between any servant of the Lord and any of the churches. The contract with man necessarily impairs the liberty of the servant of Christ.

“The labourer is worthy of his hire”; but, as one has said, “Whoever hires him pays him.” If labourers are hired by men, let them look to men for their hire. If “hired” by the Lord for His work, then let faith look to Him alone, and He is ever faithful to those who trust in Him.

QUESTION 268.—Is it right for young believers to band themselves together and go away on a Saturday afternoon as a “pic-nic party”—the sisters to play at “skipping-ropes,” and the brothers at “rounders,” &c.?

The attractions of the country—the bright surroundings of nature with its refreshing green and its invigorating air—ought not to be undervalued. To

escape from the town, with its smoke, its din, its weary round of labour, for a few hours of relaxation and enjoyment of what God has made so beautiful and gratifying to every sense, is surely desirable for all sorts and conditions of men. And if this should involve the necessity of a rustic meal after the picnic fashion, we do not see why that also should not be done to the glory of God.

But at the same time there are dangers that demand the most solemn and serious consideration associated with all this line of things. We greatly fear that such parties are rarely arranged with any reference to the glory of God. Composed largely, if not entirely, of young unmarried men and women, there is an open door for Satan to come in, at first in the way of levity, foolish talking, and jesting, which are not convenient, and this, if persisted in, too often leads on to familiarity and intimacy that is imprudent and godless, and alas,—sad it is, yet awfully true,—a course that in all simplicity entered upon, ends too often in sin, and shame, and shipwreck.

Sometimes a gloss of religion is cast over the proceedings with a large admixture of hymn-singing. But hymn-singing may be for self-pleasing as much as song-singing, and it would be well to test the motive lest it be only a device to hide from a reproaching conscience the real nature of the entertainment.

Israel's idolatry is described in the New Testament, not as bowing down to idols, but in the simple words, “The people sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to play.” Self-pleasing without God is the equivalent of idolatry.

“Skipping-ropes” and “rounders” are excellent for children; but it is written, “When I became a man I put away childish things.” “Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour” (1 Pet. v. 8). “Young men, exhort to be sober-minded” (Titus ii. 6).

Happy are they who give the Lord the *first* place in all their arrangements. “Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God” (1 Cor. x. 31). “See that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise, redeeming the time, because the days are evil” (Eph. v. 15, 16). “And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God, and the Father by Him” (Col. iii. 17).

The Saturday afternoon and evening may be so spent as to be a preparation for the worship and service of the Lord's-day. Is it not one of Satan's devices to induce the children of God to spend it so carnally that its chill shadow still lingers over the soul during the hours of the sacred resurrection morn? Most of us are little aware of the awful extent to which Satan's ingenuity has gone in placing impediments in the way of holy, happy, spiritual worship and ministry in the Lord's-day gathering of the disciples. Well he knows the power of a frivolous Saturday evening.

THE DIVINITY OF CHRIST.

BY THE EDITOR.

I.

MANY of us have drunk in orthodox teaching from our infancy. We learned right doctrine from our parents, or perhaps we were privileged to listen to a ministry which, as to the great fundamental doctrines of the Christian faith, was orthodox. It may never have occurred to us to question these doctrines, and when we fall in with some one who has not been so taught, and who has, it may be, imbibed error, having been corrupted by rationalism or scepticism, we are astonished at our weakness and helplessness, and how little hold we have of the truth, as they raise questions upon points that it never entered into our minds to doubt.

It is when thus confronted with difficulties that we cannot answer, perhaps not even satisfactorily to our own minds, still less to convince the opposers, that we feel the need of a closer searching into and dealing with the Word of God.

I believe that God permits evil doctrines as well as evil practices to crop up among His people, just in order to send the roots of our faith deeper down into His own Word.

One of these doctrines that it perhaps never occurred to us to question, is the Divinity of our Lord Jesus Christ, and, if tested, we might be astonished to find how little we know of those scriptures in which this doctrine is taught, and how little we know of the breadth of the foundation upon which it rests. I believe the enemy would have far less power to draw us aside if we had a closer acquaintance with the Word of God. Sometimes there is a tendency among us to cry down knowledge, as if knowledge in itself were an evil thing. I am persuaded our lack is that we think we know much, when in reality we know very little, and are comparatively ignorant of the mind and teaching of our God.

I propose to deal with this subject in the following order:—

First, to examine scriptures which refer to the pre-existence of Christ.

Secondly, scriptures which speak of Christ as the Creator.

Thirdly, scriptures in which are ascribed to Him Divine honour.

And last, scriptures which teach the doctrine of what is called the Trinity, a word not found in Scripture, though the doctrine it is intended to express is abundantly taught.

First, then, let us look at a few scriptures which show that the Lord Jesus Christ existed before He was born into this world.

Turn to Micah v. 2—"Whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting." When Herod inquired of the chief priests where Christ should be born, they answered, "in Bethlehem," and quoted this scripture, which to them was conclusive. To Israel it was perfectly clear that when the Messiah came He would not only be of the lineage of David, and born of a virgin, and at Bethlehem, but also one concerning whom it could be said in a sense in which it could apply to no other that "His goings forth had been from of old," "from the days of eternity" (see margin).

In confirmation of this, turn to John i.—"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God"; then of this same person it is said, "And the Word was made" (or rather, "became," as in R.V.) "flesh, and dwelt among us."

The correction of the Revised Version is important here, as well as in other passages where the same word occurs. The words, "was made," imply creation, but not so the original word, "became."

The first two verses of this chapter, taken along with the fourteenth verse, show us that the very one who became flesh—Jesus—in whom John beheld the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth—was "in the beginning with God." And more than that, not only that He was a distinct person, as implied in the words twice repeated, "with God," but also that He "WAS GOD."

Now this is a mystery beyond our comprehension. And here it is that so many get astray. They are not willing to bow their reason to the acceptance of that which is above reason; *i.e.*, above and beyond our limited power of comprehension. Never let us forget while dealing with this solemn subject, the Person of the Son of God, that "No one knoweth the Son, but the Father." The doctrine of the incarnation of the Son of God is a mystery communicated to us from the Father. Fully to know and understand it is not given to us. It becomes us, like very little children, like those who are dealing with things that are far above them, reverently to bow to the Word of God, and accept it in simplicity, even though we do not understand it. The time will come when we shall understand it. When we are "with the Lord" He will make known to us those deep, mysterious things which we cannot now comprehend. Our wisdom, meantime, is to accept and believe fully what God has communicated to us in His Word. Like new-born babes, drinking in "the sincere (unadulterated) milk of the Word, that we may grow thereby."

Proud reason comes in and says, "I won't believe what I can't understand." But my little child believes all I say, whether it understands it or not. The child first *believes*, because father says it, and then tries to understand. This, I believe, is the meaning of that word, "Except ye be converted, and become as little children," &c. (Matt. xviii. 3). The pride of human reason cannot search the deep things of God. But at the feet of Jesus, and by the teaching of His Spirit, God will make plain to a childlike heart things that nature cannot attain to.

Turn now to a verse in John xvii.—"And now, O Father, glorify Thou Me with the glory which I had with Thee before the world was" (verse 5). Anyone who denies the eternal existence of the Lord Jesus must necessarily also deny the inspiration of such a scripture as this. What mere man could speak of his pre-existence as the Lord Jesus here speaks? Clearly this verse, if there was not another in the Bible, tells us

that He, who as a man appeared to suffer and to die, is the very One spoken of in the first chapter, who "in the beginning (and that refers to a period before the world was) was with God and was God."

Now, turn and read chap. viii. 56-59—"Before Abraham was I am." That is a most remarkable expression. It is just putting into short and simple form the very thought that is conveyed in the name of Jehovah in the Old Testament. "I am"—the Ever-existent One. The One who was, and is, and is to come. No past, present, or future with Him, but all an eternal *present*. "Before Abraham was (or came to be) I am." No mere man could use such language as this. Hence the Jews, who believed not that He was the Christ, assumed that He was speaking blasphemy, and took up stones to cast at Him.

Look now at another scripture, Rev. xxii. 16—"I am the Root and the Offspring of David." This corresponds with what we find in Ps. cx.—"The Lord said unto my Lord" or, literally, "Jehovah said unto my Lord."

In Matt. xxii. 42-45, the Lord Jesus applies this to Himself, and puts the Jews between the horns of a dilemma by asking the question, "If David call Him Lord, how is He then his Son?" This silenced them. It showed that Messiah was to be a person who would stand in two mysteriously distinct relationships to David—*viz.*, his SON and his LORD.

The same is seen in this verse in Rev. xxii. He is David's "offspring," but He is also "the Root of David," the One from whom David sprang, as well as the One that sprang from David. This is only to be understood by what Scripture everywhere teaches as to the Godhead and Manhood of the Lord Jesus. As God, He is "the Root of David," and David's "Lord." As to His Manhood, He is "the Son of David," David's "offspring."

All these passages go to prove indisputably the pre-existence of Christ—that He existed before He was born into this world, before creation—yea, "in the beginning with God."

(To be continued.)

THE FIRST EPISTLE TO THE THESSALONIANS.

CHAP. ii. 14, &c.

NOTES OF AN ADDRESS BY J. R. C.

FOR ye, brethren, became followers of the churches of God which in Judea are in Christ Jesus: for ye also have suffered like things of your own countrymen, even as they have of the Jews." We see in this the result and evidence of the effectual working in them of the Word of God.

These churches in Judea, here referred to, were composed of converts from the Jewish religion who had before their conversion been familiar with the Old Testament Scriptures, but were now owning Christ Jesus as Lord.

Here at Thessalonica was a company composed of those who before their conversion had no knowledge of the Scriptures, but worshipped, in their ignorance, heathen deities, whose service involved all kinds of abominable practices.

To both alike had come the Gospel of the grace of God. Whether it be the Jews, with all their outward morality and knowledge of the Scriptures, or the Gentiles, in all their blindness, ignorance, and superstition, they received the same Word and the same Spirit, they owned the authority of the same Lord, and the churches grew up according to the same divine pattern.

But, on the other hand, they received the very same treatment from the world. Gentile believers received from Gentiles in the flesh the very same persecutions that Jewish believers had received from the Jews. In either case it was the manifestation of the flesh—the enmity that is the essence of the carnal mind. Jews and Gentiles were one in their rejection of Christ, and still they are one in their hatred of those who have the Spirit of Christ. "They that are in the flesh cannot please God."

Let us ask ourselves, "How is it with us?" Is the Word of God so working in us that

the world hates and persecutes us? Do you find that the world likes your company and that you can get on happily with them? Remember what the Scripture says, "The friendship of the world is enmity with God; whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God" (James iv. 4).

Verses 15, 16, "Who both killed the Lord Jesus and their own prophets," &c. What a description of those who were the chosen people of Jehovah! We see in Matt. xxiii. 13-39, how the Lord Himself speaks of this same people. This chapter contains the Lord's last address to the nation of Israel. Eight times over He repeats, "Woe unto you, scribes and pharisees." Then He tells them that they are filling up the measure of their fathers' iniquity, and the crowning act of all was the putting to death of the Son of God.

We know the history of the Jew. They said, "His blood be upon us and upon our children." God has against them still that terrible sin, the murder of His own Son; His judgment still lies upon them as a nation for this awful deed.

If you ask a Jew why it is that the nation is thus scattered and their land desolate, he cannot tell. For their long-continued and abominable idolatries Jehovah sent them into captivity in Babylon for 70 years. But now they have been 18 centuries exiled from their land, and Jehovah seems deaf to their mournings and their prayers. What, then, is the awful national sin that God so terribly visits upon them? WE can answer: every converted Jew knows what the answer is the moment his eyes are opened to see Jesus as Messiah and Lord. But the Jew in the blindness of his heart can give no answer.

But "He that scattered Israel shall gather him." God is keeping the Jewish people a distinct nation from all others, and keeping the land for them, and in His own time, when His wise purposes are fulfilled, He will restore them again, both nationally and spiritually, in accordance with all His promises to Abraham and by all His prophets.

Terrible indeed is the indictment brought in this passage against the people of Israel; but let us turn to another Scripture in connection with the same subject—Matt. xii. 43-45. This is a remarkable parable, containing as it does an awfully solemn prophecy from the lips of our Lord concerning the future of the nation.

There was no such thing apparently as the sin of idolatry in Israel during the time of our Lord's sojourn upon earth. That "unclean spirit" which once had possessed the whole nation seemed to have been quite driven out, and from the time of the Babylonish captivity there had been no return to it. They were at the time referred to a religious, orthodox, outwardly moral people, professing great zeal for Jehovah's law, and ordinances, but nevertheless so blind, so hardened, that they knew not their own Messiah when He came unto them, but put Him to death. And in those who still rejected the truth and testimony of the Holy Spirit to the risen and ascended Christ the same spirit of enmity found expression in the persecution of the Church and of the Lord's servants. Hence this terrible indictment.

Meantime the nation is, so to speak, wandering about in dry places, seeking rest and finding none. The time is drawing nigh when they will return to their land, and when this takes place many will doubtless be saying, "Now is the beginning of Israel's blessing, and of the world through them."

Back to their land and city and temple they will go. It will be, as it were, a fresh start where all is "empty, swept, and garnished," but still in blindness and unbelief, the veil still upon their hearts, the sin of the murder of the Son of God unacknowledged and unrepented of.

The very people who rejected Christ will then accept the anti-christ. Again will the guilty nation be possessed even with the demon of idolatry, and with a sevenfold energy of evil will be deluded into the worship of "the beast and his image," "the abomination that maketh desolate."

Thus will they go from bad to worse until they have filled up the cup of their iniquity, and when the measure of their guilt is full, then will the appointed wrath come upon them to the uttermost.

But even then God will have a remnant sealed and preserved "according to the election of grace." That nation, howsoever it may be judged, will never be exterminated. A people with contrite hearts, owning their sin of the rejection of Christ, and refusing to bow to Satan's demands, will be found, persecuted but preserved, waiting deliverance at the hand of Him whom they had pierced and for whom they mourn.

Even now, in this present dispensation, is there a remnant according to the election of grace. The Church, although viewed as mainly in connection with the Gentiles, is not wholly composed of Gentiles. Jews as well as Gentiles have all down the age been converted, and by one Spirit both have been baptized into one body—united to one Head—one in the risen Son of God. Thus, although nationally "cast away," individually many have been saved and incorporated with the Church of God, where there is neither Jew nor Gentile.

It is remarkable that the epistles of Paul are addressed to churches among the Gentiles, not to churches in Judea. The Epistle to the Hebrews has its own distinctive character, but is not properly addressed to "a church." Rome, Corinth, Galatia, Ephesus, Philippi, Thessalonica, were all Gentile. Seven churches or groups of churches being thus addressed. John also, with his back so to speak upon Judea, addresses seven churches in Asia. But it must always be borne in mind that although Gentile in locality each of these churches was composed of those who were by nature Israelites as well as of Gentiles, so that sovereign grace still had and continues to have respect to that favoured but guilty people.

Observe these words, "Forbidding us to speak to the Gentiles that they might be saved." Nothing seems to be more heinous in the sight of God than to stand in the

way of the outflowing of His grace. The only time we read of the Lord Jesus being angry is when, with hardened unbelieving hearts, they watched Him whether He would heal on the Sabbath day in order that they might accuse Him.

Did they dare to hinder the outgoing of His compassion and healing power toward this poor man with the withered hand? Then "He looked round about upon them with anger," and wrought the miracle of grace before their eyes. All their opposition and bitter enmity to Himself brought out but His patience and His tears; but when they stand in the way of the outgoing of His grace, the holy indignation of His heart rises up and flashes forth in looks of anger.

Yes, God loves the sinner, and Jesus came to declare the love of God. "As I live, saith the Lord, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked." It is His desire that all should turn unto Him and live. Hence the strong denunciation of those who would hinder the Gospel from going forth to the Gentiles.

Is there not a solemn lesson for us here? If God thus speaks of hindering the Gospel testimony as Israel's crowning sin, what of those, professing to believe that Gospel, whose inconsistent lives stand as a hindrance to its reception? Let us ask ourselves, are we in fellowship with the heart of God? Are we in sympathy with His compassion for a perishing world? Or, are we so full of self and the world that we have neither time nor heart for seeking to rescue sinners who are rushing on to an undone eternity?

YOUR HOLY CALLING.

THE idea of the church in heaven — of men walking *here*, and yet having their proper standing and centre of union *above*, is too pure, too elevated, too heavenly, to be extensively held among men Those who will maintain Paul's gospel will find themselves, like him, deserted and despised amid the splendid pomp and glitter of the world. The clashing of ecclesiastical systems, the jarring of sects, and the din of religious controversy, will seek to drown the voices of those who would speak of the heavenly calling and the rapture of the Church.

IS GOD IN EVERYTHING?

TO the eye of sense it was surely Joseph's wicked brethren who had sent him into Egypt, and yet Joseph, looking at it with the eye of faith, could say, "God sent me." It had been undoubtedly a grievous sin in his brethren, but by the time it had reached Joseph, it had become God's will for him, and was in truth, though at first it did not look so, the greatest blessing of his whole life. And thus we see how the Lord can make even the wrath of man to praise Him (Ps. lxxvi. 10), and how all things, even the sins of others, shall work together for good to them that love Him (Rom. viii. 28).

I learned this lesson practically and experimentally from a Christian lady long years before I knew the scriptural truth concerning it. She said she had great difficulty in living a life of faith on account of the second causes that seemed to her to control nearly everything that concerned her. Her perplexity became so great that at last she began to ask God to teach her the truth about it, whether He really was in everything or not. After praying this for a few days, she had what she described as a vision. She thought she was in a perfectly dark place, and that there advanced towards her from a distance a body of light, which gradually surrounded and enveloped her and everything around her. As it approached, a voice seemed to say, "This is the Presence of God—this is the Presence of God." While surrounded with this Presence, all the great and awful things in life seemed to pass before her—fighting armies, wicked men, raging beasts, storms and pestilences, sin and suffering of every kind. She shrank back at first in terror, but she soon saw that the Presence of God so surrounded and enveloped each one of these, that not a lion could reach out its paw, nor a bullet fly through the air, except as His Presence moved out of the way to permit it. And she saw that, let there be ever so thin a sheet, as it were, of this glorious Presence between herself and the

most terrible violence, not a hair of her head could be ruffled, nor anything touch her, unless the Presence divided to let the evil through. Then all the small and annoying things of life passed before her, and equally she saw that these also were so enveloped in this Presence of God, that not a cross look, nor a harsh word, nor petty trial of any kind, could reach her, unless His Presence moved out of the way to let it.

Her difficulty vanished. Her question was answered for ever. God was in everything; and to her henceforth there were no second causes. She saw that her life came to her day by day and hour by hour directly from His hand, let the agencies which should seem to control it be what they might. And never again had she found any difficulty in an abiding consent to His will, and an unwavering trust in His care.

If we look at the seen things, we shall not be able to understand this. But the children of God are called to look "not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal" (2 Cor. iv. 18). Could we but see with our bodily eyes His unseen forces surrounding us on every side, we would walk through this world in an impregnable fortress, which nothing could ever overthrow or penetrate, for "the angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear Him, and delivereth them" (Ps. xxxiv. 7).

We have a striking illustration of this in the history of Elisha. The King of Syria was warring against Israel, but his evil designs were continually frustrated by the prophet, and at last he sent his army to the prophets own city for the express purpose of taking him captive. We read, "He sent thither horses, and chariots, and a great host: and they came by night, and compassed the city about." This was the seen thing. And the servant of the prophet, whose eyes had not yet been opened to see the unseen things, was alarmed. And we read, "And when the servant of the man of God was risen early, and gone forth, behold

an host encompassed the city, both with horses and chariots. And his servant said unto him, Alas, my master! how shall we do?" But his master could see the unseen things, and he replied, "Fear not; for they that be with us are more than they that be with them." And then he prayed, saying, "Lord, I pray Thee, open his eyes that he may see. And the Lord opened the eyes of the young man; and he saw: and, behold, the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire round about Elisha" (2 Kings vi. 14-17).

The Presence of God is the fortress of His people. Nothing can withstand it. At His Presence the wicked perish; the earth trembles; the hills melt like wax; the cities are broken down; "the heavens also dropped, and Sinai itself was moved at the Presence of God." And in the secret of this Presence He has promised to hide His people from the pride of man, and from the strife of tongues, "My Presence shall go with thee," He says, "and I will give thee rest" (Ex. xxxiii. 14).

I wish it were only possible to make every Christian see this truth as plainly as I see it. For I am convinced that this and being "careful for nothing: but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus" (Phil. iv. 6, 7), is the clue to a restful life. Nothing else will take all the risks and "supposes" out of a Christian's life, and enable him to say, "Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life." Abiding in the light of God's Presence we run no risks. And such a soul can triumphantly say—

"I know not what it is to doubt,
My heart is always gay;
I run no risks, for come what will,
God always has His way."

I once heard of a poor coloured woman, who earned a precarious living by daily labour, but who was a joyous, triumphant Christian. "Ah, Nancy," said a gloomy

Christian lady to her one day, who almost disapproved of her constant cheerfulness, and yet envied it; "Ah, Nancy, it is all well enough to be happy now; but I should think the thoughts of your future would sober you. Only suppose for instance, you should have a spell of sickness, and be unable to work; or suppose your present employers should move away, and no one else should give you anything to do; or suppose—" "Stop!" cried Nancy; "I never suppose. De Lord is my Shepherd, and I know I shall not want. And, honey," she added to her gloomy friend, "it's all dem *supposes* as is makin' you so mis'able. You'd better give dem all up, and just trust de Lord."

There is one text that will take all the "supposes" out of a believer's life, if only it is received and acted on in child-like faith: it is Heb. xiii. 5, 6—"Be content, therefore, with such things as ye have; for He hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee. So that we may boldly say, THE LORD IS MY HELPER, AND I WILL NOT FEAR WHAT MAN SHALL DO UNTO ME." What if dangers of all sorts shall threaten you from every side, and the malice, or foolishness, or ignorance of men shall combine to do you harm? You may face every possible contingency with triumphant words, the "Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me." If the Lord is your helper, how *can* you fear what man may do unto you? There is no man in this world, nor company of men, that can touch you, unless your God in whom you trust shall please to let them. "He will not suffer thy foot to be moved: He that keepeth thee will not slumber . . . The Lord shall preserve thee from all evil: He shall preserve thy soul. The Lord shall preserve thy going out, and thy coming in, from this time forth, and even for evermore" (Ps. cxxi. 3, 7, 8).

Nothing else will completely put an end to all murmuring or rebelling thoughts. Christians often feel at liberty to murmur against man, when they would not dare to murmur against God. But this way of

receiving things would make it impossible ever to murmur. If our Father permits a trial to come, it must be because that trial is the very best thing that could happen to us, and we must accept it with thanks from His hand. The trial itself may be hard to flesh and blood, and I do not mean that we can like or enjoy the suffering of it. But we can and must love the will of God *in* the trial, for His will is always sweet whether it be in joy or in sorrow.

In short, this way of seeing our Father in everything makes life one long thanksgiving, and gives a rest of heart, and more than that, a joy that is unspeakable. Some one says, "God's will on earth is always joy, always tranquility." And since He must have His own way concerning His children, into what wonderful green pastures of rest, and beside what blessedly still waters of refreshment, is the soul led that learns this!

He who sides with the Lord cannot fail to win in every encounter! and whether the result shall be joy or sorrow, failure or success, death or life, we may, under all circumstances, join in the apostle's shout of victory, "Thanks be unto God which always causeth us to triumph in Christ!"

CREATION GROANING.

THE sons of God are yet in disguise, and creation, or nature, as people now like to call it, in their anxiety to forget the Creator, is longing for the time when they will be formally and publicly acknowledged amid the splendours of their coronation around the manifested Son of God. . . . Musicians inform us that every note of nature is in the minor key. The sighing of the winds, the dash of the waves upon the shore, the lowing of the cattle, the very song of the birds, all are so pitched that they utter a constant complaint of the injustice they have suffered at the hand of proud and disobedient man; the injury they received on the fatal day when Eve yielded to the seductions of Satan.

NOTES ON THE PROVERBS.

PART XV.

PROVERB.

PARALLEL.

Chap. xx., verse 1. "Wine is a mocker strong drink is raging," &c.

Noah, though so highly honoured of God, fell thereby.—Gen. ix. 20, 21.

Nadab and Abihu—Lev. x. 8, 9. "Be not drunk with wine wherein is excess, but be filled with the Spirit."

Verse 3. "It is an honour to a man to cease from strife." &c.

Abraham so acted to his honour.—Gen. xiii. 7-17.

"The wisdom that is from above is easy to be entreated."

Amaziah lost much through meddling.—2 Kings xiv. 8.

See Prov. xxx. 10. Miriam got hurt thereby.—Num. xii.

Verse 4. "The sluggard will not plow by reason of the cold," &c.

They who are lazy of habit are often too late as regards their soul's welfare.

The foolish virgins.—Matt. xxv.

Verse 5. "Counsel in the heart of man is like deep water," &c.

Keep counsel till sought for, then give it honestly.

That which is "drawn out" is better than what is proffered without being asked for.

Verse 6. "Most men will proclaim every one his own goodness," &c.

Absalom the murderer.—2 Sam. xv. 4. "Vain talkers."

The Jews (Jer. ii. 23-35); and yet scarce one living righteously (Jer. v. 1); and Psalm li.—a faithful man's confession—and Rom. vii.

Verse 7. "The just man walketh in his integrity," &c.

Noah—Gen. vii. 1. Abraham—Gen. xvii. 2-7.

Verse 9. "Who can say . . . I am pure from my sin," &c.

Ezra did not—Ez. ix. 6. Nor Job—Job xlii. 5, 6.

Nor David—Psalm cxix. 176.

Nor Isaiah—Isaiah vi. 5.

Nor Daniel—Dan. ix. 8.

Nor John—1 John i. 8.

Nor Paul—1 Tim. i. 15, Rom. 7.

"The more holy any man is, the more sensible is he of his unholiness," &c.

Verse 11. "Even a child is known by his doings, whether his work be pure," &c.

Abijah—1 Kings xiv. 13.

Joash—seven years old—2 Chron. xxiv. 1.

Josiah—eight years old—2 Chron. xxxiv. 1.

Timothy, &c.

Verse 12. "The hearing ear and the seeing eye," &c.

Ps. xciv. 8-9. Acts xvi. 14.

"Open *Thou* mine eyes."

"*He* wakeneth mine ear."

We owe all spiritual seeing and hearing to God, therefore we have to give Him all the glory.

Verse 14. "It is naught, . . . saith the buyer," &c.

It is naughty or inferior, saith the *buyer*; but when he gets it, he boasts.

Abraham and David did not so when they wanted to buy of Ephron and Onan. God disliketh such meanness.

Verse 15. "There is gold, . . . but the lips of knowledge are a precious jewel."

Knowledge is power; for the diffusion of real science by the lips procureth much wealth. How much more when the lips spread the knowledge of Christ? See Paul's estimate—Phil. iii. 8. 1 Tim. i. 11, 12; Acts xx. 24.

Verse 17. "Bread of deceit is sweet to a man, but afterward," &c.

Jacob experienced this for many years. Ananias and Sapphira found their way to be death.

Verse 19. "He that goeth about as a tale-bearer revealeth secrets, therefore meddle not," &c.

See Lev. xix. 16-17. Prov. xxvi. 22. Ziba—2 Sam. xix.

Verse 20. "Who-so curseth his father or mother," &c.

Exod. xx. 12. Deut. xxi. 18, &c.

Verse 21. "An inheritance may be gotten readily at the beginning," &c.

Ahab took Naboth's vineyard, but he never *enjoyed* it. Many *haste* to be rich, and so fall into divers sorrows — 1 Tim. vi. 9, 10.

Verse 22. "Say not thou, I will recompense evil," &c.

Romans xii. 19-21. Joseph placed his matters in God's hands, and so had noble revenge on his brethren.

Verse 24. "Man's goings are of the Lord," &c.

That is, God disposes all events — Joseph's life. The lack of sleep to the king proved the salvation of Mordecai and the Jews—Esther vi. 1, &c.

Verse 25. "It is a snare to the man who devoureth that which is holy," &c.

The proverb refers to solemn promises hastily made, and then slowly and reluctantly fulfilled — See Lev. xxx. 2.

Verse 26. "A wise king scattereth the wicked," &c.

The reference is to winnowing and threshing, the wheat being thereby separated from the chaff.

So a wise king in his judgments discerneth and judgeth the righteous and the wicked. Solomon did thus.—Matt. xxv.

Verse 27. "The spirit of man is the candle of the Lord," &c.

The conscious soul of man is designed of God, to enlighten his whole nature.

Joseph's brethren — Gen. xlv. 16. Herod — Mark vi. 16. The Pharisees — John viii. 7-9.

Verse 28. "Mercy and truth preserve the king," &c.

They secure the love and respect of the people, and the blessing of God.

Such will be the throne of the Messiah — Ps. xcvi. 2.

And such in measure was David's.

Verse 30. "The blueness of a wound cleanseth away evil," &c.

—*i.e.*, by afflictions God separates the soul He loves from the sin He hates.

Manasseh—2 Chron. xxxiii. 12, 13.

Nebuchadnezzar — Dan. iv. 34-37.

The Prodigal — Luke xv.

God heals us by affliction when we are wounded by sin.

THE GOSPEL OF JOHN.

CHAPTER XIV.—(CONTINUED.)

NOTES OF ADDRESSES BY W. LINCOLN.

(Communicated by J. S. H.)

WE have now considered four points out of the seven which the Lord gives us as grounds of comfort for our souls whilst He is away from us. These four we have seen to be connected in thought. We have now to ponder the remaining three, which also are connected; and they are these, "My life," "My presence," "My peace."

The first, My life. "Because I live ye shall live also." There is the fountain of our new life. And it is not merely our getting everlasting life from Him, but life in distinct union with the Lord Jesus. For look at the next words by which He explains it, "At that day ye shall know that I am in My Father, and ye in Me, and I in you." Interpenetration of Spirit. Because Adam lived we lived; because Adam died we died. But now God has put us into a new stock, by which we are a "new creation"; put us into a Christ who has died and risen, and given us a risen life—a glorified life—a Christ that is the life in you and in me. And before we can die Christ must die. And the expression, "At that day," does not now mean some future time. It was future when Christ spoke, but it is fulfilled now in this present time, as the Epistle of John often puts it. There may be a glance at the time of His coming, but it is not by any means all future. There seems here to be the beginning of the Epistle of John, which differs in this important point: in the gospel Christ is giving these truths to us, in the epistle we are living upon them. This is the force of the word, "we know," repeated fifteen times: "At that day ye shall know."

Thus having spoken of the Spirit in the fourth place, He goes on to speak of life in union with Himself. Then in the sixth it is "My presence"—"My company." We know a little of this, some more than others. Here I see an exemplification of the thought

in Rom. viii.; here are the things of the Spirit. I see there a great deal laid down about life and the Spirit; here I see the Lord Jesus telling what these are: living in the hope of His coming, coming to His Father continually, delighting in His love, habitually referring everything to Him, giving ourselves up to be filled with the Spirit, living in oneness of life with Him by the Spirit. And as we are living in Him we are knowing a bit of verse 20, knowing it in our souls, entering into it by the Spirit; and this is the life in the Spirit of Rom. viii.

And then it is "My presence." It is connected with obedience, and the Lord evidently thinks it can be enjoyed, for He enlarges upon it, as if, so far from having His words attenuated, He would have them lived upon. God give us to be obedient to *all* His Word, and *just* His Word. Please observe that what in verse 21 He calls His "commandments" He calls in verse 24 His "sayings"; and again, in verse 23, His "word" (it should be in the singular); as if the more you obeyed the more ready would you be to hear and obey, and would catch the slightest whisper of His will and run to fulfil it. But this depends upon our being in communion—abiding in His presence. Notice, too, that the word "abode" here is the same as "mansions" in verse 2; so that before we get to the mansions there He makes His mansion with us here, and this to-day. The line of thought is throughout one.

And in the last place we have, "My peace." "Peace I leave with you, My peace I give unto you." I think the two are one, and the second explains the first. It is My peace, My own that I give you. There is no reference here to peace *with* God, that is assumed quite as before all this. There is nothing about the conscience, it is about the heart; it assumes the conscience at rest, but the heart liable to be perturbed. It is possible for us to be sure of our salvation, and yet to be upset by twenty things; and here is something to deal with every one of the twenty. It is something like that expression in Philippians iv., "The peace of

God," the very peace that surrounds God's throne. And it is that peace that Jesus had upon earth, and He would have us too living the holy life of children, calm and patient, for there can be no impatience in the presence of God; Christ is there and He gives His peace.

Then He ends with the words with which He set out, "Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid. Ye have heard how I said unto you, I go away, and come again unto you." "I am coming again; coming! Meanwhile, come and be happy with My Father, where I am. I will see to giving you the Holy Ghost, and do you still realize that you are one life with Me. Believe, that My presence is worth having, and be obedient, and you shall have it, and My peace shall rule in your heart."

CHAPTER XV.

The foundation and central thought of this chapter is, Christ, the vine, bearing much fruit unto God; the subject is fruit-bearing essentially, and not salvation. But of course the Lord begins with Himself, for as we know, and as He says, "From Me is thy fruit found." "I am the true Vine"; as He had said in chapter xiv., "I am the Way, and the Truth, and the Life." He presents Himself to the soul, for there is no other way of blessing than by the revelation of Christ.

"I am the Vine," "and I bear much fruit unto God." We may see how He bore fruit; how He became obedient even unto death; how He would die rather than sin, or disobey, or lose His confidence in God. How easily the devil gets us to disobey; how easily does he divert us from the simple path of duty to avoid a thorn or to pluck a rose; but the Lord Jesus never. And so did He bear much fruit to God; trusting in God; and yet the more He trusted the greater trouble did He get into, and on the cross He was forsaken and died. And then the fruit again of bringing many sons unto glory; and again of manifesting the name of God. An infinity of meaning is

there in these words, "I am the true Vine."

But does the word "branches" refer to true believers only, or to professors? If we would see that the point of the chapter is fruit-bearing and not salvation, the matter is easy, and the question remains whether God's people do not all bear *some* fruit. But as to this point at the outset, are these "branches" necessarily true disciples? Some answer in the affirmative, and quote the words, "In Me"; how can they *abide* if they are not already in Christ? If, then, these are all true disciples, some passages of the chapter must be explained in a limited way, such as verse 2 or verse 6, for none of Christ's own can perish; once in Christ in Christ for ever. But there is nothing in the chapter about their being certainly in Christ, except the fruit-bearing. A striking variation is there between verses 6 and 7. In the sixth, when a person is spoken of as not abiding, the word is "a man"—anybody; but in verse 7, when there is fruit-bearing, the word is "ye"; the one looking at professors, the other at true believers.

Then when He is before the soul observe that He next begins with us at the beginning. "Now ye are clean," or, "Ye are clean now, through the word which I have spoken unto you." The reference is to what He had said in chapter xiii., "He that is washed needeth not save to wash his feet, but is clean every whit"; and we shall find, as we go on with the chapter, that it abounds with allusions to the thirteenth. Everyone of those whom He was addressing was clean, clean every whit. And many there are in the present day who say they are thus clean; for we are surrounded, not only by infidelity and ritualism, but also with spurious evangelicism. A deal of truth may be held, but not digested or enjoyed, and the evidence will be found in their lives: branches outwardly partakers of the vine, but bearing no fruit. This, then, is where we must begin, and first see that we have really taken God's Word into our souls and are clean.

(To be continued.)

CHRIST'S BIBLE.

OUR Lord Jesus Christ, to whom I look as the supreme authority and guide in all matters—the Divine Saviour—God manifested in the flesh, used the Bible as we urge all the world to use the Bible. He read it in private, storing it in His memory, used it in His devotions, went to it for comfort in His sorrows, for strength under temptation, and died with its words upon His lips. As a Teacher, He referred to it at the beginning of His ministry, up to the close of His ministry, after His resurrection. He referred to it as a book peculiar, a book paramount, a book divine. And, therefore, may I not be encouraged to read it, and trust to it as the guide of my life, for strength in my perils, for comfort in my sorrows? If good enough for the Master, is it not good enough for the servant? Let us read it daily—let us read it in private—let us store it up that we may not sin against it—let us read it daily in our household—let us honour it in our churches—let us test all our doctrines by the Bible—Christ's Bible. Let us bring all our controversies to Christ's Bible as the ultimate court of appeal. While we value the writings of all good men of all ages, we will test all they have to say by the authority of Christ's Bible. "To the law, and to the testimony." We love the Bible. We love it for what it is in itself. We love it for its association with the Lord Jesus Christ. How many things we prize because of their associations! Why, I value even a bit of furniture connected with the memory of those I love. The desk at which he wrote—the chair on which he sat—the book associated with our friend's mind, his favourite authority, and his marked passages—the Bible of our friend, associated with the high exercises of his soul. How I love my own dear father's old Bible. I see his marks in the margin, I see the traces of his tears, of his joys, of his sorrows, of his holy communion with the God he loved. I love it, for it is *his* Bible. And shall I not love it because it is my Lord's Bible—the Bible

my Saviour loved? There are His marks upon it, the traces of His fingers, the marks of His tears, the echoes of His sighs, and His songs, and His prayers. And, therefore, whatever difficulty assails me, and whatever question perplexes me, and whatever enemy of truth comes to unsettle my faith, I am ready to say—"If my Lord read the Bible, I'll read it—if He loved it, I'll love it—if He taught it, I'll teach it—if He found comfort from it, I'll find comfort from it—if He upheld the Divine authority of it, I'll uphold the Divine authority of it." When the enemies of my faith come, I will say, "This testimony have I taken as an heritage for ever."

LOVE'S CHOICE.

(Ex. xxi. 5, 6.)

THINE, Lord Jesus, Thine for ever,
Thou hast bought us with Thy blood!
Height, nor depth, nor aught can sever
Saved ones from the love of God.

Love so freely, fully given,
While we wandered far from Thee—
Satan's chains of bondage riven,
Love hath set the captives free.

Free to serve the Lord, who bought us,
Turned our darkness into light;
To His royal banquet brought us,
Filled our souls with "great delight."

Draw us, Lord, that ever faster
We may follow after Thee;
For we truly love our Master,
And we would not "go out free."

Failing and inconstant ever,
Oft we from Thy ways depart;
Still we joy that nought can sever
E'en the weakest from Thy heart.

At Thy feet, our gracious Saviour,
Every power we would lay—
Showing, in our whole behaviour,
That we own and love Thy sway.

Rule Thou over each emotion,
Every act, and thought, and word;
Worthy of our full devotion,
Reign Thou over ALL as Lord.

A. H.

"GO UP TO THE MOUNTAIN."

HAGGAI I. 8.

THE secret of blessing is in being occupied with what concerns God.

When Israel came back from captivity under Zerubbabel, difficulties arose about the building of the Lord's house, as we read in Ezra iv. But difficulties test our reality. Israel succumbed to the difficulties of their circumstances, and said, "The time is not come, the time that the Lord's house should be built." So now, difficulties often prove hindrances when they should be but occasions for faith to draw near and lay hold of God.

Difficulties tell us where our hearts are. They showed to Israel that their hearts were set on their own things; for every man ran *for* (not unto, rather, about what concerned) his own house. Thus were they proved and found wanting, and the result was that they sowed much and brought in little; they ate, but were not satisfied; they drank, but were not filled; they clothed themselves, but were not warm.

Is it not so now in the spiritual life of the Church of God? Much yields little; much work brings in small results; and souls are conscious that they are neither satisfied nor warmed. We ask, Why is this? God replies, It is because His house lies waste, and everyone cares for his own, and not for the things of Jesus Christ. He calls upon all to "consider" (or set their hearts upon) "their ways." Then comes the command, "Go up to the mountain, and bring wood, and build my house."

Through the Lord's mercy we hear of believers here and there awakening to the summons, and beloved labourers are starting for the mountain to cut down wood, and to dig out stones from the quarries; and let us speed them with our prayers, and help them with our means, and comfort them with our sympathy. May we thus all be found fellow-helpers of the truth.

There are beams that must come from the forests of Asia and Africa, and stones

costly and great that have to be dug out of the quarries of Spain and Italy. There are elect ones everywhere to be gathered in; and we need, God needs, faithful men who are content to say with Paul, "I endure all things for the elects' sakes, that they may also obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory" (2 Tim. ii. 10).

There are those who have to go into a desert place to find one soul, leaving the many-peopled city, like Philip, to find one anxious stranger who has no one to teach him. The labour, the long journey, were not in vain—"the elect's sake" made it needful—and a lifetime may be needed to win such a trophy; and he will have a double "well done" who thus toils in the footsteps of the Son of God, content to rejoice in spirit, and say, "I thank thee, O Father, that thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes. Even so, Father: for so it seemed good in Thy sight." Yes, "even so," though Chorazin and Bethsaida repent not, and Capernaum be brought down to hell. God had been glorified, though but one poor, lonely sinner had heard the invitation, "Come unto Me;" and having accepted it, came and found the Blessed One in Simon the Pharisee's house (compare Matthew xi. with Luke vii. 19-50), and there received from His own lips those precious, priceless words, "Thy faith hath saved thee; go in peace."

Let us not think, if after much toil one be gathered in, that it is *only* one; that *one* was needed, and the guest-table would have had one place vacant if that one had not come in. We have to seek out and to find God's jewels, and all must be gathered in before the Lord can respond to our cry, "Lord Jesus, come quickly."

So, again we beseech the saints of God to help all who are going at the call of God to the mountain in distant lands, and to esteem them very highly in love for their work's sake.

FAITHFULNESS TO GOD brought Christ into suffering; THE FAITHFULNESS OF GOD brought Him out of it.

FAITH AND REVERENCE.

THERE are truths in the Bible which, in their sublime grandeur, and when received with childlike faith, fill the soul with awe and the spirit of worship; and this although they are not, nor can be, fully understood whilst we are in the body.

Some, however, by an irreverent prying into such truths, not only lose the support their very greatness gives, but bring upon themselves the judgment of God. Of the men of Bethshemesh there were smitten in one day fifty thousand and seventy, because they presumed to look into the ark of God (1 Sam. vi. 19).

The Incarnation is a truth of this kind. To attempt explaining, or demonstrating with precision, how Christ could be very God and very man, is akin to the sin of the men of Bethshemesh. To the apostle Paul was grace given to reveal many mysteries which before had been hid, but this, the "Mystery of Godliness," remained to him at the close of his life a mystery still (1 Tim. iii. 16). A *fact*, however, which he unhesitatingly believed "*without controversy.*"

The description of the Heavenly City, "New Jerusalem," is one of the most gorgeous scenes ever drawn before our eyes. But if the thought of a mason wielding his mallet, or using his trowel, be allowed to intrude, the picture has lost its power of entrancing the soul. To watch the pure white snowflake fall is a pleasure; grasp the flake, and it is gone; it will not bear handling. In the soap bubble glitters every colour of the rainbow; the slightest touch, and it is dissolved. And so it is with the Incarnation and kindred truths. Let us beware of the rationalising spirit, if we would maintain the spirit of dependence and reverence. How painful to hear Christians argue and dispute over subjects which God has in His wisdom only partially revealed or wholly hid! Precious hours wasted on things too high for us, while the rich feast spread before us remains untasted. Truly "The eyes of a fool are in the ends

of the earth" (Prov. xvii. 24). The moment draws near when we shall know as we are known (1 Cor. xiii. 12). Meantime, in the Lamb slain and roasted with fire, in the Living Bread, and "the old corn," there is more than sufficient for all our need. P. H.

"AT THE RIGHT HAND OF GOD."

Heb. i. 3.

JESUS sits at God's right hand,
Shewing that His work is done;
Satisfied is each demand

By the Father's holy Son.
Charge can never more be laid
'Gainst the ones that in Him trust:
Everything was fully paid;

Now they are accounted just.

Heb. viii. 1.

Jesus as a priest on high
Sits upon the Father's throne;
We may freely now draw nigh,
Trusting in His name alone.
While He represents us there,
Ceaselessly He'll intercede;
Bearing on His heart each care,
Satisfying every need.

Heb. x. 12.

Jesus there is waiting now,
Till the day of grace be o'er;
All must then before Him bow.
Those who mocked and scorned before,
Footstool for His feet to be;
Low, before His throne they fall,
Dreading most His face to see,
Forced to own Him Lord of all.

Heb. xii. 2.

Now we look and see Him there,
Pattern for ourselves who run,
By His grace with patient care,
That race He so nobly won.
Low He stooped to deepest shame,
Seeing but the joy to come;
Now He bears the highest name
Known in God the Father's home.

M. M. A.

THE GOD OF HOPE.

A MIDST the hopelessness of all around what a privilege to be enabled to lay hold on One who calls Himself to us "*the God of Hope.*" Let this be only fully realised, and we can descend into the most hopeless circumstances, and take up the most hopeless service, and, with that anchor of the soul sure and steadfast, endure and labour on.

It was thus Paul felt when contemplating the ministry of the gospel of grace in writing to the Romans. He saw the Church of God there in its feebleness, as contrasted with the giant power of heathen darkness that surrounded it. He went in spirit, like Gideon into the midst of the Midianite host, where Gideon heard whispered in his soul the strange tale of the cake of barley-bread that smote Midian's tent so that it lay stretched helpless on the ground. It was but a cake, and that only of barley-meal; but God was with it. "Immanuel" was, shall we say, stamped on the cake; and the sword of the Lord and of Gideon was there. Will God link His mighty name with that of the weak instrument He uses? Faith says He will. Scripture tells us He did. The Midianite interpreter of the dream thought only of "the sword of Gideon;" but Gideon thought otherwise, and knew the sword to be Jehovah's, and added his own small name to it, linking it with that mighty sword. He had the God of hope to lean on, and he told his men to shout "The sword of the Lord, and of Gideon."

It is God's delight to work with His chosen ones as long as they take their proper place and give Him His; and we would seek to encourage faithful servants of our God thus to wield Jehovah's sword, and not be afraid to link their own name in humble childlike confidence to that of the Almighty Lord, who worketh with them as He also works in them.

It was thus Gideon's faith triumphed. Hope shone upon his path and dispelled the clouds of doubt and misgiving that

hindered his progress. In like manner prays the beloved Paul for his Roman fellow-saints, that they may realise in the mighty capital and centre of this world's greatness that the preaching of the cross will not be in vain; for in the Crucified One, the root of Jesse, "shall the Gentiles *hope*" (better than trust); and he prays, "Now the God of the hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in the hope, in the power of the Holy Spirit" (Rom. xv. 13).

Yes, dear fellow-labourers in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ, the God of the hope of the coming kingdom is our God. The feast is prepared, and the house must be filled. It is God's decree, and His electing love will not allow it to be frustrated; therefore let your hearts be filled with all joy and all peace in believing. Calmly, surely, look on to the consummation of life's holy, happy toil, the toil of love. Let no difficulties discourage, no perplexities lead to despair; but in the power of the Holy Spirit, who dwelleth in us, "abound in hope." There is a joyous triumph in that abounding hope which will uphold and enable the saint of God to say to his soul when it faints because of the way, "Why art thou cast down, O my soul? Why art thou disquieted within me?" Why? oh why? Has thy God failed thee? Have His promises been broken? No, never. "Hope thou in God; for I will yet praise Him; His presence is salvation" (Ps. xlii. 5, marg.) Praise on. Through sunshine and through shade, through sorrow and through joy, His presence is with thee here, till the prayer of the apostle shall be sealed to thy soul in everlasting glory, and thou shalt see the King in His beauty, and wonder why thou didst so often fear when He said so often to thee, "Fear not, I am with thee."

DID you ever notice that God never lets His Name be associated with the remnant that *remained* in Babylon after He had opened the door of their captivity?

THE POISON OF THE LAST DAYS

Has penetrated everywhere; unbelief, error, strong delusion, self-will, ambition, pride, hatred of God and of His Christ—these are the deadly forces that are operating all over the earth and disintegrating society, making all human rule impossible, and demonstrating the necessity for the arrival of Him who is to end all these overturnings, and to introduce the reign of peace, the kingdom of everlasting order—the time when the vile person shall no more be called liberal, when darkness shall no more be called light, nor science substituted for Scripture, nor the glitter of human culture for regeneration by the Holy Ghost.

Questions and Answers.

QUESTION 289.—If a ministering brother in an assembly is guilty of moral evil, or living a life dishonouring to the Lord, the same being known to several in and outside the gathering, ought one brother in that assembly to take upon himself the responsibility of dealing with the case personally, or does it become a matter for the church to deal with?

Before any definite reply could be given to such a question as this, every circumstance would require to be known and taken into account.

There might be, in a small assembly, only one who was competent to deal with the case. It might be a case of supposed evil not fully proved, but only surmised; in which case every care should be taken *not* to allow the matter to spread until fully proved. Even the speaking of such things carries defilement.

But, apart from any particular case, we may remark that Satan has no more successful method of bringing "the way of truth" into disrepute, than by leading into prominent service in connection with assemblies, especially those that are young and inexperienced, men of indifferent character, of low moral tone, and having an ill savour in the world.

"Having a good report of them that are without" is an essential qualification for one who assumes to be a leader or guide among saints.

That "House of God," of which "every whit" should "utter His glory," is thus turned into a beacon to warn saints away from the truth, instead of an attraction to draw them to it.

We are sometimes astounded at the indifference with which this evil is regarded by many whom we would fain acknowledge as spiritual.

Persons are allowed to minister publicly, both in teaching and in preaching the Gospel, who are well known to be in debt; whose families are

undisciplined and ungodly; whose reputation in the world is unsavoury; whose tempers are so ungovernable that they get angry at the slightest provocation, and speak unadvisedly with their lips. Alas for the low moral tone that can tolerate such things, instead of weeping over them, and rising up in the power of God to deal with them in righteousness, and put such persons in their proper place!

We could tell of an assembly, once prosperous, where a man who had several times failed in business was allowed to take the lead. Soon after (need it be wondered at?) holders of non-eternity were forced in, the godliest were forced out, and, ultimately, as no one was left with enough means to pay the rent, or enough preaching ability to keep up the meetings, the whole thing fell to pieces. We mention this as a solemn warning against indifference to God's glory and the honour of His name, in regard to the character of those who are allowed to take a prominent place in service.

QUESTION 270.—Does Phil. iii. 18, 19, refer to believers, or only to professors?

The words "whose end is destruction," cannot, in our judgment, be applied to any true child of God. His "end" is "everlasting life" (see Rom. vi. 22) however varied the experiences, or severe the discipline through which that "end" is reached. Moreover, the contrast in the next verse is very marked—"from whence also we look for the SAVIOUR;" not the *destroyer*, but "the SAVIOUR;" not "destruction," but SALVATION.

The apostle, with prophetic vision, foresaw the corruption that was about to creep into the Church, and how disastrous it would be in result. He saw that the hearts of many who had professed faith in the One whom the world had crucified, were turning back to the world. A Christianity without a cross, that waged no war with fleshly pride and worldly lusts, was what they desired. The unworldly, heavenly, self denying, flesh-crucifying doctrines of the Lord Jesus they would not endure. With affection set on earthly things, and glorying to their shame in that which the heavenly-minded apostle had counted "dung," their whole life, and walk, and testimony, was antagonistic to the Cross of Christ. Soon the heavenly hope of the coming of the Lord was superseded by the hope of an earthly millennium, and the Gospel that calls to separation from the world in fellowship with a rejected Christ, degenerated into a scheme for Christianising the flesh and reforming the world. Already, the walk of many told out in plainest terms that they were "of the earth" and "earthy;" being "after the flesh" they were minding the "things of the flesh" (compare John iii. 31, and Rom. viii. 5). But this fleshly, earthly walk and conversation is linked with "the form of godliness." It is the "tares" that could only be distinguished from the wheat when the time of *the fruit* came. But whatever the outward form, or howsoever the whole may be linked with the name of Christ, the end of all such is "destruction."

THE DIVINITY OF CHRIST.

BY THE EDITOR.

Continued from page 130.

I NOW wish you to turn with me to a few familiar scriptures which show us not only that Christ existed as a Person before the world was, that in the beginning He was with God and was God, but also that He is the Creator of all things.

Let us look at John i. 3—"All things were made by Him; and without Him was not any thing made that was made." Literally, as in the margin of the Revised Version, it is "All things were made *through* Him." This I accept as the true meaning—He being the One *by* whom or *through* whom God created all things.

Col. i. 15—"Who is the image of the invisible God, the first-born of every creature: for by Him were all things created that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by (or through) Him, and for Him: and He is before all things, and by Him all things consist."

What a vast idea these verses give of the person of Christ! "He is before all things," answering to His own words, "Before Abraham was I am"; and also to that other scripture, "In the beginning was the Word." "By Him were all things created"—thus ascribing to Him a place above all created beings. And this not only as regards the earth and the things that are seen, but equally as regards the heavens and the things invisible, yea, the very highest intelligent beings in all the universe of God are here said to have been created by Him.

But further, they are created for Him as well as by Him. He is not only the One by whom all creation was brought into being, but the glorious object for whom it all exists and is maintained. And yet more, "By Him all things consist" or "stand together." His mighty power who created is the same that maintains creation in its present order.

Further confirmation is found in Ephesians iii. 9—"The mystery . . . hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ." Thus we are distinctly shown that whilst, as in Gen. i., God is the Creator, yet it pleased God in carrying out all His creative purposes to act in and by the Son, so that Jesus Christ was actually the One who created, though in doing so He was acting in the power and by the authority of God the Father; and so that scripture is confirmed—"Without Him was not anything made that was made."

Thus is He shown to be co-eternal with God,—*"In the beginning with God,"* before creation, everything in heaven and earth, visible and invisible, having been brought into existence through or by Jesus Christ.

In like manner it has pleased God to accomplish the mighty redemption work in and through Christ: and so also as to the ultimate work of judgment—"The Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son" (John v. 22). Thus, whether we look at Creation, Redemption, or Judgment, it has pleased God to act in all through His Son.

It is easily seen that any one holding that Jesus was only a Man must set aside all these scriptures—all must be got rid of before the idea can be maintained for a moment.

The two first chapters of the epistle to the Hebrews are very definite in their character. The first shows fully, and by many quotations and arguments, the Godhead of Christ. The second chapter equally clearly sets forth His manhood.

The Unitarian is quite willing to accept the second chapter, but he rejects the first. He cuts out of God's book all that does not square with his theory. Thus the Scriptures are set at the bar of reason, and man's poor puny reason presumes to judge the Word of God.

Let us read in Heb. i.—"God . . . hath in these last days spoken unto us by (or in) His Son, whom He hath appointed Heir of all things, by whom also He made the worlds: who being the brightness of

His glory, and the express image of His person, and *upholding all things by the word of His power.*" This confirms the word in Colossians i.—"By whom all things consist;" and is further explained in 2 Peter iii. 5-7—"By the word of God the heavens were of old, and the earth standing out of the water and in the water . . . ; but the heavens and the earth, which are now, by the same word are kept in store, reserved unto fire," &c.

We frequently hear of the earth being shaken by deep internal convulsions, by the outburst of volcanoes and earthquakes—all showing that there are terrible pent-up forces ready to burst forth at any moment, involving the whole in one mighty conflagration. The only thing that prevents it is that the world is maintained in its present form and condition by the word of God. The same Creator, and the same creative word that made the worlds, maintain and uphold them. "Upholding all things by the word of His power;" "By Him all things consist."

Thus Scripture brings us face to face with God in Christ. Man comes in with his theories and natural laws, and shuts God out of sight. I do not despise the remarkable discoveries of natural laws,—for example, the law of gravity as discovered by Sir Isaac Newton,—but I do say that there is a continual tendency in scientific research to exalt itself above revelation, and continually men who are neither subject to the Word of God nor guided by the Spirit of God, are putting NATURE in the place of God—thus in effect blotting out God from His own creation, and instead of discerning in creation the wisdom and power of the Creator, regarding it as something that has somehow developed, but out of what, no one will dare to say! Let us beware of such teachings, however plausibly introduced. God is not far off from the works of His hands. We have a God who watches over and maintains His creation, upholding all by the word of His power, so that without His permission no earthquake can cause the earth to tremble, or the raging tide pass by

a hair's-breadth its appointed bound. And is it not a precious thought that this universal control is exercised by the same Blessed One who made the worlds, and who "by Himself purged our sins!"

Heb. i. 4—"Being made," or more literally, "Having become so much superior to the angels, as He hath by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they. For unto which of the angels said He at any time, Thou art My Son, this day have I begotten Thee?" Before proceeding further, I want you to see to what period this word applies. Turn to Acts xiii. 32-34—"The promise which was made unto the fathers, God hath fulfilled the same unto us their children, in that He hath raised up Jesus again; as it is also written in the second Psalm, Thou art My Son, this day have I begotten Thee." Compare also Rev. i. 5, where Jesus is called "The first begotten of the dead." Thus the Scriptures clearly teach that the occasion of these remarkable words spoken by the Father to the Son was the resurrection morning. Then addressing the same Person, He goes on to say—"Thou, Lord, in the beginning hast laid the foundation of the earth, and the heavens are the work of Thy hands." There, then, is the definite word of God the Father ascribing the creation of all things to Jesus Christ.

I do not think I need proceed further with this part of our subject. We have before us four distinct testimonies from the Scriptures—viz., John i., Eph iii., Col. i., Heb i., all attributing creation to the power of Christ—and two of these also attributing to Him the power that personally upholds the creation to which He gave being and form.

Who then can such a Person be? Not a man; not an angel; not any created being—but the only begotten Son of God, the Eternal, who before creation "*was with God and was God.*"

A PARADISE of God is a company of believers finding, Christ in their midst to be a Tree of Life unto them (Rev. ii. 7).

HALF-HOURS with a CONCORDANCE.

IV.—CHURCH.

THE word at the head of this article is the usual representative in the Authorised and Revised Versions of the New Testament of a word in the original which literally means "*called out*." It is our aim in this half-hour to distinguish between its uses, and seek yet to see such connection as there may be between them.

It will be well first to dispose of the case in which the word is applied to a company of Gentiles, namely, of Ephesians, as recorded in Acts xix., who were "*called out*" from their respective occupations by their evil passions and concurrent circumstances. The word occurs twice (verses 32 and 41) of this disordered concourse, and once of a "lawful assembly" (verse 39). [As these three are the only variant translations of the Greek word usually rendered "church," so it is in this chapter, verse 37, that we get the one and only instance of a different Greek word being translated church. It should read "robbers of temples."]

In Acts vii. 38 we read of Israel as a church in the wilderness, doubtless as having been "*called out*" of Egypt (Hos. xi. 1). And while Heb. ii. 12 doubtless has a meaning for the present in connection with Matt. xviii. 20, yet it (or at least Ps. xxii. 22) has also a future bearing in the time when Israel is again gathered, gathered to their Messiah, when He will lead the praises of His earthly, as well as of His heavenly people.

Passing on now to other occurrences of the word "church," they in the main fall into TWO GROUPS, not very carefully discriminated between, perhaps, by the general reader, but still with a very marked difference, which we may conveniently distinguish by the use or non-use of a capital C. Looking, for example, at Eph. v. 25, 26, by the side of Rev. ii. 5 (addressed to Ephesus), a manifest difficulty arises if we are to suppose that "the church" in each is the same. And on the other hand, if we are clear that it is not the same, it is still important, as it will be interesting, to

see what, if any, is the connection between the meanings, and wherefrom and wherefore the difference arises. As sometimes happens, a key passage containing the two usages in approximation gives great help. Such, for our present subject, is that wherein the first three occurrences of the word in the New Testament are, namely, Matt. xvi. 13 to xviii. 35.

In Matt. xvi. 18 we read of a "Church," *i.e.*, a called out Company, then about to be built by and for the Lord Jesus Christ. "I will build," says He, "My Church." This is perfectly definite; not "My churches," or "a church," but "the Church of Me," "My Church." Moreover, He adds, "The gates of Hades shall not prevail against her." Now compare and contrast Matt. xviii. 17, where he against whom a brother has sinned, having taken certain prior steps, is to tell the church, whom, if under such circumstances, the sinning one neglect to hear, he is to be regarded as is the Gentilish one and the publican, *i.e.*, as outside the circle of that church. From which it clearly follows that this church of Matt. xviii. 17 is that which is within reach, in so that the one sinned against can come and tell the church. Moreover, it is such as may be heard; it is altogether a recognisable community with a plainly definable boundary line. I say not merely definite, but manifestly defined, so that they in it (ay, and they out of it too) know who are in it and who are not. Now, as to the Church of Matt. xvi. 18 it is not so stated, it is not so implied, neither is it denied. It is not revealed in Matt. xvi. 18 of the Church which the Lord Christ calls His Church, whether it and its boundaries are visible or invisible. And on the other hand, there is nothing in Matt. xviii. 17 to say one way or the other, whether the church there spoken of is an unique, only thing, or one of many. Whether, to put it in another form, the "where" of verse 20 is some one place, or any one of many, is not, in the time when these things were said, revealed, and I think could not be.

Here, then, I think, we have two scriptures speaking of a church, which may refer to the same in two different aspects, or may refer to entirely different things; and whether of the two is meant it was not now the time to reveal. For whilst in this time of Matt. xvi. to xviii. the rejection of the Christ in and by the crucifixion was matter of which He spake to His disciples with much plainness and freedom (Matt. xvi. 21), and that led of necessity, in the grace of God, to the preaching of gospel to Jews and proselytes as on the Day of Pentecost it was preached, so that thereupon followed an incipient fulfilment of the prophetic utterance of Matt. xvi. 18; yet thereupon did not follow an immediate rejection of the Jews as a nation, nor an immediate preaching of gospel to Gentiles; but first a prolonged offer to the Jews until their national sin culminated in the murder of Stephen, and then (but not till then) churches were immediately multiplied, and thereafter Gentiles had gospel preached to them unto a multiplication of churches among them also.

To go into details a little. We should first notice that the Gospel preached on the Day of Pentecost (Acts ii. 38-40 especially) to Jews and proselytes, as individuals, who came to where the apostles were, differs essentially from that preached afterwards to the nation as such, when Peter and John in Solomon's porch, having in the extremest publicity cured a lame man "in the Name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth," delivered the message recorded in Acts iii., which message, had they attended thereto, might have been soon followed by the fulfilment of verses 19, 20 (see R.V.), and of Old Testament prophecies, &c. Failing the national acceptance, any who, as individuals, hearkened to the word, were doubtless put on the same footing as they of Acts ii. 41 (as Acts ii. 47, R.V., shows); but that was not the main end of the preaching here in chapter iii. recorded, which was for national acceptance. Compare Acts ii. 40, "Save yourselves FROM this untoward generation," with Acts iii. 19,

"Repent ye," addressed to the "untoward generation"; verse 12 says, "he answered unto the People." Well, then, so long as God's message was preached unto the Nation or People as such (marked in part by the preaching in the temple, Acts iii., iv., v.), so long we read of a church which was in Jerusalem, and of that one only. This, at its inception, was identical with the Church of Matt. xvi. 18, as to the persons therein included, and was also, in fact, the first instance of such a church as Matt. xviii. 15 to 20 contemplates.

The identity of persons between the church as first formed at Jerusalem and the Church spoken of in Matt. xvi. 18 lasted only a short time. For this latter Church is that of which we read in Eph. i. 22; Eph. iii. 10, 21; Eph. v. 23, 24, 25, 27, 29, 32; and Col. i. 18, 24. It is therein identified with the Body of Christ, which, as we clearly saw in our last half-hour, includes all who are in Christ and none others; and is such that if into it a man be brought by the grace of God, in it he ever shall be; and into which none can be brought by erring human agency, but only and entirely by the unerring work of the Lord Jesus, by means of the Spirit. And all that is true of the Body of Christ is true of the Church whereof He speaks in Matt. xvi. 18, which is identical therewith.

With this, then, contrasting that part of the history of the visible church at Jerusalem which we get in Acts v. 1-14, what a difference do we see! Even if it be granted that Ananias and Sapphira were real believers, then, after their death, two who were in and of the Church, the Body of Christ, ceased to be in and of the church of which we here read in this fourth occurrence (Acts v. 11). Whereas if, as verses 13 and 14 appear to me to teach, Ananias and Sapphira were false professors, then into the company gathered at Jerusalem were brought by man two such as the Lord Christ had never built into His Church, and such as it was not according to the Divine will should have been brought into this church of God at Jerusalem. But in it they were, and

herefrom at least the distinction between these two uses of the word church becomes marked enough; and we shall find it become more marked still, till to a church in Laodicea it be said, "I am about to spue thee out of My mouth"; while it remains still true that against His Church the gates of Hades prevail not. C. M. L.

(To be continued).

THE GOSPEL OF JOHN.

CHAPTER XV.—(CONTINUED.)

NOTES OF ADDRESSES BY W. LINCOLN.

(Communicated by J. S. H.)

THEN, being clean, we have simply to stay in Christ; or, as He puts it Himself in chapter vi., "He that eateth My flesh, and drinketh My blood, dwelleth in Me, and I in him." Thus, having had to do with Him, having taken His salvation and rested in His love, we have then to stay where He has brought us.

"Abide in Me, and I in you." What is the meaning of this? and is there any difference between Christ abiding in us and ourselves abiding in Christ, and what is it? Unquestionably one way of ascertaining the meaning of any expression in Scripture is to notice any other that is used interchangeably therewith. Now further down we have, "Continue ye in My love. If ye keep My commandments, ye shall abide in My love; even as I have kept My Father's commandments and abide in His love." So that, to abide in Him is tantamount to dwelling in His love. Then, on the other hand, what is meant by His abiding in us? We have in verse 7, "If ye abide in Me, and My words abide in you"; and thus the Lord again explains Himself, that His Word dwelling in us is the same thing, to some extent, as Himself dwelling in us, He the living Word. So that, to dwell in Him is to dwell in His love, in His presence, in conscious association with Himself. To dwell in Him is our privilege. On the other hand, for Him to dwell in us is for His Word to dwell in us, His life to be

developed in us, and is our responsibility. In 1 John ii. 6 we read, "He that saith he abideth in Him ought himself also so to walk, even as He walked." There again we have the responsibility. He that says he lives in Christ ought to be living out the life of Christ. Thus the one shows us our blessed standing before God, that can never be otherwise; the other, that the life is to grow and to be developed.

This will further appear if we look at the connection of the passage with the line of thought of the chapter before and the chapter after. In John xiv. it is mostly our blessed privilege. Three different things put together by the Holy Ghost; three replies of Christ to three disciples about the Way, the Truth, and the Life; about being with Him, seeing Him, and being like Him; in other words, John xiv. is heaven, and the earnest vouchsafed to us now. Then the connection of chapter xv. with xiv. is this: stay in all that grace into which My Father hath called you, and My blood has brought you; live in that happy life which I have traced out for you. But if you look at the end of chapter xv. you will see it is about the world's hatred, and seven times over the Lord warns them that the world hates Him. "And I in you." Oh, to be caressed by a world that hates Him! What more awful mark could be put upon you?

Now, let us bear that portion in mind. "Abide in Me," in all that precious love that I have brought down to you and that is yours, abide in it continually; and if ever you get out of its consciousness, return. On the other hand, "And I in you"; and the world hates Me, and the religious world will not have Me, will give Me up to Pilate. Besides which, there is a general principle in connection with the subject; that is, that likewise when it is said that Christ is in God, the thought is of Christ at rest, His work done. On the other hand, when it is said that God is in Christ, the thought is of work; God in Christ reconciling, God in Christ entreating, a God at work. So with ourselves. When it is we in Christ, we are at rest, or may rest; nothing to do but to

enjoy His love : when it is Christ in us, it is the living out Christ, living out His life in practical details, as separated men hated by the world, even by the religious world.

The subject is fruit-bearing. What fruit are we to bear? Two kinds are mentioned. If you look at verse 12 you will see one. This is My commandment, "That ye love one another, as I have loved you." Again the reference is to chapter xiii. I had perhaps better mention again that the Lord in all His discourses in John is pleased to preface them with a little action, on purpose to help the soul in understanding them. Bear in mind that chapters xiii. to xvii. were all uttered together, constituting one entire section of the Gospel. He begins this with a little picture, like as He does in chapters v., vii., viii., and others; the Lord of glory, knowing that the Father had given all things into His hands, bends and washes the feet of the disciples. Then He commands them twice, "Love as I have loved you!" It is the same life in us as it is in Him, and He requires that the love be manifested in the same way. That is to say, with all fellow-Christians needing help we are to render them priestly succour; to lift them up into closer communion; to help them and to wash their feet. When you see them going wrong don't point the finger at them or pass them by as though it were not your concern, but seek to restore their souls as you are being lifted up by your High Priest.

Then a second feature. The idea in the whole passage is of taking the lowly place, as Christ did in chapter xiii. In other words, the two together teach us how that we are to seek to serve our brethren rather than ourselves, and in the way of self-sacrifice and self-denial. What have we to fear? "Abide in Me." What have you to desire of self if I am all to you? The one is our strength in order to do the other. It is difficult, owing to the flesh in us, to deny ourselves; to act out as if dead, buried, and risen with Christ; to go on to the Cross in practical self-sacrifice. But why do we want to be full of self if it be as we say that Jesus is enough for us, if Jesus and His love fills

us? for, as the Lord says, "If ye keep My commandments ye shall stay in My love." Very likely there is some reason that you are not enjoying the love of Christ; negligent-walking, self-seeking, or something else; for the Spirit in you is easily grieved. Note, too, how that the word "if" occurs here a great many times. Nothing so tends to damp the soul's ardour in its joy in God as negligent-walking when there is not tenderness of conscience and spirituality.

Thus the fruits spoken of are two: "Love one another as I have loved you," and love by following Me. "Arise, let us go hence." Where? To the Cross. Therefore the point of this 15th of John is, particularly its latter part, go and face the world's hate, content that My Father loves you, instead of being anxious for anything connected with self. There is a part of Isaiah liii. which properly belongs to you. It is said of Christ, speaking of Him of course as a man, "He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were our faces from Him; He was despised, and we esteemed Him not." But further on we have, "He shall divide the spoil with the strong (ones)." First He goes alone, then beckons us to follow Him.

Now look at the importance of this fruit-bearing. Chapter xiv. 31 is a sort of introduction to chapter xv. "But that the world may know that I love the Father; and as the Father gave me commandment even so I do." So I will bear fruit. He is the great Fruit-bearer. He has brought us to God; and He has brought infinite glory to God. "Why do I go hence?" "Because I love the Father and do anything He tells Me." Then He has given us commandment. "If ye keep My commandments ye shall abide in My love, even as I have kept My Father's commandments and abide in His love." "I love Him, and will lay down My life to serve Him;" and then He beckons you on and tells you not to be taken up with self-indulgence and self-advancement, but instead, to let His love be your power, and to dare to be hated of the world. He says, impliedly, "Do you love Me? Then go

and bear fruit. And do not apply this to all the wretched ways of the religious world, with its humanitarian schemes, and schemes of progress; it is in self-denial and self-sacrifice, in every way taking your place with Christ, washing the feet of others and trying to lead them on, even at cost to yourself. "Arise, let *us* go hence." He had to go alone first; "Whither I go thou canst not follow Me now"; but when He had gone alone and borne the wrath, then He beckons us to follow. Something like it we have in the Canticles—"Come *with Me* from Lebanon." Is it not enough to go with *Him*? to know that you are putting your foot down where He trod. Was He caressed and petted of the world? If not, then do you shudder at it? But, you say, "it's very difficult to be separate, Lord." "With *Me*." "Where, Lord?" "To the Cross."

But He shows His love to the Father in more ways than this. He says, as it were, to His Father, "Thou art glorified by My fruit-bearing, but I will get many others to glorify Thee in measure." "I am the true Vine." Israel had been the vine planted of God, but had brought forth wild grapes. So God sets aside Israel, and begins again with Christ. And His people are the branches, some who dare to follow Him in the path of rejection, so that the Father may be glorified. This reminds me of a very important doctrine, I think not apprehended as it ought to be: that whilst matters between God and our souls are eternally settled, matters between Christ and us are not settled. And there are many "ifs" when it is a question of fruit-bearing. The matters of chapter xiv. are settled, that is work that Christ sees to; but when it comes to "I in you," the life of Christ is more lived out in some than in others, and He will reckon with us about it. "He shall divide the spoil with the strong." Nay, more, He tells us in verse 16 that that was one object in our election. "I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit." Ordained, not merely for salvation or for glory, but that when Christ was gone to heaven, we should live

out the life of Christ and suffer for Christ in a world that hates Him now as much as ever it did.

But if you look at verse 5 you will see the Lord wants us to bear *much* fruit, and so again in verse 8; twice He utters the expression. Another passage is there where we have the same thing apart from figure, in Phil. iii. 10-14, and the other side, these not abiding, in verse 18. And notice, too, in verse 2, which are the branches that came under God's dealings,—the fruit-bearing branches; He purgeth them that they may bring forth more fruit. And the word "purge" in verse 2 is the same as the word "clean" in verse 3. You are clean every whit, but He must needs keep washing your feet, and cleansing you in the water of the Word continually.

But there are other things here beside fruit-bearing, and it is remarkable that they all assume we are children; but after we are children He shows us we may still go on in practical apprehension. For example, "That My joy may remain in you, and that your joy may be full." Bearing fruit is the way to be full of joy, being true to God. "As the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so our consolation also aboundeth in Christ." Again, so do we get our prayers answered. As children we are heard; yet is it a fact that we more prevail with God when we are abiding in Christ. Thus, verse 16, and again in verse 7, prevailing with God is connected with identification with Christ. And then thirdly, you come to learn the Father's secrets. "For all things that I have heard of My Father I have made known unto you." True in a sense of every Christian, for, "We have the mind of Christ"; but some see more than others through abiding in Christ.

MOSES was the meekest man; yet who could speak out like him when the honour of God was at stake?

PAUL, who wrote that lovely chapter on love (1 Cor. xiii.), was the very man to withstand the oldest apostle to the face.

DIVINE UNITY, &c.

THE actual oneness of the body of which the Lord Jesus Christ in heaven is Head is beyond controversy (Eph. iv. 4-6). On the confession of Simon Peter, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God," the Lord Jesus said—"Upon this rock I will build My Church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it" (Matt. xvi.). At Calvary the price of purchase was paid in His own blood (Acts xx. 28), and by the resurrection full redemption—standing before God and eternal glory were secured in her exalted Head (Eph. i. 19 to ii. 6). For this wondrous unity the Lord asked (John xvii.). At Pentecost the Holy Spirit, the Divine agent for its accomplishment, came (compare Acts i. and 1 Cor. xii. 13) and instruments for the work we acknowledge in the various gifts from the Lord (Eph. iv.), until at length the body perfected as bride shall arise all glorious in resurrection beauty to meet her Saviour Lord (1 Thess. iv. 17 and Eph. v. 27). All this, we further learn from the epistle to the Ephesians, is according to the eternal counsel of God and for the display of the glory of His grace throughout ages never ending. May we not, therefore, safely conclude that no power, human or satanic, can ever touch that unity or turn God from His purpose? His truth remains unchangeable as Himself, and Divine principles for the guidance of saints so that they may walk worthy of their high and holy calling apply alike to all, and in this our day as at the first.

In the Epistle to the Ephesians, where the body is viewed in its heavenly completeness as "the fulness of Him that filleth all in all," from the fourth chapter onwards we have practical teaching as to the walk corresponding thereto, which needs to be well considered; whilst in 1 Corinthians we are shown human failure, which calls forth apostolic remonstrance in somewhat a tone of authority calculated to arouse the consciences of carnal Christians (note particularly ch. xiv. 37).

Usually, in Scripture, exhortation is based upon doctrine; for truth is intended to affect the heart and way in a practical manner, hence the order of teaching as in the epistle to the Ephesians. First, the believer is shown his place as a child of God "accepted in the Beloved," and also as a member of the body of Christ; then follows the exhortation as to the walk worthy of this two-fold calling, as child of God, in holiness, after the example of Christ Jesus, and as member of the one body, in love, endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. To fail in either respect is to grieve the Spirit, whose presence here has regard both to the individual and to the body collective. Each member He takes possession of, sealing it as the Lord's until the day of complete redemption; and in proportion as He is yielded to, so will the result be practical sanctification and union. By means of the truth ministered in love the body is edified, each member growing up into the Head in all things, there abiding and receiving according to its measure so as to impart for mutual edification. Carnal divisions, as seen at Corinth, result from "not holding the Head" (compare Col. ii.).

Addressing saints in that condition, the apostle wrote—"I could not speak unto you as unto spiritual" (1 Cor. iii.). Truth must be seasonable. There is truth for the heart, truth for the conscience, and truth for the way. So long as heart is sick and conscience sleeps communion is interrupted. Of this, disorderly walk is but a symptom; and when one member suffers all the members suffer with it, because of the very fact that the body is one.

For a brief season at the outset "all that believed were together," "of one heart and of one soul," "and great grace was upon them all." The churches "were edified, and, walking in the fear of the Lord and in the comfort of the Holy Ghost, were multiplied"; and notwithstanding the scattering abroad everywhere, the multiplication of assemblies, and the difficulties arising out of the differences between

believers from among the Jews and from among the heathen,—now all brought together in one fellowship,—the union of the assembly was for a time preserved, probably owing to the special powers vested in apostles and prophets whilst the Church was in its infancy. It is not very clear how long exactly this continued; but one thing is certain, the break-up came when the Lord ceased to own as His the professing body as a whole.

The apostle Paul foretold the disorder which should arise after his departure (Acts xx.); and the Lord's judgment of the assembly in its symbolic sevenfold character (Rev. ii. and iii.) appears to cover the whole period from the commencement of decline until the final total rejection. Three stages in the downward course may be specially noticed—1st, That which the Lord alone could have detected, "Thou has left thy first love"; 2nd, "Thou hast there them that hold" (false doctrine); 3rd, "Thou sufferest that woman Jezebel . . . to teach and to seduce My servants." Ephesus, heart sick; Pergamos, conscience sleeps; Thyatira, total apostacy. Other conditions follow, all of which, together with that of Thyatira, continue to the coming of the Lord. In Thyatira, for the first time, a remnant as distinct from the assembly is owned. With respect to this we have further important teaching in the second epistle to Timothy. Then the call to separation is personal and peremptory—"Let every *one* that nameth the name of the Lord depart from unrighteousness"; "Study to show *thyself* approved unto God"; "If a *man* purge himself from these he shall *be* a vessel unto honour." But the godly remnant have the same truth to act upon and principles to guide as disciples had when the assembly was as it should be. The word still applies—"Walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called," "endeavouring to keep the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace," because the truth remains unchanged. Circumstances of course have altered, inasmuch as now there are many so-called "Christian" associations in which children of God and

unbelievers are mixed together, all more or less leavened by evil, out from which the faithful are called to purge themselves. Then there was but one Christian association—"the assembly of God"—of which every true believer was a member, and in which he should remain, no matter what evil might have been there. Accordingly, the call to separation, in 2 Timothy, differs somewhat from that, in 2 Corinthians vi. At the first it was "come out from among unbelievers (idolaters, &c., having made no Christian profession) and be separate." That, of course, still holds good, with this further call to separation from evil even though it may be in that which assumes to be of Christ. Therefore, so long as Christians remain in mixed associations there must be separations; but we have to watch against *unscriptural divisions* (see Rom. xvi. 17). Everything must be tested by the Word of the Lord, and the wilful allowance of anything contrary to the doctrine taught us is schism.

There is another form of evil against which we also need to guard—namely, the effort to present before the world a false appearance. As man ever has sought by some means of his own to cover up or hide his nakedness, so now, instead of the humble acknowledgment of failure, we hear from some loud pretentious claims to be something. Under this head may be classed all man-made unions, and such must stand the unerring test of the truth of God or else be set aside among the many things from which the servant of the Lord must stand aloof. That union which embraces in its fellowship saved and unsaved, kept together by a code of man-made rules and regulations, does not bear the stamp of truth. Neither that, although confined to professing believers, which in order to maintain what is called in some sort *corporate testimony*, on principle, cuts off godly persons because they disagree on points non-fundamental. And what else can be said of union based upon suppression of truth? Correctly speaking, *corporate testimony* ceased on the break-up of the assembly. That was a testimony to the

Divine reality so long as the members continued subject to the Head. Clearly that cannot be now, inasmuch as restoration at the most is but partial. But saints are still called to *collective testimony*. The Lord has made provision for the continuance of *that* until He comes by the precious pledge, "There am I in the midst," even though but two or three are gathered together in His name. The principle of gathering together remains and has the Lord's sanction; and the power for union as the result of scriptural gathering is spiritual and internal, not human and external. The latter it is which characterises sectarianism.

In conclusion, the path of the godly is clearly defined in Scripture—"Whoso hath an ear let him hear what the Spirit saith"; and the dark day of apostasy is the occasion for the exercise of faith and for the display of that heart-devotedness to the Lord which finds expression in obedience to His every word. This is what the Lord looks for and commends (see Rev. iii. 7-11). May both reader and writer thus be found when the Lord comes; for the brief moment till then being kept from the manifold evils which surround us, and from all the lofty pretensions of man.

R. S.

THE SOUL'S LONGINGS.

HE has kissed me, freely pardoned,
Once polluted and defiled;
Sealed me by its impress, made me
Not a servant, but a child.

He has kissed me—

I'm for ever reconciled.

"Draw me" closer, all the longings
Of a captive chained by love,
Burning with a sacred ardour,
Instinct, heavenly, from above.

Draw me closer—

Now Thine undefiled dove.

"Tell me," though in faintest whisper,
Now I know Thy voice Divine—
Where Thou feedest, restest? Tell me
What a blissful portion's mine?

Tell me, tell me,—

Bridegroom of my heart, I'm Thine.

S. B.

THE FIRST EPISTLE TO THE THESSALONIANS.

CHAP. ii. 17, &c.

NOTES OF AN ADDRESS BY J. R. C.

VERSE 17—"But we, brethren, being taken from you for a short time in presence, not in heart, endeavoured the more abundantly to see your face with great desire." We have noticed before how the deep affection of the apostle comes out again and again; he cannot help making known how much he loves them. His inward affection yearned over them as over his children. It was the affection of a nursing mother combined with the care and tenderness of a father. Again it comes out. He says, "I am taken from you for a little while, but not in heart." Like a dear friend who is separated for a little from those he loves, he is absent from them in body but not in heart. By nature there's not a spark of divine love in our hearts. The love that filled the bosom of the apostle toward these Thessalonian saints came from God. It was poured into his soul by the Holy Spirit. It is only as we are filled with the Spirit that we can truly love one another. O, that we would seek of God more of this yearning heart over fellow-saints. Paul had a love for the naughty ones, just as a parent has for his children; some are naughty and some are pleasant, and the parent sometimes loves the naughtiest best, in spite of the naughtiness which grieves him.

Verse 18—"Wherefore we would have come unto you, even I Paul, once and again; but Satan hindered." He does not tell how Satan hindered. We are apt to think that so eminent and devoted a servant as the apostle Paul could not be hindered; but he could, and was hindered by Satan. You and I are not less exposed to Satan's hindrance than the apostle. It was a real Devil, and no mere influence that stood in the way of the apostle. May our eyes be opened to see Satan's subtle devices to hinder us in the path of obedience and faith. He is busy putting all sorts of devices in the path of the Lord's

servants; opposing every step in testimony to the world for Christ, and every step to help fellow-saints. We have a real adversary to contend with, we are in an enemy's land; knowing this, how important it is that we should have our eye on God, and not engage in anything in which we cannot count on God being with us. Being in the enemies' land we ought to be so walking, day by day, that we can rely upon the protection of our heavenly Father; putting ourselves under the covert of His wings and counting upon Him being with us continually.

Verses 19, 20—"For what is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? Are not even ye in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at His coming? For ye are our glory and joy." You will find in this epistle every now and then, not only the inward affection of the apostle, but that which was the hope and joy of his heart, the object ever before him, viz., the coming of the Lord. In the first chapter the coming of the Lord is brought in in connection with their conversion. Here his hope, and joy, and crown of rejoicing was, as he looked forward to the hour of the coming of Christ, when that company that he had been instrumental in gathering to Christ down here would then be gathered around Him in His glory. He had gone forth weeping, bearing precious seed, and he looked forward to the time when the result of his testimony would be seen in these Thessalonian saints being gathered around the Christ of God. Jesus Himself was the great Sower. He was the Weeping One that sowed the precious seed, and He is the One who, when He comes again, will come with rejoicing, bringing His sheaves with Him. Now we are called into fellowship with Christ in sowing the seed of the Word—fellowship with Christ in His rejection and afflictions. As truly as we have had fellowship with Christ in suffering here in testimony for Him, we shall share with Him in His joy, and glory, and victory hereafter; and the apostle here is cheered as he looks forward to "the crowning day" that is "coming by and by." There are various aspects of that day of

victory and glory. There will be the Judgment-seat of Christ, the tribunal before which His people will be brought; and where their service to Him will be tested, and where rewards from His hand shall be granted according to their faithfulness. But this is rather a different aspect of recompense. In 2 Tim. iv. 6-8, he says, "I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give me at that day;" &c. There he is looking forward to the Judgment-seat of Christ; but here he is looking forward to the joy of seeing those he has been instrumental in leading to Christ, caught up to meet the Lord in the air, to be for ever with Him in that glorious home that He is preparing for His bride. There are some Christians who are so spiritual that they will not allow their minds to think of anything or anybody but Christ. That was not how the apostle acted, and it was not because he undervalued Christ; but he thus entered into fellowship with Christ's joy. That is the blessed thought here. And so you find throughout the gospels, wherever the Lord Jesus raised up one from the dead He restored them to those they had been separated from, as in the case of Jairus' daughter, the widow's son, and Lazarus; and so they shared with the Lord in His joy. And will that not be the joy of the Lord Jesus when He comes, when He gathers all those whom He has so loved, even unto death. Will it not be His joy to waft us up to His embrace; to surround Himself; to be made like Himself; to have neither spot nor wrinkle, nor any such thing; to have every heart for ever set at rest; not a cloud in the sky of your eternal future? Will that not be His exceeding joy? We read in Jude 24 of "Him who shall present us faultless before the presence of His glory, with exceeding joy." What is the apostle's joy? Fellowship in the triumph of Christ. He has a heart beating in unison with Christ's. He is willing to suffer for Christ's sake; to have fellowship in the afflictions of Christ. That

is a practical thing. God has not only brought us into fellowship with Christ in His sufferings and His joy, but He has also brought us into fellowship with one another in our sufferings and joys. Real practical fellowship with one another depends upon real practical fellowship with the Lord Jesus and God our Father. Have we not had some little share in this blessed work of leading sinners to Christ? Are there not some that we feel a godly care about, and that we would see growing in grace? We may have been used of the Lord in the salvation of one, two, or even a large number of saints. Are we at all in sympathy with the joy of the Lord Jesus as we pass along through life? Are we cast down in heart when we see one fall before the Tempter? Are we brokenhearted when we see some who for a time ran well and then departed from the Lord? And do we follow after them until they are restored to the Lord? If we are in real sympathy and fellowship with Christ for His blood-bought heritage, it will give us joy to see them following Him and delighting to please Him; and it will grieve our hearts when we fail to see the ways of Christ in them. Are we looking forward to that blessed time when we shall be gathered around Him, and we shall have the joy of seeing those that we loved and cared for, live also with Him?

"THE FAITH."

Multum in Parvo Notes of a Meeting.

JUDE 3—"The faith which was once delivered to the saints"; 17-20—"Most holy faith." Difference between "faith" and "the faith." "Faith" is the *act* of believing; "the faith" is *that which is believed*. "The faith" is not mentioned till Christ was risen, being embodied in Him. That which God has revealed and communicated to us in the Word to be received, believed, obeyed, constitutes *the faith*.

Look at a few references. The first mention of it is in Acts vi. 12—Believed, received, *obeyed*. Acts xiii. 8—Elymas the

sorcerer tried to *turn from* "the faith." Sorcery exists in these last days as well as then. Acts xxiv. 24—Felix heard concerning "the faith" *in Christ*; all the faith being centred in and embodied in Christ. Rom. x. 8—"The word of 'THE faith' which we preach." Gal. i. 23—Paul, the opposer of "the faith," now preached "the faith." Gal. ii. 16—"Justified by 'the faith' of Jesus Christ," *i.e.*, the faith embodied in Jesus Christ. Gal. ii. 20—Live by "the faith" embodied in the Son of God. Gal. iii. 23—Before "the faith" came;—not, before "believing"—"the faith" *now* revealed." Why is "the faith" so often in Galatians? Because it is in a certain sense contrasted with the law. Col. i. 23—Continue in "the faith," *i.e.*, not turned away from "the faith." The *hope* here so closely connected with the faith loosens from earth, turns us heavenward. Col. ii. 7—Established in "the faith"; here, it is intimately connected with Christ and the Word. 2 Thess. iii. 2—"All have not 'THE faith,'" *i.e.*, do not *hold the faith*. World "holds" science; we "hold" the faith. 1 Tim. i. 19—"Shipwreck concerning 'the faith.'" Nature of *their* shipwreck—*vain*, carnal minds, never submitted to God, who *let go* the resurrection *hope*. 2 Tim. ii. 16-18—The hope is overthrown in three ways. (1) By saying it is past, "past already." (2) By saying Christ cannot come till "after one thousand years." (3) By saying there must first be the rise of antichrist and the great tribulation. Two things necessary to holding "the faith." (1) Trust in God. (2) A good conscience. 1 Tim. iii. 9—Holding "the faith" in a *pure* conscience. 1 Tim. iv. 1—Depart from "the faith," giving heed to demons (not "devils," there is only one Devil), same as the *sorcerer*. 1 Tim. iv. 4—*Good* servant, nourished in "the faith." "*Refuse* profane and old wives' fables"; yes, *refuse everything* that does not come in the words of "the faith"; all else is bad doctrine. A good servant is *nourished* in "the faith" and *exercised* unto godliness. Much nourishment without exercise makes

a man gouty. Much exercise without nourishment makes a man lean. Spiritually, it is the same. Scripture is never one-sided. 1 Tim. iv. 1—*Seduced* from “the faith.” Covet after a shilling a week or a thousand pounds a year and Satan has the advantage, and soon the feet will be turned out of the path. 2 Tim. vi. 2—“Fight the good fight of ‘the faith.’” How much opposition to the faith is there in modern “science” falsely so called! No contradiction between *actual* science and “the faith.” Science says “man developed from monkeys;” “impossible for the ‘body’ of Christ to ascend into heaven;” “irrational to believe in a *literal* resurrection.” Have we to enter arena and combat these? No! “Preach THE WORD.” Judge science by the Bible, not the Bible by science. Sir David Brewster, though a great scientist, had implicit faith in Jesus Christ and the Bible. 2 Tim. iv. 7—“Kept ‘the faith’”; “practised what he preached” to Timothy; *henceforth* a crown. Titus i. 1—“The faith” of *God’s elect*; not only of Jesus, but of God’s elect; they believe it, obey it, live in the power of it. James ii. 1—Have not “the faith” with respect to persons; the mind off “the faith” will regard the “ring.” All departure from “the faith” is traceable to a *bad* conscience, e.g., Jude 4, tried to make Word support *bad practices*. Phil. iii. 18—Why enemies? *Self-lovers*. Acts xx. 30—*Honour-seekers*, led away from “the faith.” 2 Tim. iii. 2—*Self-lovers* “after them.” What is “the faith”? “All things I have commanded.” The Bible *once for all* delivered, complete revelation of “the faith.” Why did Paul keep “the faith”? Because he had nothing of his own to keep. Phil. iii. 8—“The faith” is the communication of God’s glorious thoughts to us, to *all* saints; so should be *contended* for by *all*. To do so we must be *right with God*. The man that lets go *one* part is in great danger of letting go *all*. “The faith” is *not* liberty or license, but “our *most holy* faith.” May we receive, obey, hold, contend for, and “keep the faith.” Hy. P.

NOTES ON THE PROVERBS.

PART XVI.

PROVERB.

PARALLEL.

Chap. xxv., verse 1. “These are also proverbs of Solomon, which the men of Hezekiah king of Judah copied out.” Part iv. of the Proverbs extends from Chap. xxv. to Chap. xxxix., and contains proverbs selected by the men—*i.e.*, prophets—in Hezekiah’s reign; it consists of unconnected sentences.

Verse 2. “It is the glory of God to conceal a thing,” &c. As whatsoever we do know of God but shows His goodness, so we may also take for certain that the things He has not revealed (and which we could not now understand) are also right. While it is to the honour of kings, who are but mortal, to fully show the *reason* for all they do, even though they may not be fully understood by all their subjects.

Verses 4, 5. “Take away the dross from the silver,” &c. Solomon purged his kingdom of those who were in heart traitors to him, and so established his throne.

“Let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and of the spirit,” &c.

Verses 6, 7. “Put not forth thyself,” &c. See Luke xiv. 7-11.

Verse 8. “Go not forth hastily to strive,” &c. Always set the matter before God, honestly, in prayer, before setting it out before thy neighbour.

1 Cor. vi. 6, 7.

Verse 12. "As an earring of gold . . . so is a wise reprover." Psalm cxli. 5.

Verse 13. "As the cold of snow in the time of harvest," &c. As refreshing as a cool breeze on a sultry day, so is the faithful messenger to his master. Such was Eliezer to Abraham and Isaac, and such every true servant of God. Of One it is said (Isaiah xlii. 1-4), "Behold My Servant . . . in whom My soul delighteth."

Verse 16. "Hast thou found honey?" &c. Earthly pleasures soon cloy and become distasteful, causing leanness of soul—See Psalm cvi. 15.

Verse 20. "As he that taketh away a garment in cold weather," &c. Psalm cxxxvii. 3, 4. Darius — Dan. vi. 18.

Verse. 21. "If thine enemy hunger," &c. 2 Kings xxvi. 21-23. Rom. xii. 20, 21.

"The heaping coals of fire" is in allusion to the melting down of silver and gold through piling up hot charcoal on them in the crucible. So are men melted down by forbearance and kindness.

David so acted towards Saul, and the Lord rewarded him by giving him the kingdom.

Verse 25. "As cold waters to a thirsty soul," &c. Jacob hearing of Joseph—Gen. xlv. 25-28.

Luke ii. 8-14. "Behold, I bring you glad tidings of great joy."

Eph. ii. 17.

Luke iv. 16-19.

So is God's Gospel to every convicted sinner.

Verse 26. "A righteous man falling down before the wicked." Either cast down by oppression, or basely yielding to evil ways and evil men. If such happen to those who are deemed righteous it is like a poisoned spring.

David's fall caused the enemies of the Lord to blaspheme, and gave evil example which Amnon and Absalom followed fatally.

Verse 27. "It is not good to eat much honey: so," &c. Much honey causes nausea. So to seek out praise for oneself.

The humble soul is ever conscious of increasing imperfection, not of cause for glorying.

"Let him that gloryeth, glory in the Lord."

Chap. xxvi., ver. 1. "As snow in summer, and as rain in harvest," &c. These are out of place and harmful at such seasons: so is honour unto a fool. See Herod's case—Acts xii., 21-23.

Verse 2. "As the bird by wandering," &c. That is, a curse uttered without cause shall no more settle on a man than the aimless wandering of a bird shall attain any end. Balaam's curse came not on Israel (Neh. xiii. 2); nor Goliath's (1 Sam. xvii. 43); nor Shimei's on David (2 Sam. xvi. 5).

Verses 4, 5. "Answer not a fool . . . Answer a fool," &c. We ought not to answer a fool according to his folly, so as to be like him by acting in the same fashion. Moses did so at Meribah; David in his answer to Nabal.

But we should answer a fool so as to expose his folly. Thus David did Goliath; Job, his wife; the Lord so, continually, in His answers—see Luke xiii. 15, xiv. 5, 6; Matt. xv. 2, xvi. 1-4, xxi. 23-27, xxii. 16.

Verses 6-12. "He that sendeth a messenger by the hand of a fool," &c. These verses show in various ways the folly of trusting fools, *i.e.*, those wise in their own conceit, regardless of God's wisdom.

Verse 6 is illustrated by the ten spies—See Deut. i. 22; Num. xiii. 32; xiv. 29-36.

Verse 7 is illustrated by Balaam — Num. xxiii. 7-10.

Verse 8, by Abimelech—Judges ix. 6.

Verse 9. The very proverbs the Jews gloried in are shown to be their shame—Ezek. xviii. 2, &c.

V. 10. Nabal's case.

Verse 11. Herod's case—Mark vi. 20-27; the unclean spirit — Matt. xii. 43-45.

Verse 12. The Pharisees' rejection of the Lord (John ix. 34-41, Matt. xxiii. 17-33), so that publicans and harlots entered before them (Matt. xxi. 31).

Verse 23. "Burning lips and a wicked heart," &c. Joab—2 Sam. xx. 9, 10. Judas—Luke xxii. 47, 48. Cain and Abel. Absalom and Amnon.

Verses 24, 25. "He that hateth dissembles," &c. Herod to wise men. Eve fell a victim to Satan's fair speech. So let us beware. 2 Cor. xi. 3.

Verse 27. "Whoso diggeth a pit." Haman's case — Esther vii. 10. Psalm ix. 15.

Verse 28. "A flattering mouth worketh ruin." 20,000 men fell victims to Absalom's flattery—2 Sam. xv. 4-6, xviii. 7.

Ahab's prophets—1 Kings xxii. 11, 12.

"A flattering mouth is an open sepulchre."

A. O. M.

"HOLD FAST."

What to hold fast—

- That which is *good* (1 Thess. v. 21).
- Confidence and rejoicing—*firm unto the end* (Heb. iii. 6).
- Confession of our hope *without wavering* (Heb. x. 23).
- Faithful word (Titus i. 9).
- MY* name (Rev. ii. 13).
- (in distinction to those who *hold* the doctrine of Balaam, and the Nicolaitanes).

Manner of holding fast—

Hold fast . . . in *faith and love* (2 Tim. i. 13).

Why hold fast?—

Seeing we have a great High Priest that is passed into the heavens (Heb. iv. 14).

How long to hold fast—

Hold fast *till I come* (Rev. ii. 25).

In case of slackening—

Hold fast and *repent* (Rev. iii. 3).

Last exhortation—

Hold fast that no MAN take thy crown (Rev. iii. 11).

Opposite to Holding Fast—

"LET THEM SLIP" (Heb. ii. 1).

Hv. P.

Questions and Answers.

QUESTION 271.—In Rom. iv. Abraham's circumcision was the seal of his pre-existing personal faith; upon what principle then was Isaac circumcised, who as yet had no such faith?

God chose Abraham to be the head of a family and nation with whom He was about to enter into peculiar covenant relationship as with no other people. His choice of Abraham may be referred to in Jer. ii. 21, "A noble vine," "wholly a right seed." His personal faith was abundantly evidenced by his obedience, and, not only so, but he was one of whom God said, "I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord, &c."

Like Noah, who was righteous before God, and found grace in the eyes of the Lord, and whose household shared in the salvation of the Ark, not for *their* righteousness, but because of Noah's righteousness, so Isaac is brought into covenant relationship with Jehovah through God's favour to Abraham.

Abraham thus becomes the father of a two-fold seed. According to the flesh the father of Israel nationally—the father of the circumcised nation of whom Isaac was the first—but according to the spirit he is the father of all who believe, whether they be believers of the circumcision or believers uncircumcised. If they have the same faith in God, and walk in the steps of that faith, then are they the children of Abraham. Circumcision, therefore, in the case of Abraham had a significance beyond that which it possessed for his descendants. To him it was an act of obedience, and a seal of the righteousness he already possessed; to them it was but the outward sign of a relationship in which they stood to God nationally, because of being the literal fleshly descendants of Abraham.

QUESTION 272.—Is it right to teach children to pray?

All are "by nature the children of wrath." "Without faith it is impossible to please God." Spiritual worship cannot be offered by those who are "in the flesh"—who are unregenerate. Fruit unto God can only spring from a divine root. Therefore, we conclude, that to teach children forms of prayer, and to insist upon the habitual use of such forms, is neither good for the children nor pleasing to God. Unreality, which is but a form of hypocrisy, cannot be pleasing to God in a child any more than in one of mature years.

But, on the other hand, are children not to be taught in any way to recognise God? We believe they should. We believe that as creatures who are the daily recipients of God's mercies, and dependant upon Him for life and breath and all things, they should be so instructed that they will both ask God for those things they require, and thank God for those things which they receive. To this end ought Christian parents to instruct their children

diligently in the Word of God, so that learning His will, and seeing how *they* acknowledge God in everything, the children may spontaneously do likewise. Thus the great fact that there is a living God to whom they are accountable, is borne in upon their young hearts, and conscience becomes exercised as to right and wrong, and soon the faithful parent may count upon the grace of God to produce by His Spirit in the child a feeling of *need* deeper than of temporal daily blessings, even that need which Christ alone can satisfy.

We believe that if children are diligently instructed in the Word of God, and hear their parents praying, and *praying for them*, they will soon begin to pray after their own simple way. Thus, without teaching them forms of prayer, they will really learn to pray; and who shall dare to forbid them?

QUESTION 273.—Is it the mind of the Lord that the children of believers should accompany their parents when they come together to break bread on the first day of the week?

The principle is clear in Ex. xii. 26. One of God's purposes in appointing the Passover to be repeated annually was that it might awaken inquiry in the minds of the young, and lead to a knowledge of Himself.

There is no warrant for excluding *any person* from the *place* where the church assembles. On the contrary, it is clear from 1 Cor. xiv. 24-25, that the presence of unbelievers is anticipated, and that there is good ground for the expectation that, through the grace of God, their presence there may be the occasion of blessing to their souls.

How much more may the Christian parent count upon the presence of his children, when the Lord's death is so evidently shown, being made a blessing to them.

Of course their presence in the room is quite another thing from their being received into the fellowship of the assembly and partaking of the feast. The fact of their being outside the circle of the fellowship has often been the occasion of conviction.

We believe it to be a most serious evil habitually to leave children at home, when their parents are at the Lord's table, and then, as is too often the case, to send them to a Sunday school as a substitute for parental instruction.

He who said, "Suffer the little children to come unto Me, and forbid them not," will surely be pleased to see them where the eye as well as the ear may be a channel for awakening interest and conveying instruction as to His glorious redemption work.

A FAITHFUL ministry will never get a great name for the man, but is sure to get one for the Master.

CHRIST'S lament for Ephesus was not for lack of labour, patience, works, and such-like outward manifestation, but for lack of true and genuine *love*—that love for which He died.

SPIRITUAL GROWTH.

SUBSTANCE OF AN ADDRESS BY A. STEWART.

TURN to 1 Peter i. 17—"If ye call on the Father, who without respect of persons judgeth according to every man's work."

We read elsewhere that "the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son." How, then, are we to understand this passage? What may help in removing the difficulty is to consider that while future judgment is committed to the Son, and each of us must appear before the judgment-seat of Christ, we are, as regards the present time, under the discipline of the Father. We are the subjects of His fatherly government, and He is now taking account of our ways.

"Pass the time of your sojourning here in fear" (verse 18). The reason is given: "Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, . . . but with the precious blood of Christ." The exhortation is not based upon doubt, but upon certainty. We are to be in fear because we "know" that we have been redeemed and with what we have been redeemed. There is not a tinge or a taint of bondage in this fear. A verse in Proverbs sets it in the light—"In the fear of the Lord is strong confidence." There is not a trace of slavishness in it. Yet we ought to remember the claims of that great and holy God who has redeemed us, and our ways should correspond with His character. There are two great reasons for Godly fear; the preciousness of the blood which has redeemed us, and the holiness of the great Person who dwells within us. We are to work out our salvation with fear and trembling, because it is God that worketh in us to will and to do of His good pleasure. Holding these truths, or rather, being held by them, we shall go about the Lord's work in His fear continually. The element of reverence will be in all our service, and the excitement connected

with the work will not carry us out of the presence of God.

"Who by Him do believe in God, that raised Him up from the dead, and gave Him glory; that your faith and hope might be in God" (verse 21). In this passage we are carried to a remote point. Says some one, "I believe in the Lord Jesus." But, says Peter, "There is something beyond that." The word is—"Who by Him do believe in God." Let me illustrate. Here is a sapling that has taken root in congenial soil. We say it is rooted. Yes; but follow the root to its extremity, and you will find that it has passed down through the intervening soil, and wound itself round the rock below. By Him, the Lord Jesus, we believe in God. That is where faith ultimately reaches. We say, "God is my salvation."

"Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit" (verse 22). There is a cleansing by the precious blood of Christ, and there is a cleansing by the Holy Ghost. "If we walk in the light, as He is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin" (1 John i. 7). It has efficacy to cleanse us from all sin, and if we sin it has not meantime lost its power. But as regards our practical cleansing, and the producing in us of pure thoughts and desires, that is done through the power of the Holy Ghost, who dwells in us, and whose very office it is to extricate us from the sins that would ensnare and defile us. The precious blood cleanses us judicially from all sin, and the Holy Ghost conforms us practically to the mind of God. He may and does powerfully use the truth concerning Christ crucified and His precious blood in doing so.

"See that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently" (verse 22). The warmth comes in here. Purity and warmth are what God desires in His children. Some may think that if they are warm they are all right. Others may be content with being what I may be permitted to call icily clear.

God says that our love is to be at once pure and fervent. We are never right till we combine the two, and they can only be maintained in us by our dwelling in Christ; the power comes from Him. The verse is a testing one. Have I, since I knew the Lord, let us ask, loved all my brethren, without exception, with a pure heart, and have I loved them fervently? That is what we are called to—to love in this way not only the saints who agree with us, nor those only whose ways we judge to be according to the mind of God; we are bound to love all saints in the bowels of Jesus Christ. Who that knows the Lord would wish to bring the standard down?

“Wherefore” (ch. ii. 1.) There are some words that are hinges. This is one of them. It refers to what goes before, and what follows turns upon it. Seeing you have been born again, as the former chapter teaches, seeing you have been made new men in Christ Jesus, for that reason lay aside “all malice, and all guile and hypocrisies and envies, and all evil speakings.” The Word of God gave you life when you believed, and that life must be sustained by the same Word. You are to desire it as a new-born babe turns to its mother’s breast, and for this reason—that you may grow thereby. The moment we believe the Gospel we receive spiritual life, and that life yearns for its proper nutriment, of which there are not two kinds, but only one, and that one the Word of God. God desires growth. Have you thought of that word, “Ye are God’s husbandry”? (1 Cor. iii. 9). As a man takes a farm and expends labour upon it, so God has taken our souls under His care, and He is bringing us through the discipline of life, its trials and difficulties, in order that we may bring forth precious fruit to Himself. If God so deals with us, we should be desirous to respond to His grace and to grow.

There are certain things mentioned here which hinder spiritual growth, and they must be got rid of. They are not theft, robbery, murder, and adultery, but they are perhaps nearer to us, and more dangerous than any

of those sins. They are guile, malice, hypocrisies, and evil-speaking. If you are to grow in grace and enjoy blessed communion with the Lord Jesus Christ, you must look upon these as you would on a nest of vipers, and if one of them should stir in your soul, then, in the power of the Spirit, you must put your heel upon it. We are exhorted in the Word of God to speak evil of no man. Try all you have been saying this week by that Word. If you have spoken evil of any, it condemns you. Even regarding the devil we read in Jude 9, that “Michael the archangel, when contending with the devil he disputed about the body of Moses, durst not bring against him a railing accusation, but said, The Lord rebuke thee.”

That is the negative side, but positively, you are to “desire the sincere milk of the Word that ye may grow thereby.” You cannot grow in any other way. There must be humility and desirousness of nourishment. The fact that food is a necessity is in itself humbling. If a man ceases to eat, he dies; he has no inherent power to sustain life. Every meal he takes proves his dependence. “As new-born babes” is the requisite condition. Not that we are to continue in spiritual babyhood. Paul chides the Corinthians for being babes in spite of all their gifts. God demands growth in His children. But to be as a new-born babe in desire for the sincere milk of the Word does not merit rebuke, but the contrary. To say of an old man that he is childish is a reproach, but to say of him that he is child-like is to put a crown of glory on his hoar hairs.

It is only the humble who will grow in grace. Our blessed Lord, as He grew to manhood, increased in wisdom and stature and in favour with God and man. Look at Him in the Temple as a boy of twelve years of age—a perfect boy—not teaching the doctors but hearing them and asking them questions. Great is the grace of humility, and blessed is the man who possesses it. It is the solvent of all difficulties. You may have heard of two goats who once

met on a ledge of rock where there was no room for one to pass the other. Below them was a precipice, and it would have been death to have fallen over. Neither could turn back, but they solved the difficulty. One of them lay down and allowed the other to walk over it. A simple expedient. With us the difficulty is apt to be who is to be the first to lie down.

THE DIVINITY OF CHRIST.

BY THE EDITOR.

Continued from page 146.

WE now come to consider, in the third place, scriptures in which Divine honour is ascribed to the Lord Jesus Christ.

To attribute Divine honour to the creature would be to rob God of His glory. Let us look first at John v. 23—"That all men should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father. He that honoureth not the Son honoureth not the Father which hath sent Him." Now turn and see how this is borne out in John xx. 27, 28—"Then saith He to Thomas, Reach hither thy finger, and behold My hands; and reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into My side: and be not faithless, but believing. And Thomas answered and said unto Him, My Lord and my God."

Contrast with this the action of Paul and Barnabas in Acts xiv. 11-15. When the people at Lystra beheld the miracle of healing wrought by Paul upon the man who had been a life-long cripple, "They lifted up their voices, saying in the speech of Lycaonia, The gods are come down to us in the likeness of men." "Then the priest of Jupiter brought oxen and garlands unto the gates, and would have done sacrifice with the people. Which when the apostles, Barnabas and Paul, heard of, they rent their clothes, and ran in among the people, crying out, and saying, Sirs, why do ye these things? We also are men of like passions with you, and

preach unto you that ye should turn from these vanities unto the living God," &c., &c. "And with these sayings scarce restrained they the people, that they had not done sacrifice unto them."

Here we see Paul and Barnabas refusing the honour which is due to God, the Creator, and to none else.

Another instance of a similar character is in Rev. xxii. 8, 9—"And when I had heard and seen, I fell down to worship before the feet of the angel which shewed me these things. Then saith he unto me, See thou do it not: for I am thy fellow-servant, and of thy brethren the prophets, and of them which keep the sayings of this book: worship God."

I cannot explain, nor do I care to explain, why John fell down to worship at the feet of the angel. Like Peter on the mount of transfiguration, he may have been bewildered by the things which he had seen and heard, and scarce knew whether he lay at the feet of an angel or of Christ Himself. But even angels, though mighty beings, would not for a moment accept Divine honour. They are but fellow-servants of the saints now, and of the prophets of old.

Mark what the Lord Jesus said to Satan when he shewed him the kingdoms of this world, and the glory of them, saying—"All these things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me." He answered, "Get thee hence, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and Him only shalt thou serve" (Matt. iv. 8-10). Guilty, deluded Christendom will yet commit that terrible sin when by-and-by they shall worship the beast and his image, giving thus to the creature, or rather to Satan himself, the honour that belongs to God alone.

But Jesus, in the calm consciousness of the glory of His own Person, accepts from Thomas the honour that we have seen is promptly refused by Paul and by the angel. None but a Divine person could so act without dishonour to God.

Again, in Matt. xxviii. we read (verse 9), "Behold, Jesus met them, saying, All

hail. And they came and held Him by the feet, and *worshipped Him.*" And in verse 17, "Then the eleven went . . . and when they saw Him, *they worshipped Him.*" And in Luke xxiv. 51, 52—"And it came to pass, while He blessed them, He was parted from them, and carried up into heaven. And *they worshipped Him,* and returned to Jerusalem with great joy."

In all these scriptures, we see that Divine honour was paid to Him, and accepted by Him: thus fully bearing out His own words, "That all men should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father."

Then in Heb. i., we read—"And again," or rather, as in the margin, "When He bringeth again the First-begotten into the world, He saith, And let all the angels of God worship Him." This "First-begotten" from the dead is none other than the Lord Jesus, according to Rev. i. 5. When He is brought again the second time into the world (the inhabited earth), not as before in humiliation, but in all His glories as the Heir of all things, the whole of the angelic hosts will be summoned, along with all the redeemed, to ascribe to Him, the same who was nailed to the Cross, that worship and honour which is due to God alone. Turn now to Rev. v.—"One of the elders saith unto me, Weep not: behold, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, hath prevailed to open the book." Here again occurs that title so expressive of His Divinity, contrasted with a title, "The Lion of the tribe of Judah," which tells of His Manhood, of His pertaining to the Royal Tribe, and of His being the King of Israel; who, as the Lion, will yet appear to destroy the enemies of God.

Then in verses 8 to 14, we see how all created beings, the living ones, the twenty-four elders, the ten thousand times ten thousand angels, every creature in heaven and earth, all unite in ascribing "blessing, honour, glory, and power, unto Him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever." What name but that of a Divine person could thus be associated with

the name of "Him that liveth for ever and ever?"

There are many scriptures where the name of the Lord Jesus is thus so intimately linked with that of the Father that they afford the strongest proof of His Divinity. For example, Gal. i. 1—"Paul, an apostle, not of men, neither by man, but by Jesus Christ, and God the Father." What irreverence it would be thus to associate with "God the Father" the name of any created being, however exalted! Again, Phil. i. 2—"Grace be unto you, and peace, from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ." Also, in Col. i. 2, 1 Thess. i. 1; 2 Thess. i. 2, &c., &c. Again, in 2 Thess. ii. 16—"Now our Lord Jesus Christ Himself, and God, even our Father, who hath loved us." Again, 2 Peter i. 2—"Grace and peace be multiplied unto you through the knowledge of God, and of Jesus our Lord." 2 Peter iii. 18—"But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To Him be glory both now and for ever. Amen."

These scriptures I think sufficient (though many more might no doubt be adduced) to show that the Lord Jesus did receive, and does receive, and will yet receive, and that eternally, Divine honour and worship from His redeemed people, from the angelic hosts, and from all creation; and that it is the will of God that it should be so.

All these scriptures must be explained away, or got rid of, before it is possible to hold any other doctrine than that which is the common belief of the saints, as it is the plain teaching of the Scriptures, that the Lord Jesus is a Divine person, the eternal Word who was with God, and was God. True, "the Word became flesh," but He did not thereby cease to be God—God and man in one person, the only One who could be a worshipper and an object of worship. Thus, upon three grounds, His pre-existence, His creatorship, and the ascription to Him of Divine honour, I have sought to prove from Scripture that Jesus Christ is God.

THE FAITHFULNESS OF GOD, AND MAN'S FAILURE.

HOW comforting the assurance that God is unchangeable, and that nothing can turn Him from His purpose or hinder its accomplishment. "Hath He said, and shall He not do it?" Man may fail, and on his part forfeit blessing, "Nevertheless, the counsel of the Lord, that shall stand," and the knowledge of this should stimulate to more reverent attention to the Word and perseverance in the path of obedience.

The purpose of God, in the present election of grace, has remained unchanged since the descent of the Holy Ghost at Pentecost, and shall so continue until the Lord comes to receive unto Himself the Church (1 Thess. iv.), and accordingly *general* principles and precepts for the guidance of saints apply alike to all, and in every place, for the entire period until then. In the New Testament *prophetic* portions of Scripture, we have additional *special* instructions as to how the godly should act after declension in the body corporate had set in, and onward to the close, which are particularly applicable to this our day (see 2 Peter, 2 Thess., 2 Tim., Jude, Rev. ii. and iii.); so that saints have in the Holy Scripture sufficient light for the path, however dark or difficult it may become, leaving no excuse for failure.

Notwithstanding, is it not true that professing Christians, as a rule, appear to think little of the sin of schism and the manifold evils connected with it? Some defend sectarianism on the ground of necessity and expediency; others even boast in their favourite system; many after conversion to God continue in the same unscriptural association apparently without any exercise of conscience; whilst there are also those (perhaps of all the most inconsistent) who, themselves professedly separated unto the Lord, make light of the sin which by their previous action they had openly condemned. How often we hear sectarian differences respecting clearly revealed truth spoken of

as mere trifles—not sufficient to interrupt fellowship, not seeing eye to eye, and so on; and in keeping with that view of the matter, leaders of sectarian bodies have been invited to occupy places of prominence as teachers and preachers in connection with assemblies of separated believers. Where this is so, is there not cause to fear that the mind of God is not clearly apprehended? For, is not schism the revolt of members of the Body from the head? the gravity of which may be estimated by the force of the apostolic reproof addressed to saints at Corinth—"Is Christ divided?" &c.—and by the fearfully solemn results as predicted in epistles already referred to. Even now the fruit is apparent. The authority of the Lord having been set aside, the lawlessness which commenced in the assembly has now extended to the world, with which the church became allied. Open infidelity is gaining ground, and the end will be judgments most dreadful.

Departure from the truth is always a serious matter, however trivial it may appear, and if unjudged it certainly will lead from bad to worse; therefore we need to watch against the beginning, or if that has set in, to seek grace to retrace the step in time. Thank God, the way is clear. His purpose and mind, as at the first revealed, have not changed. Christ Jesus is the Lord, therefore His authority must be practically acknowledged. The Body of Christ is one, therefore the members may not become members of independent worldly bodies or act in self-will. The Holy Ghost is still on earth to gather unto the Lord, and from Him through individual members as He wills to minister for the building up of the body; therefore He must not be trammelled by mere human rules or regulations, and the Word of the Lord must test everything. Whatever is contrary to that, however desirable or expedient it may appear, is unclean, it is unrighteousness, and the command to every *one* who nameth the name of the Lord is imperative. "Touch not the unclean." "Depart from unrighteousness." "Keep thyself pure." "Neither

be a partaker of other men's sins." Thus we see that notwithstanding the general break-down and departure from the truth, the godly may find their never-failing resource in God and the Word of His grace.

Whilst thus resting in God, and the stability of His Word, the true believer will also form a correct estimate of man—of his sin and failure. The result will be distrust of self and humility of mind, the humble acknowledgment of failure wherever it may have been, and a taking the lowly place which becomes one in view of it. And this all so strikingly in contrast to that spirit which shall characterise the mass, concerning which the Lord has pronounced those solemn words, "I will spue thee out of My mouth"; and have not brethren cause to watch, lest, in their zeal to clear themselves of other prevailing sins, they fall into that of spiritual pride. For what, if out of the confusion, the result of disobedience, a few have been gathered unto the Lord in the confession of His name and authority, they have nothing in themselves to boast of, neither can they glory in man—"He that glorieth let him glory in the Lord."

In so far as Christ is the object, testimony, whether individual or collective, will be to the praise of God. Albeit there may be little of outward display, and however few in number, union will be real, and power and blessing shall be experienced. How different the result whenever congregational union becomes the object. With strict attention to externals, decay works within. Outwardly there may be an appearance of strength, whilst inwardly the lack of spiritual power is felt, and in the effort to maintain the corporate oneness of assemblies some have resorted to unscriptural discipline, which in result has proved the very opposite of that which was desired.

In this connection it may be profitable to notice a characteristic distinction between the epistles to Timothy, first and second. In the former, stress is laid upon the condition of heart and conscience, "Love out of a pure heart, and a good conscience, and faith unfeigned: from which some having

swerved have turned aside" (chap. i. 5 connect verse 19), whereas in the latter epistle, after declension has become general, righteousness is the prominent thought. "Depart from unrighteousness." "Follow righteousness, faith, love, peace, with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart" (chap. iii. 19-22 connect chap. iv. 8). Brethren, the Master is coming. Harken to His words of counsel and cheer. "That which ye have hold fast till I come." "Be watchful and strengthen the things which remain." "Behold I come quickly, hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown." "Surely I come quickly. Amen, even so, come, Lord Jesus." R. S.

THE FIRST EPISTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS.

CHAP. XII.

NOTES OF AN ADDRESS BY J. R. C.

EVERY one of the epistles has a character peculiar to itself. We have seen in our consideration of this epistle that it concerns the order of the House of God.

Observe that expression in verse 1, "spiritual gifts." Let us bear this in mind, that mere natural ability has no place in the House of God. In the first three chapters of this epistle there is a clean sweep made of man's wisdom, eloquence, and ability. What is required in the House of God is that ability which the Spirit of God alone can bestow. That is a thing that has almost been lost sight of in Christendom. The ministry by which the members of the body of Christ are built up must be the gift of the Spirit of God. The very idea of man qualifying man for the work of edifying in the Church of God is foreign to the Scriptures. We are dependent upon the indwelling Spirit of God for those spiritual gifts which are freely bestowed upon the members for the growth and edifying of the Church of God.

"Ye know that ye were Gentiles, carried away unto these dumb idols, even as ye

were led." When he says "Ye *were* Gentiles," he seems to infer that they are no longer Gentiles. These distinctions are done away with by the Cross. Both Jew and Gentile are made one in Christ—they become members of the Body of Christ. The man who believes in Jesus no longer belongs to the old Adam stock; he is in the new creation. This brings us at once to what composes the Church. There are not any unregenerate persons in God's assembly; all who compose the Church are born again, and therefore partakers of the Divine nature. In God's sight it is a living organism. It is compared to a human body, every member living and the blood circulating through all the body—every member a partaker of the life of the head. This brings out what the structure of the Church is. It is not a nation of men, according to the flesh, like the nation of Israel taken out of Egypt and brought into the wilderness; but a company of lost sinners out of both Jew and Gentile, who were once dead, but now quickened, raised up, and linked in eternal life to the risen Christ. Now he says "ye were Gentiles carried away even as ye were led." Unsaved don't know that they are led by the devil, carried away captive whatever direction he chooses to lead them, driven on by the prince of the power of the air. They were carried away, these Corinthians, to worship idols, just as he leads people to the theatre and the ball-room. The believer who is indwelt by the Spirit of God is led in the paths of righteousness and peace.

They were carried away to dumb idols. That was the character of all the gods of the heathen—they were dumb, they could not speak. Men might speak to them, like the worshippers of Baal; but they cannot hear, and they utter no response. But Elijah spake to Jehovah, and down came the fire; that's how his God answered. Ours is not a dumb God, but a God that speaks; a living and sympathetic God, who has spoken, who does speak, and who will yet speak. We find this all through the Scripture. "Hear and your soul shall live." "Faith

cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God." "He wakeneth mine ear to hear as the learned." We have a God who speaks to us in His Word and by His Spirit. We want to enjoy continual intercourse with God; to have Him speaking to us by His Word, and we speaking to Him in prayer and praise. Can there be such a thing as a child of God who has not heard the voice of God? The Lord Jesus says, "My sheep hear My voice." That is the mark that separates between His sheep and those who don't know Him. The others never hear Him speak. We have heard His voice convincing us of sin and telling of coming judgment. We have heard Him say unto us, "Thy sins are forgiven thee," "I give unto My sheep eternal life." We know it, for He has told us by His Word. We have heard God's voice cheering and encouraging us on our way. In a little while we shall hear His voice in the skies calling us to Himself. What we see in this 12th chapter is a present living God, ministering to the need of His people through those whom He has chosen and gifted and qualified in different ways as members of His Body, each to fulfil its own function.

Verse 3.—It may occur to us, as we read a verse like this, that everybody calls Jesus Lord. What, then, does it mean? God is not speaking of mere profession. There be many that say "Lord, Lord," and do not the things which He says. The mere saying of "Lord" with the lips is not the owning of Christ as Lord. As I have remarked before, it would be interesting if you would read through this epistle, and underline where the word Lord occurs. It is His authority that is asserted throughout this epistle. If the assembly is to be rightly ordered and built up, it can only be as it owning Christ as Lord; it can only be as the Lord Jesus gets His own place in God's House. Set aside the authority of Christ and everything gets into confusion. Instead of the ministry which is to build up being that which Christ as the Head has bestowed, and that which the Spirit of God has gifted

in the body of Christ, man has brought in his will, set up his order; and set aside the Lordship of Christ. What is the burden of the Spirit's ministry? It is concerning Christ. We read in John xvi. 13, 14, "When He, the Spirit of Truth, is come, He shall receive of Mine, and show it unto you." The Spirit takes of Christ's wisdom, Christ's work, Christ's glory, and shows them unto us. The work and ministry of the Spirit is, to reveal and glorify Christ. It may be illustrated by the seven-branched lamp in the Tabernacle. All was dark without it. There was no window in the Tabernacle as there was in the Ark. Wherever that lamp shone it revealed the beauties of the curtains, the veil, the golden altar of incense, &c., &c., all of which spoke of Christ. The work of the Spirit is to exalt Christ. No ministry can be the ministry of God's Spirit that does not exalt Christ and give Him His place as Lord—that does not show forth and honour the atoning work of Christ, and the glorious perfection of His person and character. There are many who say with the lip that Jesus is Lord but who are disobeying the simplest and plainest commands that He has laid down. What we have to contend for is this—a man speaking by the Spirit owns Jesus as Lord. It has pleased God that in all things He should have the pre-eminence. In every department of life, wherever we may be placed, we are called to own Jesus as Lord. If gathered to Him we are to own Jesus as Lord in the assembly. That will separate us from the world's religion as well as from the world's folly. The question ought not to be "how far can I go?" and "is there any harm in this?" but rather, "can I do this, and own Jesus as my Lord?" God is jealous about the honour of His Son. The devil would have God's people to think little about carrying out the will of Christ. In those early days to be a real believer and follower of the Lord Jesus was to be exposed to the bitter hatred and cruel persecutions of His enemies—to be cast out and separated from kindred and friends; therefore no man could really own Jesus as Lord but by the mighty power of

the Spirit of God. We require the same power now;—to be true to Him and subject to his authority requires nothing short of the infinite power of the Spirit of God.

ARE YOU HELPING FOREIGN SERVANTS?

"Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others."—Phil. ii. 4.

IN the second chapter of Philippians, which so graciously unfolds to us the lowliness of God's Son, our Lord, we are told, "Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others." Beloved in Christ, we lose much rest of heart by thinking too much, too long, and too anxiously about our own private cares and troubles; yes, even by plotting and scheming, and planning *too* much about our own little corner of Christian work. We can never be over-earnest, but we *can* be over-busy. Let us learn to work *for God*, and then day by day we can rest *in God*, leaving all results in His wise keeping. If too much success would excite us to pride or selfishness, God may hide a good deal of the sure and certain fruit till we see the blessed Lord face to face. If, on the other hand, we stand in sore need of encouragement and cheer, the Lord, our EMPLOYER, will surely revive our weary spirits by tokens, earnest of the splendid harvest that we shall soon see in all its glorious completed fullness. Now, are you, dear fellow-worker, so very occupied with your service for the Lord that you have scarcely any thought for distant labourers in far-off lands? Do the hours you give to daily searching of our Father's Word, to daily prayer, and to outward Christian effort, leave you no time to think of those lonely ones? Are you so busy with the necessary claims of home and business, with the health of your family, with your own health, and countless other right (but yet "*temporal*") matters, that you are unknowingly neglecting those tried

fellow-servants who need your constant prayers?

I think we have no idea how warmly these toilers treasure every mark of interest in them, in their work, in their wives, or in their children.

Allow me to plead warmly for foreign servants. They have, like us, to fight against outside ungodliness and inside sin. They are, like ourselves, strangers and pilgrims in a sadly ruined world. They are weak in themselves, and liable to be tempted in many subtle ways. They need just as much as we do the fellowship of saints. They are sometimes oppressed and wearied with difficulties which we know nothing of; and though Christ is theirs, and they are journeying to the homeland where He will for ever rest and satisfy them, yet who will help and cheer them now? Who will conscientiously, for Christ's sake, regularly give up an evening a month, or an evening a week, or some other specially set apart time, in order to pray, or write, or work for the labourers among the millions in foreign lands? One hour's prayer meeting per month is surely not enough, though many assemblies have not even this. Will you, busy reader, stop to ask yourself, when next you are on your knees, "Have I done, am I *now doing*, all I might and could do to help and cheer, and support God's lonely, plodding servants? H. B. W.

"WITHIN AND WITHOUT."

I COR. V. 12, 13.

THERE is a within and a without. Within is a sphere of judgment, and consequently a sphere of responsibility as to those who are received and retained. Judgment is never left to man. Every earthly judge must go by the statute book, and must administer the law accordingly. So the judgment of within is the carrying out of the statutes of God's Word. "Do not YE," not one, or a minister, or elders, but "ye that are within." Neither unsaved, nor one guilty of sins mentioned in this chapter, should be "within." Shame on us if they are found feasting with us.

THE GOSPEL OF JOHN.

CHAPTER XVI.—(CONTINUED.)

NOTES OF ADDRESSES BY W. LINCOLN.

(Communicated by J. S. H.)

THERE are two subjects to occupy us in the consideration of this chapter. First, the great promise of the Holy Ghost; and secondly, line upon line, teaching as to the "little while" and His coming again. To the former of these two let us turn our attention now.

It is noticeable that in each of these three great chapters there is some special promise about the Holy Ghost. In chapter xiv. the great point is that He is a *Person*, who will come to this world; and again, that the Father sends Him. In the fifteenth it is seen that Christ sends Him; and in the sixteenth that He comes of His own accord. In the fourteenth He comes and points God's people to the Cross of Christ, occupies them with the love that Christ has displayed upon the Cross; for so I understand verse 26. In chapter xv. 26, it is the Holy Ghost coming to testify of the risen and ascended glory of Christ; and that is the subject of the first fifteen verses of this chapter xvi.

You are aware that there are three references to the Spirit in the earlier chapters: born of the Spirit, worshipping in the Spirit, and the Spirit as rivers of living water flowing out from us. None of these speaks of Him as a *Person*.

Now, it is remarkable that when it speaks of the presence of the Holy Ghost, it speaks first of how His presence affects the world. The Holy Ghost did not come down into the world to convert sinners. He comes into the world, and has to do with the world; but He had been converting sinners for 4000 years before He came into the world personally, therefore that was not the object of His coming. Of course His presence here acts upon the world; He comes, it is said, to convict the world. It happens that His presence here does so, but it is not said that He came on purpose. Had the world not killed Christ, humanly

speaking the Holy Ghost had not come personally; for His personal descent is in order to declare the deep heavenly worthiness of the Son, His glory up there at God's right hand. He is sent to testify who the the Person was whom the world had so maltreated; therefore the presence of the Holy Ghost here is evidence of what a mistake the world has made. So He reproves the world; but it is not said that He is a *Reprover*, as it is that He is a *Comforter*.

So these first words about the Spirit say, "When He is come, He will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: of sin, because they believe not on Me." And the words are very plain. Evidently God assumes that if a person does not believe in Christ, a solemn responsibility is incurred; God puts the blame on men, as if that were the sin of sins. The next words are more obscure. "Of righteousness, because I go to My Father, and ye see Me no more." The meaning is this: Jesus has gone, they have cast Him out, and God by taking Him to Himself has distinctly raised the question, which the judgment will settle for the unbeliever, as to which is right, the world or Christ. The world would have it that Christ was wrong, and crucified Him between two thieves. The world would have it, "He *said* He was a King," "He *said* He was God's Son." God exactly reverses the sentence and says, "He *is* My Son"; and puts Him at His own right hand. The last words of the verse will be cleared up in the second half of the chapter. There we shall find, in verse 16, two various words both rendered "see." "A little while, and ye shall not survey Me: and again, a little while, and I shall be seen of you," "with supernatural power to discover who I am, and as I am."

"Of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged." Satan is never so called in the Old Testament, nor yet the God of this world, as he is spoken of in Corinthians: as civil and religious head of the world. And the Cross displays that so thoroughly is the world inspired by the devil as that he could lead men, when the Son of God

was here, to put the spear into His heart. But he judged himself.

But now to look further at the action of the Spirit of God with the believer. In chapter xv. 26, it is written, "When the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of Truth, which proceedeth from the Father, He shall testify of Me"; that is, of all My glory up there. "And ye also shall bear witness, because ye have been with Me from the beginning"; that is, of My work down here. But now this is opened out more fully. "I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. Howbeit when He, the Spirit of Truth, is come, He will guide you into all *the* truth." How are we to understand these words? If you catch the thought, as it is implied in xv. 26: "I am going to be with My Father, and to sit with God in uncreated glory, and the Spirit will tell you what I am, of the Father's love in giving Me, and of what you are in Me. Into all the truth about *Me*. I am the Truth." He that knows and understands Christ, all His glory and His beauty, knows the truth of God; and glimpses and rays of that very glory will beam into your soul by the Spirit, and you will come to learn what a Friend you have, and what a God it was who grappled with your case.

"Again, into all the truth about My Father and My God"; the Lord Jesus assumes that there is no truth unconnected with Himself. The Holy Ghost is not given to teach us conchology or mineralogy, and yet He teaches us all *the* truth. These will all perish, all our knowledge of these things will pass away with them. We have to do with God, from whom will come the new creation. We are told distinctly that God hath sent forth the Spirit of His Son into our hearts crying "Abba, Father." That that great God, from whom this creation came which is to perish, and from whom the new creation is to come, is our Father, is indeed a great piece of truth. And the Holy Ghost even condescends to argue with us. "If children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ Jesus."

Then thirdly, into all the truth about ourselves in Christ; what Christ is, there is God's standard of what we are in Christ. Thus we see He teaches us the truth as to these three particulars. But now, before we go further, bear this great fact in mind: the Holy Ghost is given to us who believe as the witness at present, the first fruits of God's delight in Christ's finished work. Remember that in chapter xiv. it is God who sends the Spirit; in chapter xv., "Whom I will send." Christ goes up to heaven; God looks at the work of Christ with ineffable delight. "How shall I reward you? I have a people whom I have loved and redeemed. There is My Spirit, give them that"; and Christ sends the Spirit. Just turn to Acts ii. 33. "Therefore being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, He hath shed forth this, which ye now see and hear." As we have it in Psalm lxxviii., "Thou hast received gifts for men"; then in Ephesians iv. He is seen bestowing these gifts—"And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers." The Spirit is given, first as the testimony of the fulness of the efficacy of that blessed work, and then given as the foretaste of the joys of heaven. The gift of the Spirit is God's first testimony of His perfect satisfaction with the work of Christ; and then He comes as the earnest of the blessing which is ours in Christ. And not until all the children are brought home will there be the last testimony of God's satisfaction with the work of Christ. The work of the Holy Ghost with the unbeliever is to awaken and arouse him, and to draw him to Christ. But His work in believers is to dwell in them, to unite them to Christ in heaven, and thus to form the Church.

(To be continued).

"We think more of *getting* from God than *giving* to God; of *getting out* of trial than *profiting in* trial; of *getting out* of the furnace than walking with Christ *in* the furnace.

R. CHAPMAN.

HALF-HOURS WITH A CONCORDANCE.

IV.—CHURCH.

(Continued from Page 149.)

AS we glance through the Acts till we reach our next occurrence (viii. 1), we see the continuance of the national rejection of the Christ, though many believed, until the climax was reached in the stoning of Stephen and the great persecution that then arose against the church which was at Jerusalem. Before passing on to verse 4, and its consequences, look for a moment at verse 3. You notice therefrom that the circle of Saul's persecution was Jerusalem. Then please connect therewith the three passages in which he alludes to the circumstances, saying (Phil. iii. 6), "Persecuting the church," and (Gal. i. 13, 1 Cor. xv. 9), "I persecuted the church of God." Scripture never speaks of the Church, the Body of Christ, as the church of God. The church of God is an expression ever only used of a visible community, such as we read of in Matt. xviii. 17. Such was the church at Jerusalem; such were the companies that God gathered in the places whereunto were scattered those that "went everywhere preaching the Word" (verse 4).

These did not need to come up to Jerusalem from time to time if they desired collectively to worship and also to participate in the benefits of being in a church, such, e.g., as Matt. xviii. 15-20 tells of. This is not conjecture, for in the very period at which we now are looking, *i.e.*, the period elapsing between "the tribulation that arose about Stephen" and the going out of Peter to Cornelius—I say, in regard to this very period, Paul speaks (Gal. i. 22), "I . . . was unknown by face unto the churches of Judæa which were in Christ." Thus, at this early time we read of "churches," in the plural; churches of Judæa, to each of which in all its fulness Matt. xviii. 15-20 applies, but to none of which does Matt. xvi. 18

apply; to all which together Matt. xvi. 18 does not apply, for they were not built thereunto by the Lord Christ; but, having been scattered by God, were gathered in the several localities wherein they were, by the Holy Spirit unto the respective places where God (by His providential dealings, &c.), showed it to be His will that a church of God should be, setting His Son's name there as the gathering point. And when, in any place, there were found those who had been gathered thus by the Holy Spirit to the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, then and there He was in the midst (Rev. i. 13). Such I take to be the teaching of Matt. xviii. 20, as it applied to disciples scattered from the church of God in Jerusalem, who were thus brought and kept together in churches of God in Christ Jesus (for this expression, see 1 Thess. ii. 14; for though it refers to a later date, that does not affect the point).

Like all fundamental truths, this truth of the plurality of churches has its anti-thesis, to which due attention must be paid. See Acts ix. 31, which refers to the same time as Gal. i. 22. We read according to the Revised Version (the Authorised Version is certainly wrong), "So the church throughout all Judæa and Galilee and Samaria had peace, being edified; and walking in the fear of the Lord, and in the comfort of the Holy Spirit, was multiplied." Please note that this does not refer to the Body of Christ, though there was doubtless a correspondent increase therein; but here the baptism into the Body, in the Spirit, of an unbeliever on believing is not before the mind. That is an inner thing, which would be out of place in the narrative. The allusion is to the manifest increase of those who were gathered.

In this book of Acts we have the doings and teachings in continuance of what "Jesus began both to do and teach" divinely recorded, and doubtless every word is of deep import; but primarily it must be regarded as a straightforward

record of what others did and what others taught, and therefore we do not see here a doctrinal statement, as it were, of a unity of the church, but a statement rather of a fact that then was. The churches of Judæa at which we have been looking, and other churches in Galilee and Samaria, were actually one, and are therefore so spoken of by God as "The church throughout all Judæa and Galilee and Samaria." The use of this expression in Acts, I want to make quite plain, is not comparable with that in Eph. iv. 4, for example, which tells of something true, apart altogether from the doings of those spoken of. For the epistles generally are didactic, written mainly to instruct us in what is, and what ought to be done; whereas, Acts is historical, telling us of what was, and what was done in the times alluded to. Therefore, clearly what we are to learn from this is, that notwithstanding the individual responsibility of the various assemblies, they were united in heart and practice, minding the same thing in the Lord, so that God the Spirit, could write of them, "The church throughout all Judæa and Galilee and Samaria." Would God that could be said of the church in Britain to-day!

We next come to the preaching of Gospel to a Gentile in Acts x., but whatever conjecture may be made, the Holy Spirit does not speak of a "church" in this chapter, and desirous of learning of Him alone we pass on to chapter xi. (verse 22, xii. 1-5, xv. 4-22, xviii. 22, almost exhaust the remaining references to the church at Jerusalem). Here, then, in verse 26, we first read of a church largely composed of those who from among the Gentiles turned to God, and in this church Paul long was (xiii. 1, xv. 3); and to it, as to his home, he returned more than once (xiv. 26, 27; xviii. 22). From the time, then, of Acts xiii. 1, and onward, we find a multiplication of churches among the Gentiles, see Acts xiv. 23 (every church), xv. 41, and xvi. 5; the churches (in Syria and Cilicia, and Lycaonia), &c.

Passing now to the epistles, we may first notice the places in which the expression "church of God" occurs, as much and serious misapprehension prevails as to what it means. We have already seen it twice applied by Paul to the church at Jerusalem, which he persecuted (Gal. i. 22, 1 Cor. xv. 9). We turn next to 1 Cor. i. 2, and read "to the church of God which is at (or in) Corinth." Now, what was the church of God at Corinth? Was it not a company of believers brought together by God? If not brought together by God, why is it said to be "of God"? Some say the church of God in a place means all believers. Is it so? In the church of God at Corinth was one called a brother who was a fornicator, and concerning whom the command was, "Put away from among yourselves that wicked person" (v. 13). When they had done so, was he still in the church of God at Corinth? Such as say that the church of God means all believers in any place, are in this dilemma, that they must needs say, "Yes, he was in, after he was put out!" For he was a believer, that is clear from 2 Cor. ii. 5-11. Notice, please, how clearly 1 Cor. v. puts the matter, "there is fornication among you," this is contrasted with "among the Gentiles"; thus, a definite circle is pointed out, marked by these words, "among you." So verse 2, "that he . . . might be taken away from among you," literally, "out of the midst of you." Passing on to verse 12, notice the distinction between "within" and "without." This one was within, and he was a believer, but he was to be put out. What then? did he cease to be a believer? No one would say so. Then did they cease, through not having him among them,—did they cease to be "the church of God at Corinth"? We might say, impossible! but we need not be in any uncertainty, we have the Word of God in the matter. For as the first epistle was addressed to the church of God, which is at Corinth, so the second epistle sent to that company when the wicked person has been put out from

among them is likewise inscribed to "the church of God, which is at Corinth." Indeed, it exhorts them to receive him back. Why? because he was part of the church of God? Nay, verily. Of the Body of Christ he indeed was a member, in that Church he was for ever; but he was not in the church of God till again he was received back by them in obedience to the Word of the Lord unto the glory of God, and their and His profit, and Satan's confusion.

In 1 Cor. x. 32, the church of God in any place is contrasted with Jews and Gentiles, whereas a brother put away is to be to us "a Gentilish one" (Matt. xviii. 17). Like 1 Thess. ii. 14, 1 Cor. xi. 16 speaks of churches of God in the plural, and in view of this, we ought surely to cease once and for ever to call that the church of God, of which Matt. xvi. 18, Ephes. v. 25, and kindred Scriptures speak. For they speak of it as a unique thing, having no peer nor rival, but being the sole Bride of the Lamb.

Passing on to 1 Tim. iii., first look at verse 5, "If a man know not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of a church of God?" We note this word "house" here; it does not mean a stone and mortar house, but what we sometimes call a household (or nearly that), as it is translated, e.g., 2 Tim. iv. 19 (see 2 Tim. i. 16). It is a different word in 1 Tim. iii. 5 and 15 from the word "house" in 2 Tim. ii. 20, which latter word appears never to be used directly of persons, but only of a stone building, or what a building may be a figure of. Whereas, apart from spiritual meanings altogether, this word here in 1 Tim. iii. 15 means often, as in verse 5, a number of persons living together under the rule of a common head. Well, then, a rough parallel between an overseer's household and a church of God being first drawn, a like simile of a house (*i.e.*, household) is more closely pressed in verse 15, where the house is said to be God's (Heb. iii. 6 tells us that Christ is Son over God's House), a place where God dwells,

dwells to rule and dwells to bless; such is a company on which He, looking down, can say, "That is a church of Living God."

And if it be said that this was in the past, while yet all that believed were together, please note the words, "These things write I . . . if I tarry long"; which long tarrying in its first obvious allusion to Paul definitely covers the secession of those named in 2 Tim. ii., showing that, notwithstanding the defection of these holders of evil doctrine, there still was in Ephesus a church of Living God wherein to be, and to behave; which the letter subsequently sent to Ephesus (Rev. ii.) clearly confirms. Just as 2 Cor. i. 1 shows that those within the circle of fellowship of the gathered company there were (notwithstanding the morally unclean one being outside), addressed by God, definitely as "The church of God, which is at Corinth." Clearly then, a church of God depends not for its being, on there being in it all that are in Christ in the locality.

FELLOWSHIP, UNITY, LORDSHIP.

(FRAGMENTS OF RECENT ADDRESSES.)

CONTRIBUTED BY W. K.

FELLOWSHIP.

THE word fellowship implies union and relation. Two words spring from these, viz., communion and intercourse of heart. The saints at Corinth had got away from the bond of real Christian fellowship, which is the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ. All that are given to the Son by the Father are called into the fellowship of the Father's love; they also share with Christ in His acceptance before the Father (John xvii. 23, Eph. i. 6).

Mark the condition of fellowship one with another—"If we walk in the light . . . as He is in the light, we have fellowship one with another" (1 John i. 7). When we walk in the light our hearts become knit

together in love through this blessed fellowship.

In the case of Jehoshaphat, King of Judah, joining affinity with the apostate King Ahab, we have an instance of how God judges His people when they enter into such ungodly fellowships. Lot chose the well-watered plain of Jordan, then pitched his tent toward Sodom, and next he took up his abode in that ungodly city. But Abraham walked with God in separation from it all. He could not leave his place of testimony to walk with Lot without surrendering his fellowship with God. One reason so many of God's children do not walk in the light is the low estimate they have of the precious blood which gives them title to enter into the light. How many who know that the blood has for ever washed away their sins fail to enter in the power of faith into the experimental enjoyment of that fellowship into which we have been brought by the precious blood of Jesus.

In Ephesians we have the believer's standing in Christ, and his access to the Father by Christ. Christ has been by the power of God raised up from among the dead and set at His right hand; the believer has also been quickened, raised up together with Christ, and seated in heavenly places in Him. It is one thing to know this truth as a doctrine, but it is quite another thing to be living in the enjoyment of it. If we were consciously abiding in Christ Jesus, this world would have a very slack hold of us and we of it.

The Mercy-seat which was in the Most Holy Place was a shadow of Christ in the presence of God; and that is the place of communion and nearness. It would have been instant death to the high priest in Israel to have gone into the presence of God in any other than the God-appointed way. He judged the sons of Aaron for presuming to enter into His Most Holy Presence with strange fire. Let us learn from this never to trifle with any of God's commands.

The only title for the high priest to enter into the Most Holy Place was the blood of the sacrifice which had been offered to and

accepted by Jehovah. The Lord Jesus has gone as the High Priest of His people into heaven itself, there to appear in the presence of God for us. We have also "boldness or liberty to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus" (Heb. ix. 8-24, x. 19).

The servants of Christ can only be a blessing to fellow-saints in the measure in which they abide and walk in the holy light of God's presence. If we live there we shall reflect the light of that glorious place wherever we go. G. A.

UNITY.

I Cor. i. 10.—With such a scripture as this before us we must for ever part company with the idea that Christians should agree to differ in the things of God.

There are diverse degrees of knowledge between the babe in Christ and the matured believer. There are endless diversities among the children of God in character, gift, intelligence, and attainment. It is not God's way to obliterate any such diversity. God's way concerning unity, in as far as we have attained to it, you will find in Phil. iii. 15, 16. We are to maintain the most strict and loyal adherence to every atom of Divine truth. "Whereunto we have attained we are to walk by the same rule and mind the same thing." "Buy the truth, and sell it not" (Prov. xxiii. 23). It costs us something to buy it. Perhaps where it has cost little it is easily parted with. It is far from the mind of God that contradictory and opposing thoughts and judgment should exist among His people.

Let us seek grace to acknowledge all that we see of God and His truth in one another. Take for example Daniel, the man greatly beloved of God. If there was any man in Israel who did not partake in the sins of his nation it was Daniel. He might have stood apart from it all, but he did not do so; he saw himself as bound up in the sin of the whole nation, and confesses their sin as his own.

You see Ezra taking the very same position before God in relation to Israel. He sees himself as one of a guilty nation, he

takes his place with them, and confesses their sins as if they were his own. It is only God's infinite grace that can enable us to take such a place. Nature and reason cannot understand it, and actually resent it. Nature stands up in its own self-righteousness and refuses to own any association with the guilt of the people of God. God will never use us as helpers to the unity that is according to His mind and truth until we learn this lesson—that is, confessing the sin of schism as members of the one body.

For God's people to *agree to differ* is practically to deny the all-sufficiency of the Scriptures and the ability of the Spirit of God to guide the saints into the knowledge of the mind and will of God as revealed therein. Those who are ready to subscribe to such a confession may at once surrender all claim to gathering unto the Name of the Lord.

Psa. xxv. 4-9.—"Shew me Thy way, O Lord; . . . lead me in Thy truth and teach me. . . . The meek will He guide in judgment; the meek will He teach His way." There is a condition of soul necessary to our rightly understanding God's will. We may come together, discuss and argue, but unless there is wrought in us, by the Spirit, that condition of soul,—that meekness that bows to God's will; that lowliness that trembles at His word; that grace that takes the place of identification with the whole people of God, confessing their sin as it were ours,—we shall never be made of one mind in the Lord. J. R. C.

THE LORDSHIP OF CHRIST.

"Jesus Christ, our Lord," occurs frequently in the First Epistle to the Corinthians. Lord, not in the sense of one having despotic sway, but as one who having purchased us is Lord of us. He has therefore a right to do with His own as He pleases, and His own are expected, because they are His own, to allow Him to use them as His will is concerning them.

"Let everyone that nameth the Name of the Lord depart from unrighteousness"

(2 Tim. iii. 19, R.V.). Then in verse 22 we are exhorted to follow after certain things "with those that call on the Lord out of a pure heart." This is something that has been added to meet a later need of God's people; just as the instruction given by Jehovah to His people concerning various defilements unfitting them for fellowship with God's people, given in Num. ix., we do not find in Ex. xii. They were afterwards added by God to meet a special need. There are two things named in New Testament scripture by which purification is effected. First, Acts xv. 9, where we read that God purified the hearts of some by faith. Second, 1 Peter i. 22, "Having purified your souls (yourselves) by obeying the truth." In the first the sinner is purified in his heart by faith in Christ Jesus, and in the next the saint is purified by obeying the truth.

The word fellowship, in 1 Cor., means having things in common. We have been called into this fellowship, viz., to have things in common with Jesus Christ, by the faithful God. Read 2 Cor. vi. The apostle having stated the Gospel ministry in chap. v., proceeds to speak of his ministry in connection with the saints. In verse 1 he beseeches them that they receive not the grace of God in vain. From verse 2 to 12 is one great parenthesis. Verse 1 should be read in immediate connection with verse 13.

J. B.

"TWO OBJECTS."

BELOVED brother, if all God's children had "*His glory*" and "*that day*" engraved on their inmost souls I do not think we should ever have "*self*" in view at all, having left it in the grave of Christ, far behind us. "I live, yet not I; Christ liveth in me." This is the point. Then, if Christ lives in me, Christ must reign in me. Let us exalt Him. Let us live for Him. Yea, if need be, let us die for Him.

JOHN HAMBLEDON.

LET the glory of God be our delight, our meat, our drink.

Questions and Answers.

QUESTION 274.—Please explain John xii. 31. Who is "the prince of this world" here referred to?

The expression occurs in John xiv. 30, "the prince of this world cometh and hath nothing in Me." Here there can be no question that it is Satan who is referred to; and we do not see any ground for attaching any other meaning to the same words either in the above passage or in John xvi. 11.

We do not believe it possible, from the whole analogy of Scripture, that Christ could be called the "prince" or "ruler" of "this world."

The expression "this world" is always characteristically evil. In support of this statement, will the reader kindly refer to the following scriptures:—John viii. 23, xiii. 1, xviii. 36; 1 Cor. i. 20, v. 10, vii. 31; Eph. ii. 2; Rev. xi. 15.

"This world," we conclude, then, is a term descriptive of the present evil order of things, whilst Satan is, by God's permission, its "prince" or "ruler," and by man's choice its "god" (see 2 Cor. iv. 4). Christ will be "Ruler" when Rev. xi. 15 has been fulfilled, but not till then.

In John xii. 31, Jesus is speaking with the Cross full in view. That death to which, in verse 32, He so particularly refers, was the pledge of Satan's destruction, of his being cast out, first from heaven into the earth (Rev. xii. 9, compare Luke x. 18), next from earth into the bottomless pit (Rev. xx. 2, 3), and finally into the lake of fire (Rev. xx. 10). This we believe to be the teaching of Col. ii. 15, and of Heb. ii. 14.

The Lord was comforting Himself by looking away beyond the Cross to its glorious results, of which two seem to rise prominently before Him. First, the casting out of "the ruler of this world," whose subordinate "rulers" (same word in original, see 1 Cor. ii. 6-8) crucified Him, "*the Lord of Glory*" (His proper title, never connecting Him with "this world"). Secondly, the drawing of "all" unto Himself; the "gathering together" of Eph. i. 10 and Col. i. 20. Satan and the world sealed their own judgment by the Crucifixion of Christ.

Grace has come in and is doing a marvellous and unique work, saving an elect people out of the world for heavenly glory; but the world, as such, cannot be blessed until both it and its prince are judged, and he cast out.

The teaching of John xvi. 11 is in perfect harmony.

GEORGE WHITFIELD in his last moments said:—"Lord Jesus, I am weary in Thy work, but not of Thy work. I go to a rest prepared. Many shall outlive me on earth and live when this body is no more, but there—oh, thought divine!—I shall be in a world where time and age are unknown."

THE DIVINITY OF CHRIST.

BY THE EDITOR.

Concluded from page 164.

I WISH now, in the last place, to examine what Scripture teaches as to the doctrine of the Trinity.

Although the word "trinity" is not found in Scripture, that which it is intended to represent undoubtedly is, viz., that there are Three distinct Persons in the God head,—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit,—and that these Three are One.

We find this doctrine in the very first verse of the Bible—"In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth." The Hebrew word for God is here in the plural. In English grammar there are but two numbers, the singular and the plural; but in Hebrew there are three, viz., singular, dual (a form representing *two*), and plural. The word is not "El," singular for "God," neither is it the dual form, but "Elohim," the plural, implying not one, nor two, but at the least *three* persons.

Now, in connection with this plural form of the word "God," it is very remarkable that the verb "created" is in the singular. This, in ordinary circumstances, might be set down as "bad grammar"; but the believer who, as a little child, is willing to be taught by the Spirit, discerns at once the doctrine of "the Trinity." Three in One. Three Persons, but One God. Trinity in Unity. This is confirmed in verse 26—"And God (Elohim) said, Let us make man in our image." Here it is God who speaks. And He is not speaking to others,—not to angels or to any created being,—He is speaking within Himself; and so He says, "Let us," clearly implying the same that is expressed in the word "Elohim," a plurality of persons.

Much more might be adduced in evidence from the Old Testament, but I mention these points* to show that the doctrine of a Triune God is indeed there, though only

partially revealed. I propose now to show from the New Testament that the doctrine is there *fully* declared, and that One of the Three Persons of the Godhead is none other than "the Word," who became flesh, the Son of God, the Christ of the New Testament.

Turn now to Matt. xxviii. 19—"Baptising in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit." Here the doctrine which lies almost hidden in the Old Testament is brought fully to light by the Lord Jesus Himself.

I believe God not merely *makes use of* natural things to illustrate Divine, but that He actually created natural things for the very purpose of illustrating that which is Spiritual and Divine.

When I read such a word as "God is Light," I expect to find in the light that which will help me to understand something more about God, and surely it is a Divinely-constructed illustration of the very truth we are considering.

In every ray of light there are three primary colours. These blended together in the one ray form the pure, white, colourless sunshine. From these three colours every conceivable colour and shade is derived, according as they are variously combined; but you cannot make more than the three primary colours, viz., red, blue, and yellow. This is seen in the rainbow, which is just the light divided into its three component parts, and these at the edges where they join blended together in perfect harmony. You may at any moment effect the same result by using a piece of glass with three sides, forming three angles, called a *prism*. The ray of light passing through it is divided as in the rainbow, with the same result. Thus we have a Divine illustration of that which is beyond our comprehension.

The one God of the Old Testament, seen there rather as the one undivided ray of light, but in the New Testament seen in the distinctness of the Three Persons, "Father, Son, and Holy Spirit."

I say that if the Holy Spirit be not a Person, and a Divine Person, and if the Son

* For which I am indebted to Mr. Newberry's "Englishman's Bible."

of God be not a Divine Person, then it were blasphemy to baptise all who believe, in these three names as of Three co-equal Persons—the Three Persons of the Godhead.

Turn now to 2 Cor. xiii. 14—"The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit, be with you all." Here we have again the same Three Persons,—the one ray of light, so to speak, resolved into its three parts, shining down upon us in all its beneficent grace and beauty. The eye cannot bear to look at a ray of undivided light as it shines directly from the sun; it becomes blinded by the glory of it, and, turning away to look at other objects, it sees only a blank. But with what delight it can view and rest upon the rainbow! We cannot, as it were, look upon or comprehend the glory of God as He appears in the Old Testament, but in the New we behold His glory in the face of Jesus Christ. Now we have the mystery of the Trinity unfolded to us,—the light, so to speak, resolved into its three rays. The eye of faith can look and enjoy, and steadfastly rest upon the glory of God thus revealed, drinking in the fulness of the Triune God—"The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit."

Let us now look at Rev. i. 4, 5—"Grace be unto you, and peace, from Him which is, and which was, and which is to come; and from the seven Spirits which are before the throne; and from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful Witness, and the First-begotten from the dead," &c., &c. This answers fully to 2 Cor. xiii. 14, and shows the same Three Persons to be alike, the one source of all blessing to the saints.

We might further refer to Heb. ix. 14—"Who through the Eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God." Here is a Divine summary of that sacrificial work in which man, angel, or creature, could have no part whatever; it is the work of God, and of God alone. And here, as in the other descriptions referred to, we have the same Three Persons—the same who said in Genesis i., "Let us make"—acting together

in REDEMPTION, as long before they had acted together in CREATION.

Then, again, in 1 Peter i. 2 we have the same Three Persons acting together in the work of salvation—"Elect, according to foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ." So again in the same chapter, 19-21—We see first the Lamb; next, God the object of faith who raised Him up; and, finally, the Spirit as the agent through whose gracious operation the truth is obeyed, and "love," the precious fruit, brought forth.

Many more such passages might be adduced, but these will suffice to convince any simple mind of the great truth of the Divinity of the Lord Jesus Christ, showing as they do that He is one of the Three glorious Persons of the Triune God.

As I said at the commencement, we are sometimes surprised to find with what slender grasp we hold those doctrines which are most familiar to us, and how little acquainted we are with the ground upon which they rest. But I cannot understand how any simple child of God who holds firmly, intelligently, and humbly to the scriptures, such as I have put before you on this subject, could be stumbled for a moment by the cavils of the Unitarian.

I have shown from the Scriptures (1) that Christ existed as the Eternal Word before creation; (2) that He is the Creator and the Upholder of all things; (3) that Divine honours are received by Him and given to Him by saints and angels; (4) that God wills it to be so; (5) and lastly, that He is One of the Three Persons of the Godhead.

And this might fitly bring us to a further question. The man who refuses to be convinced by scriptures so numerous and definite is obliged at last to take up a different standing ground; and, baffled by the testimony of God, he must boldly assert that he does not believe the Scriptures to be indeed the Word of God. It comes necessarily to the denial of the inspiration of the Scriptures,—to the setting up of poor puny

human reason to be judge of the Word of God!

It is the overturning of the very foundation of our faith, for if the Scripture be not inspired, if it be not the very Word of God to which God is pledged for its fulfilment and verification, *what is there left for faith to rest upon?*

But some one may say, "Do you, then, believe that every word of the Bible is inspired?" I freely acknowledge that the Bible as we have it is a human translation—the Old Testament from Hebrew, and part from Chaldee; the New from Greek. In as far as it is a translation it is the work of man, and as such it is liable to error. For this reason I thankfully avail myself of the help that may be afforded by the Revised Version, or any other help within my reach. This I do, not because I doubt its inspiration, but because I believe that *the original as it came from God*, through human instruments, who spake and wrote as they were moved by the Holy Spirit, is indeed the very Word of God. Hence the importance of every honest endeavour to arrive at the sense of the original, and to have it expressed in the most exact translation. Examine the *translation* as critically as you will, but the moment you question the inspiration of *the original* you and I part company. I will not condescend to argue about the Word of God; I can but use it as the Spirit's accredited sword, relying upon God to give it effect in the conscience of the opposer. As one has said, the soldier's business in the battle-field is not to argue with the enemy as to the power of his rifle to kill at 500 or 1000 yards, but *to fire*. So our business is to use the Word of God, and he who hardens himself against it or cavils at it, shows that he has not the spirit of a child, and affords the gravest reason for fearing that he has never been born again. I believe that there are children of God mixed up in nearly every sect of Christendom, but I cannot understand or believe in a true child of God being a Unitarian. They talk of and profess to believe in Christ, but it is a Christ of their own imagination, and

not the Christ of the Scriptures, the Christ of God, the Christ who existed before the foundation of the world, the Christ by whom all things were created, the Christ who accepted Divine honour, and whom Thomas worshipped as his Lord and his God, the Christ who is owned in Scripture as One of the Three Persons of the Triune God.

HALF-HOURS WITH A CONCORDANCE.

IV.—CHURCH.

(Continued from page 174.)

BUT all these churches had their origin in apostolic times, and the question arises whether there may be now such a thing. Well, they are not called churches of Paul or churches of Silas, but churches of God; and, though Paul and Silas are dead, we have yet to do with a living God. Well, do we, in provision made for later times, find provision for a church of God being brought into being? Surely 2 Cor. vi. helps in this—see verse 14 up to viii. 1 (inclusive). Here we have a dwelling of God; God dwelling among such as have, in response to His call, come out from unsanctioned associations; such, as are, in fact, "called out" ones—a church, called out of God, and therefore a church of God. Moreover, among such He not only dwells and walks as God, in a temple, to be worshipped, but as a Father in His house, to rule and bless His sons and daughters. Further, the very object of Matt. xviii. 20 appears to be to carry the teaching of the preceding verses on to the very end. It may help some to notice (as the second epistles are generally taken to have especial reference to later times) that while the occurrences of the word church in 2 Corinthians are NINE out of a total of over a hundred, EIGHT of those nine are plural (viii. 1, 18, 19, 23, 24; xi. 8, 28; xii. 13) out of a total of about thirty-four. The triple allusion to a local church in the third epistle of John (6, 9, 10) further guards

against any unjustifiable reasoning from the absence of the word in 2 Timothy.

Rom. xvi. 16.—Whilst we should carefully restrict the expression “church of God” and its plural to local assemblies, according to the invariable usage of Scripture, we have not quite the same warrant for using the expression “Church of Christ” for that of which the epistle to the saints at Ephesus and kindred scriptures speak; for once, though only once, we get the expression “churches of Christ” in reference to local churches; viz., those in Achaia, whence the epistle to Rome was written. Moreover, the expression “Church of Christ” does not occur verbatim; but as He who calls it “My Church” had just been confessed as “the Christ,” and as the expressions “the Christ” and “the Church” are frequently closely collocated in the epistle to Ephesus, it seems a strictly justifiable phrase to denote the Church, which is His Body. There is this distinctive difference between the Church of Matt. xvi. 18 (spoken of as the Body in 1 Cor. xii. 13) and a church of God. The former is entirely the work of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the only instrumentality used is the Holy Spirit; no other. None but “the Christ” builds the Church, whereas a church of God it is especially the work of God the Father to form, and He uses human instrumentality. Not only that of His servants, who are indwelt and inwrought by His Spirit, but by providential dealings of most varied character does He act in bringing out and bringing together such a company as is therefore, on account of its origin, said to be a church of God. Whereas, in regard to the Christ being magnified and glorified thereby, and therein accepted, and perhaps for other reasons, such companies are here called “churches of Christ.”

The reading in Acts xx. 28 is doubtful. Accepting the margin of the Revised Version as best supported, the allusion seems to be to the Church as spoken of in Eph. v. 25. Doubtless overseeing ones have a responsibility to saints outside the church wherein by God they are placed. If,

indeed, “church of God” be the correct reading, the universal usage of Scripture must prevail to show that the local assembly at Ephesus was meant.

1 Cor. xii. 28—“God set some in the church, firstly apostles,” &c., appears to me to refer as to period right back to the Day of Pentecost, as it only can be spoken of the church at Jerusalem. “The church” here cannot, I think, mean the Body, as in the previous part of the chapter the Body is nowhere called the Church. Indeed, the Body is almost never called “the Church” absolutely, for (except in certain places in the epistle to Ephesus where it cannot be mistaken) it has a word or two of explanation added or prefixed (see Eph. i. 22; Col. i. 18). Then the only church of God whereof this 1 Cor. xii. 28 can speak is the primitive church of Acts ii., wherein were placed firstly apostles, secondarily prophets, &c.

It remains to consider a special usage of the word “church” in the section of the first epistle to the church of God at Corinth, which commences at xi. 17 and concludes with chapter xiv. In xi. 18, xiv. 19, 28, 35 we get the expression “in church.” In the three latter verses Mr. Newberry’s Englishman’s Bible will show that there is no word “the” in the original, and in verse 18 of chapter xi. the word “the” is expunged by editors as destitute of authority. So that here we have a fourfold occurrence of the expression “in church” in connection with (1) coming together to break the bread, (2) speaking then to teach others, (3) keeping silence then if speaking will not be understood, (4) women keeping silence at such a time. The expression “come together” of xi. 18 occurs five times in the chapter, viz., in verses 17, 18, 20, 33, 34, and always refers to the coming together for the one special purpose, namely, to keep the command of verses 24 and 25. This coming together of those who were in the church of God at Corinth is called coming together “in church.”

Passing on now from chapter xi., which speaks of the coming together in connection

with the purpose thereof, we come, in chapter xiv., to words from the Lord in reference to ministry among the saints which may fitly be exercised in the latter part of such a meeting. In connection with this, then, we twice more get the expression "come together," and again also we get the correspondent expression "in church"; which two expressions are characteristic of this section of this epistle (the only other occurrence of "come together" in the epistles is 1 Cor. vii. 5). "In church" it is a shame for women to speak, whereas, of course, at home a woman may speak; though she is continuously in the church of God, she is only "in church" when she and others "come together" at the bidding of the Lord Christ to keep the weekly feast in its appointed time. "As in all the churches of the saints, let the women keep silence in the churches" (xiv. 33, 34). In what churches? What are the churches of the saints? Not the churches of God, certainly, though the latter are often called so by man. Note, please, first, that it is "keep silence," absolute silence; the eight other occurrences of the verb (Luke ix. 36, xx. 26; Acts xii. 17, xv. 12, 13; Rom. xvi. 25; 1 Cor. xiv. 28, 30, 34; and twice of the noun "silence," Acts xxi. 40 and Rev. viii. 1) fully bear this out. It is not the word mistranslated "silence" in 1 Tim. ii. 11, 12 which means "quietness" (and is so translated 2 Thess. iii. 12; see also Acts xi. 18, "They held their peace . . . saying"; rather, "They were quiet . . . saying"). In contrast to this, the word here in 1 Cor. xiv. 34 is "KEEP SILENCE." Well, women are to do so "in the churches," but a woman in the church of God at Corinth was in it all through the week, and it cannot mean that a woman is never to speak. No; but as verse 35 says that it is a shame for her to speak "in church" (in contrast to at home, as "*in church*" and "*at home*," are contrasted, xi. 33, 34), so we understand this expression "in the churches," "in the churches of the saints," to be, as it were, a kind of plural of the expression "in church"; *i.e.*, the successive comings-

together of the saints week after week. The putting the full stop after "peace" in verse 33, commencing verse 34 at "In all the churches of the saints, let the women," &c., has the authority of Griesbach, and, in the absence of stops in the original manuscripts, is, I think, justified by the manifest sense of the passage.

In appending a list of the occurrences of the word "church" which have not been noticed above, I would urge on each reader a careful perusal of all the passages and their context, that he may see that the conclusions arrived at are supported thereby. Of these conclusions the chief may be thus briefly summed up:—In its first occurrence the word "church" is applied by the Lord Jesus Christ to a thing He was about to build, which Church, according to the teaching of God thereabout, can never be divided, can never be multiplied, can never be subtracted from. It is the Body of Christ. Simultaneously with the inceptive building by the Christ of His Church, God brought together in manifest association, in Jerusalem, a company of such as had become believers, using for this purpose human instrumentality in thus forming the church of God at Jerusalem. This human instrumentality erring, destroyed the identity of persons between the Church of Christ's building and the church of God. Later on, in the providence of God, they in the latter were scattered, leading firstly unto a multiplication of churches in Judæa, &c., and afterwards, when God's time was come, unto the formation of many churches of God among the Gentiles. For the particular churches named in Scripture we look around to-day in vain. What then? We turn back again to the Word of God and find from such passages as 2 Cor. vi. 14 to vii. 1 that God may and will gather now, as at any time in this dispensation, such as will hear His voice calling them out (as, for example, Heb. xiii. 13), and hear it to obey it. We see that a company so gathered is indeed a church of God, corresponding in every way with those companies to which in early times God gave that name. But a

number of believers not gathered by God, though they may be all the believers in a given locality, do not constitute a church of God, as God speaks. Nor are all believers living on earth at any one time called the Church, for the Church of Christ's building contains not only the living in Christ but also the dead in Christ, and the church of God is an expression only applied to a manifestly associated company (Prov. xxx. 5; 1 Cor. ii. 13).

C. M. L.

Acts xx. 17; Rom. xvi. 1, 4, 5, 23; 1 Cor. iv. 17, vi. 4, vii. 17, xi. 22, xiv. 4, 5, 22, 23, xv. 9, xvi. 1, 19; Gal. i. 2; Phil. iv. 15; Col. iv. 15, 16; 1 Thess. i. 1; 2 Thess. i. 1, 4; 1 Tim. v. 16; Philem. 2; Heb. xii. 23; Jas. v. 14; Rev. i., ii., iii., freq. xxii. 16.

["Church" in Acts ii. 47 is an interpolation in late MSS., see R.V. "Assembly" in Heb. xii. 23 and Jas. ii. 2 is not the word "church"; in the latter it is "synagogue."]

THE GOD OF ALL GRACE.

PSALM XXXII.

NOTES OF AN ADDRESS BY HENRY DYER.

THIS is a Psalm giving instruction. I am reminded of that verse in Prov. ix. 9—"Give instruction to a wise man, and he shall be yet wiser." This Psalm is a sort of spiritual Jacob's ladder, bringing up our souls from the most untoward position to the highest state of communion that we can possibly know on earth. The word "ladder" in this connection does not give the real meaning of the thought in it. It is not so much a ladder in the Hebrew as an ascent; a sort of up-going path that God intended should be Jacob's experience all his life—an ascending path of communion with God. He sets forth the high-way of the redeemed, from the depth of our Jacob—like sinfulness up to the height of joying in God.

This Psalm is divided into three parts—(1) The storehouse of God's wonderful grace for our sinfulness; (2) The storehouse of His infinite power for our troubles; (3) The storehouse of His infinite wisdom

for our pilgrim journey. Summed up in few words—grace for our sinfulness, strength for our trials, and guidance for our journey. These constitute our threefold want.

To Israel in the land of Egypt, the lamb slain instead of the death of the first-born, was the love that loved them. In the lamb slain, we see the riches of God's grace; in the divided Red Sea, we see the riches of His power; and in the desert, we see the riches of His wisdom to guide them. God, in effect, said to them, "You are no better than these Egyptians; if I don't smite the first-born in your households, it is only because you have a lamb slain, not because of anything in you."

Verse 1 reads thus—"O blessedness! forgiven transgression! covered sin!" These words form one mighty outburst of the rejoicing soul of the Psalmist. The word "man" does not come in here at all. When God found us at first, our name was "sinner." We were only a part of the big lump of the Adam race. We were only known by these words, "transgression" and "sin." Hence there is nothing to distinguish us from any other. We were "children of wrath even as others." God in His sovereign love dealt with you and me in grace, not because there was anything in us better than in others. He forgave us our transgressions, and covered our sin by the precious blood of Christ, because through His grace we came to Him with nothing but our sin and transgression, and accepted by faith His Son, and with Him the provision made for us in Him for the forgiveness of our transgression and the putting away of our sin; and all the subsequent blessing flows from that. "O blessedness!" When did it begin? The first sigh of sorrow for sin was the beginning of an everlasting communion with God.

To transgress is to commit a distinct act, and you need to be brought into the searching light of God's presence that you may see it even as He sees it. Sin is the stain that the transgression leaves on the soul. Our first parents committed one act of

transgression, and it left the stain of sin. After they fell, God came in grace and made known unto them the coming Saviour; He clothed them with coats of skin, and thus He covered their sin.

Verse 2—"O the blessedness of the man unto whom the Lord imputeth not iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no guile." Now the word "man" comes in. The moment we come as lost guilty sinners to the Saviour our name is written in "the Lamb's Book of Life." We are practically separated from the Adam lump. Mark, the word "sin" does not occur in this verse, but there is another word, and that is "iniquity." It does not say "blessed is the man that hath no sin." There is no child of God but has a sinful nature. These words, "no guile," mean no cloaking of sin. We have an example of this in Rev. xiv. 5—"These were redeemed from among men, . . . and in their mouth was no guile: for they are without fault before the throne of God." One characteristic of the redeemed family is this: by God's grace they are a people that do not cloak their sin, but are clothed with God's cloak, raiment of love Divine—the righteousness of God, which is in Christ Jesus. We would also remind you of those blessed words that Jehovah put into the mouth of Balaam—"He hath not found iniquity in Jacob, neither hath He seen perverseness in Israel." The sins which we have committed in our regenerate condition are vastly greater than those committed by us in our unregenerate state. They make known to us the depth of our corruption. It is the saints of God who know the magnitude of sin—

"O to grace how great a debtor!"

Once when He plucked me from an awful hell.

"Daily I'm constrained to be."

I am a debtor to this moment.

"O blessedness!" A sinner saved in verse 1. "I feel humbled as I think of the sin sustained by Christ for me. I don't cloak it, but I tell Him how bad

I am and how full of grace He is to meet my constant need." John says that the one who says he has no sin deceives himself, and the truth is not in him. He says, "We are a people that confess our sins, walk in the light, and have fellowship one with the other. We walk in the light which leads us straight to God, and we will say that the blood is still cleansing." I don't know another place in the New Testament where these words, "*all sin,*" are found together; and they are found in connection with saints walking in the light. "If we walk in the light, as our God is in the light, we have fellowship one with another." Sunbeams don't quarrel with each other, and saints don't quarrel except they get out of the light. In my flesh sin dwells; you might as well tell me that my body is not mortal as say that my heart is not sin. As long as I live in this body sin will dwell in my flesh. What do I do? I tell it to the Lord. If I do not confess my sin, a cloud comes between my soul and my Father at once.

Verse 3—"When I kept silence my bones waxed old through my roaring all the day long." A believer out of communion with God is a pitiful object; he neither enjoys the world nor his God. Although this Psalm gives us David's experience and the condition of his soul at the time, the Spirit of God has so dictated it that it is applicable to the daily business of all believers as to the condition of their souls. David kept silence during those sad few months before Nathan came to him. I may not have committed the same grievous sins, but I may commit other sins which hide the face of God from me and therefore hinder my communion with Him. If I don't walk as one who knows his sinfulness, and his daily need of grace to meet it, then I am one keeping silence. Going on in this condition of soul, my heart becomes hardened instead of contrite. How can the rain or heavenly dew of His grace come down on the hardened soil of such a heart? Let me take care

lest the state of my heart becomes like the hardened soil of an unploughed field, or the stony hardness of a road that has been well trodden down. The road may be useful, but it cannot drink in the rain; and nothing can be allowed to grow upon it. The fallow ground cannot drink in the rain, not being ploughed up. May we know what we are in ourselves, and through God's grace be saved from David's experience. Saints who do not make it their daily business to examine their hearts in the searching light of God's presence, know little of that Calvary's Cross that brought them there at first. The peace and rest that many of God's children enjoy is the result of the knowledge that they have of their innate sinfulness, and the value of the death of Christ to meet it. They know the abundant provision which is in Christ for them, because they are conscious of their need of it. I hope we may learn to take the humble and lowly place, and to keep there. If you dig your garden deep, and manure it well, it will be fruitful. And our souls shall be fruitful, and showers of heavenly grace shall fall copiously upon us if we dig deep down into the love of God, and walk humbly before Him. Christ reveals Himself to each saint according to his knowledge of Him and subjection to Him. But soon He will bring us all unto the perfect likeness of Himself. If we would know and experience the riches of His grace, we must dwell in the light of His presence. You will learn more your debtorship as you learn your inborn sinfulness.

Verse 5—"I acknowledge my sin unto Thee, and mine iniquity have I not hid. I said, I will confess my transgression unto the Lord; and Thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin." A soul out of communion may get restored by a single glance of His eye upon him. "I only said I would confess, and in flowed the grace directly." I have heard an unsaved sinner compared to a dry dock; inside all is dry, whilst outside the mighty ocean is clamouring to get

in. But there is another dry dock, and that is the heart of a poor saint out of communion with God. O what an awful dry dock that saint is who regularly reads his Bible and goes and despises the very truth that he has read! Who breaks the bread and drinks the wine in professed remembrance of the Lord, but whose heart is untouched by the love of that dying Saviour? That saint is out of fellowship with God; he is not drinking in the love of Christ. The ocean of His mighty love is waiting to get into his soul to fill it. Let him but say truly, "Father, I have sinned," and the love of God will flow into his heart.

That closes the first section of our precious Psalm, the subject of which is sin and the storehouse of Divine grace. In the second part of this Psalm sin is not mentioned, because, in the plenitude of His grace to our souls, He has provided for our sinfulness; then we can trust to Him to undertake for us in all our troubles.

Verse 6—"For this shall every one that is godly pray unto Thee in a time when Thou mayest be found: surely in the floods of great waters they shall not come nigh unto him." It is always a time of finding if you only let the grace of God be the stay of your souls. No outside cloud can hide the face of God from His child if his soul is right within; but if it is not so, I am not able to bear outside affliction. My God is a refuge, though the floods should come and the waves rise. "There is a river, the streams whereof shall make glad the city of God"—and the citizens of that city. What do we want if sorrow and trials come upon us as a deluge? Only let our souls be in communion with our God, let them come; they may be round about us, but they will not come nigh unto us.

Verse 7—"Thou art my hiding-place; Thou shalt preserve me from trouble; Thou shalt compass me about with songs of deliverance." There is joy for trying circumstances, because of the triumph in the chambers of my soul through the grace

of God. May He write this on all our hearts.

The last part of this Psalm refers to God's own thoughts about our want of wisdom. We need Him to guide us, and He does indeed lead and guide the subject one.

Verses 8, 9—"I will instruct thee and teach thee in the way which thou shalt go: I will guide thee with Mine eye. Be ye not as the horse, or as the mule, which have no understanding; whose mouth must be held in with bit and bridle, lest they come near thee." That is, "Don't let Me be obliged to bring thee near Me by bit and bridle; I want you to come near Me in the closeness of personal communion." Who would have thought that all those three million of the people of Israel that were going between these mighty walls of water were to go into a pathless desert where there were no streams of water to drink? They might say, "Moses, you have made a mistake, you had better take us back." No mistake, Jehovah will instruct and teach thee in the way which thou shalt go; He will guide you with His eye. I get His eye by the Cross in the gift of His Son. I can trust that eye for every circumstance into which He may lead me. "He that spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?" (Rom. viii. 32.) Notice some of the all things that Paul enumerates, "Tribulation, distress, persecution, famine, nakedness, peril, sword." There is none of these things at all pleasing. "In all these things we are more than conquerors through Him that loved us." God can take up any one of us and so teach us that we may not only read it, but sing it triumphantly. "I will guide thee with Mine eye." "Let thine eye meet Mine: let us know each other at a glance." God knows that the look of His eye, in life or death, in ease or suffering, in comfort or sorrow, will cheer and encourage our hearts.

Verse 11—"Be glad in the Lord, and rejoice, ye righteous: and shout for joy,

all ye that are upright in heart." This is the crowning top of the soul's portion here below. Paul says in Romans v.—"We joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ." And having such grace, "we rejoice in hope of the glory of God." God settles the business of the sinfulness of our souls that He may keep us walking in the sunlight of communion with Himself. He gives us a sight of a bottomless hell at the beginning, that we may walk closely to Him all the way home. There are comparatively few scriptures bearing upon eternal punishment; but there is quite enough to settle the certainty and reality of it. The most of God's Book is taken up with showing His people how to walk on the highway of the redeemed.

THE LEVITICAL SABBATH AND THE LORD'S-DAY.

[Written for the prayerful consideration of the brother who opens his shop on the Lord's-day.]

THE Sabbath, the seventh day of the week, was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath. The Son of Man is Lord also of the Sabbath (see Matt. xii. 8; Mark ii. 27, 28; Luke vi. 5). Upon the Sabbath—that is, from the sunset of the sixth day until the sunset of the seventh day—no manner of work was to be done. The penalty for breaking the Sabbath was death by stoning (see Num. xv. 32-36).

The Jewish Christians, in apostolic times—until the destruction of Jerusalem—kept the Levitical Sabbath, the seventh day; but on the first day of the week they commemorated the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus. On the Lord's-day the Holy Spirit was sent forth, the first proclamation of the Gospel was made, and three thousand souls were converted (Acts ii. 41).

As the preaching of the Gospel extended, after the persecution which arose at the time of Stephen's martyrdom, the observance of the Jewish Sabbath fell into disuse, so much so that when Judaizing teachers

sought to enforce upon the Gentiles Levitical ritualism, Paul withstood them, and subsequently exhorted the assembly at Colosse not to allow anyone to judge them in respect of feasts, new moons, or Sabbaths (Col. ii. 16). The believers at Troas were wont to come together on the *first* day of the week, and not on the *seventh*, to break bread (Acts xx. 6). There is nothing in the New Testament to prove that the Gentile converts adopted either circumcision or the observance of the Jewish Sabbath; on the contrary, it would appear that they continued their secular occupations on the Saturday; but on the Lord's-day they met together definitely to worship. No direction can be found in the New Testament for the substitution of the *first* day of the week for the *seventh*; that is, for constituting the Christian Lord's-day the Levitical Sabbath.

Should, then, a believer open his shop, and trade on the Lord's-day? We trow not! It may be lawful Levitically, but it is not expedient from the Christian standpoint. Because—1st, He is to avoid the appearance of evil; 2nd, He is not to become an offence or a cause of stumbling either to Jews or to Greeks, or to the Assembly of God (1 Cor. x. 32); 3rd, He is not to grieve his brother by walking not according to love (Rom. xiv. 15); 4th, Whether he eats or drinks, or whatsoever he does, but one object should be before him—the glory of God (1 Cor. x. 31); 5th, Believers, in their actions, their habits, and their manner of life, should walk in wisdom towards those who are without (see Col. iv. 5).

I. Has not the opening of our brother's shop on the Lord's-day an appearance of evil, both to the world and also to professing Christians? If so, the exhortation (1 Thess. v. 22) is "abstain" therefrom. Should not the believer honour his Lord and Master by self-denying obedience? He should, and blessing would follow; for, "Them that honour Me I will honour."

II. May not the open shop and trading offend many believers, and become a

stumbling-block to them? Verily it may, and it will! It is good, then, in the sight of God, our heavenly Father, neither to open the shop nor to sell on the Lord's-day, lest thy brother stumble. The Scripture warning is, "Take heed lest by any means this liberty or authority of yours become a stumbling to them that are weak. By thus sinning against the brethren, and wounding their weak conscience, ye sin against Christ." Wherefore, if opening a shop on the Lord's-day, and your liberty to do so "become a stumbling-block to those that are weak, and wound their weak conscience," open not thy shop that thy brethren be not stumbled (see 1 Cor. viii. 9-13).

III. Doth opening thy shop and trading on the Lord's-day grieve the spirit of thy brother? If so, abstain therefrom; grieve him not; remove the cause, for the Lord's sake, who loved thee and gave Himself for thee. Pray for grace to walk in love! In the exercise of grace and self-denial, decide for the Lord, and hesitate not to close thy shop on the first day of the week.

IV. All that the believer does should be to the glory of God. The opening of a place of business on the Lord's-day cannot but tend to bring reproach upon the Holy Name by which we are called, and must of necessity give occasion to the enemies of the Cross of Christ to blaspheme; it cannot therefore be to the glory of God, but manifests weakness of faith, lack of zeal for His glory, and mistrust of His faithful providence. The words of the Lord Jesus to His own redeemed ones are, "Seek ye first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness, and *all these things* (meat, drink, and clothing) shall be added unto you" (see Matt. vi. 31-34).

V. Does the fact of a believer trading systematically and continuously on the Lord's-day indicate a desire on his part to "walk in wisdom towards those who are without"? (Col. iv. 5.) If the "word of Christ" dwelt in him "in all wisdom," would he do this? Will not persistence in doing so rather indicate departure in heart from fellowship with the living Head, "sup-

posing that gain is godliness"? Is it well to take the place of an unbeliever in such a matter, and to do that which not only worldly professors, but even the ungodly themselves would disapprove as inconsistent in the life of one who had taken up his cross and had come out from sects, in token of his desire, and full purpose of heart, to love, serve, honour, and obey the Lord Jesus only? The Blessed One claims the whole heart, undivided, sanctified to Himself; His habitation through the Holy Spirit. He emphatically declared, "Ye cannot serve God and Mammon"; and He warns all who would deliberately put a stone of stumbling in the pathway of the little ones or the weakly ones, of His displeasure,—of swift and inevitable judgment.

May he for whose sake these lines are penned, go to the Lord and ask counsel of Him. May he have faith to cast himself, his family, and all his temporal need upon His faithful providence. If he can do this, he shall yet praise Him for deliverance out of a snare of the devil, and for supply of all temporal need. The Lord abound towards him in the riches of His grace, and enable our brother to trust His faithful love.

W. N. V.

LIFTING UP THE VOICE TO GOD.

[Remarks on Acts iv. 23-37, made at family reading by R. C. C.]

IT is said of the apostles, when let go by the Jewish council, "They went to *their own company*"; but of Judas we read that he went to "*his own place*."

Peter *denied* his Lord, and went out, and wept bitterly; but Judas *betrayed* the Lord, and Satan entered into him. Judas is the author of his own ruin, and Peter would have been the same had not grace prevented. "Hath not the potter power over the clay?" Judas himself said, "I have sinned." He does not think of laying the blame at the door of the God of all grace; nor does Peter think of taking to himself the praise of his salvation.

"They went to their own company, and reported all that the chief priests and elders had said unto them." This is a precious token of their good state, and no marvel that afterwards it was said, "The whole multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one soul."

"And when they heard that, they lifted up their voice to God with one accord." Those who take every matter to the Lord, and make Him acquainted with every thing, are sure to be of one heart and soul. In these days, if there be any little stirring of the malice and rage of men, instead of talking much with God, there is a great talking with one another about it. Observe, they did not say, "Oh, James," or "Oh, Peter, how badly they served you! Who was it that threatened you so?" But they lifted up their voice to God with one accord, and said, "Lord, Thou art God."

They did not say "Father," but "*Lord*"; and this is another token of their faith. They are indeed full of the spirit of adoption; they are children; but not only so, they are *obedient* children and *servants*. They see that He who is their Father is sitting on His throne, and laughing at those mockers who are saying, "Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us." Thus while there was a stir and tumult among the priests, they were in quietness and peace, as there was peace in heaven. We can always readily turn to God if the peace of God be ruling in our hearts.

"Lord, thou art God"; that is, Sovereign Lord. Those priests have not the rule, nor the persecutors; but "Thou art God, which hast made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and all that in them is: who by the mouth of Thy servant David hast said, Why did the heathen rage?" Thus their hearts were saying, "*Thou* hast done it." And this second Psalm which they quote justifies their words in verse 28—"For to do whatsoever Thy hand and Thy counsel determined before to be done." We find the same taking hold of God's overruling power in their previous words, chap. ii. 23—

"Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain." They do not stop to reconcile the counsel and decree of God with the accountability of man, and in this also we see their faith.

"And now, Lord, behold their threatenings: and grant unto Thy servants, that with all *boldness* they may speak Thy word." Paul prays for the same thing in Ephesians vi. 19, 20—"That I may open my mouth boldly, to make known the mystery of the Gospel, for which I am an ambassador in bonds; that therein I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak." The Spirit of God is the spirit of boldness, and it is accompanied with meekness and gentleness. Scribes and Pharisees, in the midst of their great talk of their authority from God, betray themselves in that they speak doubtfully, and confess that in the things of God they have no certainty.

"By stretching forth Thine hand to heal; and that signs and wonders may be done by the name of Thy holy child" (or rather servant) "Jesus." That is, He who was the servant in the days of His flesh is now exalted, and we trust in His name. Grant that we may be true to Him and to ourselves as the *servants* of our Lord.

"And when they had prayed, the place was shaken." Rocks were rent when Christ had finished the work of atonement; here the place was shaken to signify the power of God that had raised up Christ from the dead. In both cases there was a hint, and more than a hint, that the whole of the old creation must pass away. You remember the words of the apostle, Hebrews xii., "The removing of those things that are shaken, as of things that are made, that those things which cannot be shaken may remain."

Let us be as those who have received the "kingdom that cannot be moved," and who in all things "hold fast grace whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear," since "our God is a consuming fire."

NOTES ON THE PROVERBS.

PART XVII.

PROVERB.

PARALLEL.

Chap. xxi., verse

1. "The king's heart is in the hand of the Lord."

Verse 3. "To do justice and judgment is more acceptable to the Lord than sacrifice."

Verse 8. "The way of man is froward and strange," &c.

Verses 11 - 15. "When the scorner is punished," &c.

Verse 16. "The man that wandereth out of the way of understanding," &c.

Verse 22. "The wise man sealeth the city of the mighty," &c.

As the cultivator turneth the channels of water at his pleasure to irrigate his land, so the Lord controlleth and directeth all men—even kings; howbeit they may not think so—Isaiah x., v. 15.

See chap. xv. 8. 1 Sam. xv. 22. "To obey is better than sacrifice." Amos v. 21-24.

Because his heart is "deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked."

Joseph, Moses, Daniel, as pure in heart, wrought righteously.

These verses deal with justice being truly carried out, irrespective of persons and regardless of bribes.

Saul's history shows this; Judas' also.

It were better for them not to have known the way of righteousness than, having known it, to have turned aside from the holy commandment delivered unto them.

See Eccles. vii. 19, ix. 13-18.

"The weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but *mighty through God*."

Verses 25, 26. —*i.e.*, his lusts gratified, lead to idleness and penury; but the righteous *ever* seeketh the welfare of others.

Verse 28. "A Daniel's accusers shall perish," &c.

Verse 29. "A wicked man hardeneth his face," &c.

Chap. xxii., ver. 1. "A good name . . . and loving favour," &c.

Verse 3. "The prudent man foreseeth the evil," &c.

Verse 13. "The slothful man saith, There is a lion without," &c.

Verse 17. "Bow down thine ear," &c.

and penury; but the righteous *ever* seeketh the welfare of others.

Daniel's accusers perished; but Daniel, who ever *hearkened* unto God, was ever listened to in counsel.

That is, he steels his heart against God's instruction; but the upright man delights to carefully order his way according to God's injunctions and revealed will.

The good will of others is preferable to mere wealth; for God mingles rich and poor together for mutual dependence, and "the giver" is always richer than the possessor.

So did Noah; and so will, always, those who are prudent, warned with God's Word, flee for refuge to the hope set before them.

Imagining ridiculous difficulties, so as to shirk plain duties.

Verses 17-21 form an introduction to the third division of this book, which shows forth the object of collecting and preparing for use these "words of the wise"—viz., to cause "trust in the Lord" and fitness to teach by "words of truth."

Verses 22, 23. "Rob not the poor, because he is poor," &c.

Verse 28. "Remove not the ancient landmark," &c.

Verse 29. "Seest thou a man diligent," &c.

Do not take any advantage of the poor; God is his Protector.

See Deut. xix. 14, xxvii. 17; also Jer. vi. 16; and Prov. xxiii. 10, 11.

Mordecai. Joseph. Daniel.

Chap. xxiii., ver. 1-3, 6-9. "When thou sittest to eat with a ruler, consider diligently *him* that is before thee," &c.—R.V.

A warning against courting the friendship of the great in this world, who readily note any departure from their ways, and whose condescensions are often bribes and snares—See Luke xiv. 7-12.

Verses 4, 5. "Labour not to be rich: cease from thine own wisdom," &c.

See Luke xii. 16-21. Lot suffered greatly in this way. See Agur's prayer—Prov. xxx. 8, 9.

Verses 15-35. "My son, if thy heart be wise," &c.

The delight of the father in the wise and obedient son. Urging the utter avoidance of the foolish and gluttonous, of harlots, and of wine, and showing the moral ruin they effect.

Chap. xxiv., ver. 1-9. "Be not thou envious," &c.

Envy not the apparent prosperity of the wicked. Wisdom alone satisfies. It is power. The fool hath it not. The scorner, scoffing at true wisdom, greatly hurts his fellow-men, and by-and-by becomes an abomination to them when they see the mischief he has done.

Verses 10-12. "If thou faint in the day of adversity," &c.

The obvious duty of doing all in one's power to save the lost by making known the way of salvation, and not fainting in heart.

Verses 13, 14. "My son, eat thou honey," &c.

As honey to the taste, so is wisdom to the soul.

Verses 21, 22. "My son, fear thou God and the king," &c.

"Honour the king," and have nothing to say to men who foster rebellion, for sure will be their ruin from both God and the king.

Verses 23 - 25. "These things also belong to the wise," &c.

Integrity in judgment commended. A *right* answer being like a pleasant kiss.

Verse 27. "Prepare thy work without," &c.

Due forethought in things temporal and spiritual—see Matt. vii. 21-27; Luke xiv. 25-33.

Verses 30-34. "I went by the vineyard of the slothful," &c.

Slothfulness solemnly denounced, and its ruin foretold.

Chap. xxvii., ver. 7. "The full soul loatheth an honeycomb," &c.

"The true servant of God, who hungers and thirsts after righteousness, is thankful even for affliction, because it brings him nearer to God."

"Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me"—2 Cor. xii. 7-16.

Verse 16. "He that would restrain her, restraineth the wind, and his right hand encountereth oil"—R. V.

—*i.e.*, the contentious woman is as subtle as the wind, and as slippery as oil. Such were Jezebel and Herodias.

Verse 20. "The eyes of man are never satisfied."

"The eye is not satisfied with seeing."—Eccl. i. 8; v. 10, 11; vi. 7. "I shall be satisfied when I awake with Thy likeness."

Verses 23-27. "Be thou diligent."

These verses enjoin careful attention to earthly duties.

It is not unspiritual to "profess honest trades for necessary uses"—Tit. iii. 14 (margin).

To carry on any business *spiritually*, we need to do all to please God.

Chap. xxviii., verse 1. "The wicked flee when no man pursueth."

"A guilty conscience needs no accuser."

Adam and Eve fled, through conscious guilt.

The three Hebrew youths stood firm before Nebuchadnezzar.

Verse 9. "He that turneth away his ear from hearing the law," &c.

"We know that God heareth not sinners"—*i.e.*, sin-lovers.

Read Isaiah i. 10-15. This injunction is of present, deep importance.

Verse 13. "He that covereth his transgressions shall not prosper," &c.

"If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins"—1 John i. 8-10.

Verse 17. "A man that doeth violence," &c.

"Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed."

Verse 22. "He that hasteth to be rich hath an evil eye," &c.

Lotsohasted and was ruined; Achan also. "They that *will* be rich fall into . . . a snare," &c.—1 Tim. vi. 9-10.

Verse 26. "He How often we find that trusteth in his this true in our own own heart is a fool," experience. Let us &c. ever remember we are *liable* to every sin—for the seed of all sin is in us. Christ alone can save us *from* our sins.

"THE SEVEN SPIRITS OF GOD."

REV. i. 4.

THIS is a special revelation to us for these last days, both for the ministry of "grace and peace" to the saved, and also for sustaining "the testimony of Jesus" to the unsaved.

We have both these services to our God in the precious book of Revelation; and it is in this book only that we have brought before us "the seven Spirits of God"; that is to say, the seven-fold mighty power of the Spirit. It is not so much the tender sympathies of the Spirit—these we have in Rom. viii. 26; nor is He seen here even as "the Holy Spirit," or "the Spirit of Truth"—these are in John xiv. 17, 26; but here our attention is fixed on the fulness of the Spirit, and the all-sufficiency of His mighty power.

The truth of a Divine One dwelling in us, as believers, often perhaps breaks in upon our thoughts and our hearts with a solemnity and a freshness that is very sanctifying to us, and very blessed. Then the believer's soul that has been toiling on in some dullness awakes from its weariness and apathy as if with Jacob's words upon its lips—"Surely the Lord is in this place, and I knew it not"; or, as in Solomon's Song, "Or ever I was aware, my soul made me like the chariots of Ammi-nadib" (chap. vi. 12). This inward refreshing tells of the still unwearied love of the Spirit, and of His undiminished power.

But the same grace and power of the Spirit is at hand for the saint in his Gospel testimony to Jesus among the unsaved.

Some of the most definite and blessed actings of the Spirit of God in the earliest

days of the newly-formed church of God were seen in its Gospel work to the unsaved. What a breathing it was of the mighty Spirit, for instance, with the preached Word, on the Day of Pentecost, when three thousand Jews passed from death unto life! Nor less so when all the Gentiles assembled in Cornelius the centurion's house not only believed unto eternal life, but were also endowed with the miraculous gifts of the Spirit, even before they were baptised. And what a distinct Presence and voice of the Spirit that was which said in the midst of the Antioch church—"Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them" (Acts xiii. 2); and the "beautiful feet" of the Gospel, then began over all these European parts, which have continued bearing such precious fruit to God's glory to this day.

But in John's days this simple "testimony of Jesus" was as much waning in the churches as all other fruit of the Spirit was; and in John's own case, where it still continued, the faithful preacher was banished to the isle of Patmos for maintaining it (see Rev. i. 9). The Word of God, however, could not be bound, neither could the blessed Spirit be banished, nor His power be weakened.

Nay, the Spirit's original, Divine, eternal power, co-equal with that of God and of Jesus Christ, is emphatically before us in the threefold benediction in Rev. i. 4, 5; and, as if further and yet more especially to strengthen and encourage both the work of caring for the weak and weary saints, and "the testimony of Jesus" in the Gospel, He is again and again called in this book by the title of "The seven Spirits of God."

Thus the mightiest things of the Spirit's power seem specially unfolded to cheer us in these last days. Just as in Zech. iv. Zerubbabel was cheered with Zechariah's vision of the lamp of Divinely-revived testimony, kept burning by a golden bowl of oil, which fed the precious flame by *seven golden pipes*. What encouragement to Joshua, the son of Josedech and Zerubbabel, and the remnant of that day was this, added to

Haggai's testimony—"My Spirit remaineth with you; fear ye not."

May the sevenfold power of the Spirit of our God be found now sustaining our beloved ones who are gone out by two and two witnessing for Christ in distant lands as well as those who in these parts are seeking to serve Him. H. D.

Questions and Answers.

QUESTION 275.—Do the Scriptures teach that the Lord Jesus suffered as a Substitute for the sinner?

Every doctrine of the Word of God is now being questioned, and the enemy is seeking to undermine the foundations of all truth. The fact that such a question should be raised among Christians is of itself solemnly significant. But it is an instance of the feebleness of the grasp with which even the most important and fundamental truths are sometimes held. The following scriptures seem to us indisputably to teach "substitution." We do not know *how* the doctrine *could* have been more definitely expressed. "Christ hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God" (1 Pet. iii. 18); "He hath made Him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him" (2 Cor. v. 21); "That one man should die for the people, and that the whole nation perish not" (John xi. 50); "But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon Him; and with His stripes we are healed" (Isa. liii. 5); "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us" (Gal. iii. 13). But not to multiply scriptures, we would refer to only one of that numerous class of passages which are fashioned after the language of the Levitical offerings, and the full bearing of which is only apparent when type and antitype are brought together and compared. "Behold the Lamb of God, that taketh (or beareth) away the sin of the world" (John i. 29). Here the reference is assuredly to the ordinance of the scapegoat in Lev. xvi. In that deeply significant type, the two goats (like the two birds in Lev. xiv.) represent one person and one work in two different aspects. First—The satisfaction of God's claim on account of sin by death. Second—The satisfaction of the conscience of the worshipper on whose heart sin lay as a stain or a burden. The blood (*i.e.*, the death) of the Divinely-appointed Substitute satisfies God's claim against those who through sin had incurred the penalty of death. This transaction was between Christ and God. Next there is a transaction between the sinner and God. He confesses that of which in the light of God he has seen himself to be guilty, and receives by the Word of God the assurance that God is satisfied on his behalf with the death of the

Substitute. Thus, by the one substitutionary death, two results are effected. The sin is borne away from before God, and no longer stands as a claim against the believing sinner. On the other hand it is borne away from the conscience of the believing sinner, and no longer stands between his heart and God as an undischarged liability—a liability that amounted to his death under the judgment and wrath of God. Nothing but the death of a substitute could effect either of these two results, and the doctrine of substitution is abundantly witnessed to in all the offerings. The language of them all is—"Without shedding of blood is no remission." Nothing could be plainer than the passover. The first-born exposed to judgment, but saved from it by the substitutionary death of the unblemished victim. So also with the redemption of the firstling of an ass. Its neck was to be broken, but if a lamb die as its substitute it may live (Ex. xiii. 13). Again, in the provision of the ram for Isaac. Isaac is about to die; the knife is lifted up; but the ram of Jehovah's providing is caught in the thicket—it dies, and Isaac lives.

Many who deny the doctrine of substitution dwell much on the satisfaction given to God by the holy obedience in life and in death of His beloved Son. This is the *burnt-offering* aspect of His work—the aspect in which He is represented by the "*sweet savour*" offerings. As the Holy One and the Just, He suffered martyrdom at the hands of wicked men. Yet He resisted not, neither opened He His mouth, but committed Himself to Him that judgeth righteously. Surely, here is the "*whole burnt-offering*."

But was that all? Does Scripture not teach another aspect of His sufferings? Did He not suffer the forsaking of God? Did not the sword of Jehovah smite Him? Did not the billows and waves of wrath go over Him? Was He not made a curse from God? And is not *this* the aspect of His death that is borne witness to in all the sin-offerings? And if so, did He not suffer thus as the Substitute for the guilty?

But there is one objection raised by the rationalist which must be answered. Such complain of the *injustice* of the just being made to suffer vicariously for the unjust. Clearly the quarrel is with the Word of God itself, and not merely with a doctrine deduced from that Word. But human law admits the principle, and no injustice is charged against it. If one who is poor is sentenced to pay a fine or go to prison, the law recognises the principle of another paying that fine for him. The sentenced one is thereby justified in the eye of the law, and yet the law is upheld and magnified. Where is the injustice? Injustice it would be to *compel* one to pay the fine for another; but if done voluntarily, there is no injustice, and if done from *love*, the freedom of the loved one is love's reward. Away, then, with the charge of injustice against the doctrine of substitution! "He loved the Church, and gave Himself for it." "He loved me and gave Himself for me."