

THE WITNESS:

A MONTHLY MAGAZINE OF BIBLICAL LITERATURE.

PROPHETIC PAPERS. No. 1.

BY F. C. BLAND.

(τ Peter ii. 16-20.)

“**W**E have not followed cunningly-devised fables when we made known unto you the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eye-witnesses of His majesty, for He received from God the Father honour and glory, when there came such a voice to Him from the excellent glory—This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased; and this voice which came from Heaven we heard when we were with Him in the holy mount. We have also more fully confirmed to us the word of prophecy, to which ye do well that ye take heed *in your hearts*, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn and the Day-star arise.”

Such I believe to be the true meaning of this verse, and I am confirmed in this opinion by the late Dr. Tregelles, who himself told me that he believed this to be the correct reading of it; and it gives a very exalted place to the value of prophecy in connection with the spiritual darkness which is fast setting in on the world, when the apostle speaking by the Spirit of God, bids us take heed to it, *in our hearts*, as a man walking in a dark place would do well to take heed to a light. When the day dawns men do not carry lights about, for they are not needed; and when the Day-star arises, the herald of the Day of God, there will be no need of prophecy, for we shall then be *with Him* above the region of darkness to which prophecy applies. The word “*until*” has manifestly this signification.

The value of a diagram in connection with prophetic lectures, is that it brings before us at a glance, the whole range of God’s dispensational dealings with man from the beginning,

and so enables those who have not given much study to prophetic truth, to see that God’s ways with man on the earth have not been merely a succession of disconnected actions, arising out of circumstances occurring in the world; but rather one vast design which was in the mind of God from all eternity, but which is being wrought out in time, according to the purpose of Him who “worketh all things after the counsel of His own will.”

Before explaining the diagram, it may be well to say a few words to aid us in a general way in the study of prophecy, and to lay down a few principles which must be adhered to in prophetic interpretation. First, as to the meaning of the word “dispensation,” which I have used above, and which, though its meaning is well known to every student of prophecy, may not convey any definite idea to ordinary readers. I would say that it is used in the same sense in which we use the word in every-day life, when speaking of dispensing medicine, or charity, or justice. It means, then, in Scripture language, the various dealings of God with the human race from the time man first appeared on the earth in God’s first creation, up to the time when God creates all things new, and when new heavens and a new earth will take the place of the present heavens and earth that are to pass away.

I am not speaking for those who know these things, better probably than I do myself, but for those who are beginners in the study of prophetic and dispensational truth, and so need not apologise for this digression.

I will not dwell at any length on what has been so often and so fully treated of, namely, as to what these various dispensations or dealings of God *have been* with men in the ages that have passed, or as to what they *will be* up to the time when dispensations, as matters

connected with time, shall have ceased, and eternity begun. To sum them up in a few words, they are as follow :—

1st. God's dealings with our first parents in *Innocence*.

2nd. God's dealings with man when he was taught what was right and wrong by his conscience accusing or excusing him (Rom. ii. 15). This we call the dispensation of *Conscience*.

3rd. Next comes that of the Law, in which God gave definite commands to man, both moral and ceremonial, which he was bound to observe. This is the dispensation of the Law.

4th. Then came that one in which God was manifest in the flesh, interpreting to man His ways and His heart in Christ Jesus, and telling men that "He that had seen Him had seen the Father."

5th. After this comes the time in which we live, during which Christ is on high and seated at the right hand of God, and that other Comforter, the Holy Ghost, has come down to abide with us until another apostacy sets in, and this dispensation ends in judgment, and is followed by the

6th dispensation, which will be one of power and righteousness, as distinguished from the present, which is one of long-suffering and grace. It will be a time when subjection will be *enforced* by power and by righteous, inflexible government; when cognisance will be taken of every offence, and obedience will not be invited as now, but enforced under the penalty of judgment; and when those thousand years, which will be the limit of that dispensation, shall have run their course, and man, at the close of it, gets a last chance of taking sides with Satan against God, he will prove as rebellious against God's power as he had before proved against His grace; and then the end will come, when Christ as God's Vicergerent on earth will put down all rule and all authority and power; and delegated power having ceased, God will be all in all.

7th. Then comes the last dispensation, called the new heavens and new earth, wherein will dwell righteousness, and God will tabernacle with men for ever and ever.

These comprise all God's dealings with mankind, past, present, and future. And now to explain our diagram.

EXPLANATION OF DIAGRAM.

BLACK.

The first name that appears on the chart is "Adam," and the broad black line starting from his name and running nearly the whole length of the diagram, is intended to represent the whole human race, fallen, and at a distance from God.

BLUE.

Out of this dark mass of humanity God was pleased to call Abraham to be the head of a distinct family in the earth, and the blue line, which begins with the name of "Abraham," represents, wherever it is seen, the Jewish race and its history, with all its vicissitudes. One time it is seen with the glory of God in its midst, and the government of the world committed to it; at another time subject to the Gentiles, and in captivity among the nations, *but never mixed with them* (Num. xxiii. 9).

The blue line starting from the black line and reaching up to Abraham's name, represents the nation of Israel at its beginning, called out from among the Gentiles, and a short horizontal line marks their history until their exodus out of Egypt.

GOLD.

The line ascending from "Egypt" to "Moses" represents Israel having grown to be a great and mighty nation coming out of Egypt with the presence and glory of God in their midst, which is indicated by the line of gold running through the blue. Wherever this is seen it means that the presence and glory of God is still in connection with His people (Ex. xxix. 43).

The name of Moses marks the beginning of the whole of the Mosaic economy delivered to Israel at Sinai, and under which Israel, as a people, continue whilst the veil is upon their hearts.

RED.

The next name on the diagram will be David's, and here will be noticed a red line, in addition to the gold, running along the blue. This is intended to represent the kingly power which was to be the ruling power of the world, if Israel had been faithful to God, and which was committed to Israel and to the family of David (1 Kings vi. 12, and 1 Chron. xvii. 14).

It will be remembered that ten of the tribes revolted under Jeroboam, and set up idolatrous worship in Samaria, for which God sent them into captivity into Assyria, which is the next name appearing on the chart. These are what are commonly called "the ten lost tribes." The line is, therefore, broken off here, because their history ceases for the present, and the blue line becomes thinner, as representing only the two tribes; the power and glory still being left to them. But we read in 2 Kings xxi. that because of the sin of Manasseh, and the idolatry of these two tribes, God sent them into captivity to Babylon, as He had sent the ten tribes into captivity to Assyria, and here the line descends towards the black, and runs along it for a short space, to indicate the 70 years' captivity in Babylon.

It will be noticed that *the gold line ends here*, for God's presence left them when they went into captivity, and Ezekiel sees it in a vision, leaving the temple, and going up to heaven (see Ezek. x. and xi.), while at the same time the throne of the world is delivered into the

hands of Nebuchadnezzar (Dan. ii. 37 and 38) as head of the Gentiles, and what are called, in Luke xxi. 24, "the times of the Gentiles" began.

The power of the world has ever since been in the hands of the Gentiles, and will continue so "until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled"; or, in other words, till Christ comes again and takes His place on David's throne (Acts ii. 30), and becomes head of the nation of Israel, as Israel becomes the head of the nations of the earth.

Beneath the black line will be seen the names of the four great Gentile empires that have filled the throne of the world from the Babylonish captivity to the coming of Christ, and even after, till the Roman empire disappeared; these were Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece, and Rome.

The blue line ascending from the black marks the return of the Jews out of captivity under Ezra and Nehemiah, and the numbers 7, 62, and 1, called in Daniel ix.

"70 weeks," or "heptads" (as the translation should be), embrace the whole of God's dealings with that wondrous people from the time they came out of captivity to the beginning of the 1,000 years' reign of Christ, commonly called the Millennium.

DANIEL IX. 24-27.		Daniel's 70th week divided into	
Decree to Nehemiah to restore and build Jerusalem	446	34	33
From Christ's birth to the time He presented Himself to the Jews as Messiah the King. Matt. xxi. 5	33	The Church or the Mystery hid from ages.	
Difference between our calculation of time and that of the Jews	4		
Divide by one heptad or week of years	<u>7483</u>	Nehemiah's date 446	
	69	Malachi's date 397	
The seven weeks of Daniel ix. 25 extend from Nehemiah's decree to the end of Malachi. The threescore and two weeks from Malachi to coming of Christ as King. Matt. xxi. 5.		Divide by a heptad 749	
		7 weeks or heptads.	

The sloped lines running along these dates are intended merely to mark this chronological period.

It may be necessary to state here that these "heptads," or "measures" of 7, represent 7 years each, not 7 days. These 3 periods added together make 70 heptads, or 490 years, and these comprise all God's dealings with the Jews, from the time of their return from Babylon, as stated above, to the end of this dispensation.

These 70 measures of time are divided into 3 periods of 7, 62, and 1. The 7 heptads extend from the going forth of the commandment to restore and build Jerusalem (Neh. ii.) to the end of Malachi, when God's last testimony was rendered to Israel, and all prophecy ceased.

The 62 heptads extend from Malachi to the coming of Messiah the Prince, according to Zech. ix. 9, fulfilled in Matt. xxi. 5, after which Messiah is cut off.

The 70th heptad, or "one week" as it is called in Dan. ix., remains yet to be fulfilled, and the book of the Revelation from chap. iv. to the end of chap. xix.

is occupied with the narration of its fulfilment. Some details in figures, as to chronology, will be found in centre of page.

It will be known to most students of prophecy, that the history of Israel has been interrupted, whilst God is calling out from both Jews and Gentiles those who are now being saved, after which He will again restore the tabernacle of David which is fallen down. This period, during which Israel is "Lo-ammi," or not His people, is called "The dispensation of the mystery" (Eph. iii.), which was kept secret from the foundation of the world, and was revealed for the first time to St. Paul. But we read in Eph i., that before the foundation of the world, God had purposed this in Christ, and so if we look back on the chart we shall see a star there, to indicate that before ever the ages began to run their course, God had His election in Christ, that wondrous union of Head and members spoken of in the Epistle to the Ephesians. To illustrate

this the diagram is folded here, and when it is so closed, the history of the Jewish people, and indeed the prophetic history of the earth (for all prophecy relates to the earth, and to the earthly people as its centre), can be read uninterruptedly from the Old Testament, as if it were never broken, for the

church comes in, so to speak, in a parenthesis, as a heavenly people in a timeless gap, without a date or a prophetic event to mark its history.

Those who form part of the church of this dispensation, cease to be Jews or Gentiles, and become members of a body, of which Christ is head. Our testimony is that our inheritance is not on earth, but in heaven, that our citizenship is there, and our present hope is that Christ will come to take us to the place that He has gone to prepare for us up there.

On the other hand, the hopes of the Jews are fixed, and rightly so, on the fulfilment of the promises made to the fathers on earth. Canaan is to be the lot of their inheritance, and their home. The earthly Jerusalem will be their city; and God will fulfil all His promises to them there.

It will be seen at once, when this is understood, that these two testimonies differ widely, and the one must give place to the other. That the testimony to heavenly hopes must cease before the earthly one begins, and the gospel of the kingdom be preached in

all the world for a witness unto all nations before the end comes. A people filled with Jewish hopes, and expecting the fulfilment of Jewish promises, must be prepared and on the scenes, before the transactions of that 70th heptad can begin. They must be gathered unto Jerusalem. Their temple must be rebuilt, and their sacrifices and temple worship restored. A condition of things which the present testimony *could not produce or even acknowledge.*

GREEN.

This period is called on the chart the gospel of the *kingdom*, and we would gather that it is carried on by those spoken of in Joel ii., upon whom God will in the *last days* pour out His Spirit, and give them visions and dreams to instruct the Jews in His ways, and to make ready a people prepared for the Lord.

The exposition of the events to occur in the 70th heptad, which is divided into two equal parts of 3½ years each, must be sought for in the book of the Revelation, and to which we hope to refer when we come further on in our lectures. These divisions of it are designated in the books of Daniel and Revelation by the words, "A time, times, and the dividing of a time." "A time" meaning one year, "times" two years, and "the dividing of a time" half a year.

It is called in Revelation 42 months, also 1,260 days, which make 3½ years of Jewish months. At the end of this heptad, the Lord comes in judgment and for the deliverance of His people.

The green square on the chart represents the Millennium, or 1,000 years of Christ's reign on earth, in Jerusalem, and before His ancients gloriously (Isa. xxiv. 23, and xxxii. 1).

This will be found to be described in Old Testament prophecy as a time of universal prosperity and peace. Indeed, it may be said that all the passages descriptive of earthly blessings in the Old Testament, and those which speak of Israel's restoration, refer to this period. It will be noticed that here the black line ends, because the curse is removed from the earth during Christ's reign, and the blue line, representing restored Israel, is no longer among the nations. It has also regained its original breadth, for the 12 tribes will be brought together again (Isa. xlix).

The gold line appears again on the chart, and in the midst of the blue, for God has returned again to Jerusalem with mercies, and His glory returns to the temple (See Ezek. xliii. 2).

The red line is also removed from the black to the blue, for the throne of the world has been given back to Israel, and from Zion goes forth the Law and the Word of the Lord from Jerusalem. The times of Gentile oppression are over, and during these 1,000 years *Satan is bound* (Rev. xx. 1).

Then comes the end of the heavens and the earth that now are, and God creates "new heavens and a new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness."

(TO BE CONTINUED MONTHLY.)

MARY'S NEED AND WORK.

AN ADDRESS BY JOHN RYMER, OF DEMERARA, AT
A RECENT CONFERENCE IN BIRMINGHAM.

I WISH to speak a few words concerning the Word of God, and concerning service for the Lord. Probably most of us here this afternoon, if not all, are interested, and perhaps engaged, in some way or other, in the work of the Lord. There are brethren who are wholly given up, as we say, to the Lord's service; but all believers can serve the Lord, and if the heart be right there will be the ever-increasing desire to do so.

Let us look at two portions of the Word of God. First at Luke x. 38 to 42. Now, this "one thing is needful"—this expression of the Lord is often quoted as having reference to the salvation of the soul; but it is not in this light, or this way, that the Lord Jesus Christ meant these words to be understood. He says, "Martha, thou art careful and troubled about many things: but *one* thing is needful." Now there were *many* things occupying her mind—*many* things about which she was careful and troubled; but the Lord Jesus Christ says "*one* thing is needful." Therefore this word, "one thing is needful," stands in contrast with the words, "careful and troubled about many things." Now, let us see what were the things that were troubling Martha. She was cumbered about much serving; yet she was serving Jesus. But in attempting to serve Him she was troubled, and careful, and cumbered. This is not the mind of Christ concerning any one of His servants, whoever he or she may be. Our Lord Jesus Christ would never have us cumbered concerning His service; for that cumbering, and carefulness, and troubling will lead us away from His feet. Remember, in regard to our desires, "*one* thing is needful." Now the one thing in Mary's case was that she sat at Jesus' feet and heard His word. "Mary hath chosen that good part, which shall not be taken away from her."

There is another thing we should remember. When Martha was careful and troubled about many things, the spirit of murmuring and grumbling took possession of her. Therefore she was grieved with her sister, and said, "Lord, bid her that she help me." If you and I would learn how to get rid of this

spirit we must take Mary's place, and find time really to have communion with the Lord through His precious Word. As those that serve God it may be that we need to be guarded, not so much against the worldliness or the doctrines that are abroad (for we may even detest them), but above all against allowing ourselves to get away from the feet of Jesus and from meditation over His Word. If we do, what will follow? Unhappiness in our own souls. The joy and cheerfulness, *the quicksilver*, so to speak, will be gone, and then we shall begin to grumble.

Now, let us turn to John xii. 1 to 5. We see here Mary found fault with by those who are very distinguished servants of Jesus at this time. All were there around the person of the Lord—His chosen apostles. Yet, led by the traitor, they fell in with this condemnation of Mary. Judas was very quick and shrewd in coming to a conclusion as to the value of the ointment. The word here rendered "pence" is the same as that rendered "penny" in Matt. xx. 1, 2. If a penny (in value about sevenpence halfpenny) represents the amount of wages paid to a labourer in Palestine for a day's work, this sum of three hundred pence represents nearly the whole of a year's earnings. The box of ointment was worth about three hundred pence. Take the Jewish Sabbaths out of the year, and then you have very little over three hundred days. Therefore this box of ointment was worth the whole amount of a labourer's wages for a year. Mary poured it upon the Lord's feet.

Mark xiv. 6 to 9.—Let us treasure up these three words: "She hath wrought a good work on Me"; "She hath done what she could"; "Whosoever this Gospel shall be preached throughout the whole world, this also that she hath done shall be spoken of for a memorial of her." What did she do? She sat at the feet of Jesus; she heard His words; and though condemned by others, she still sat there, choosing the good part which was not taken away from her. She grew in grace. She entered so deeply into His mind that she brought this ointment beforehand for His burial. In the midst of complaining in regard to service in connection with the Master, she does a work in the presence of them all that the Son of God looks upon with delight.

He takes it as an act of deepest devotion and heart-love to Himself; and this was the *gist* of her service to her Master. Take out the *heart-love* from our service, and what does it become? That which brings no delight to the heart of Jesus. Let there be a drinking in of God's Word, an exaltation of Christ in our hearts; let them bow more and more before Him and worship Him. Let us *love Him*, giving up ourselves, all we have and are, to Him. Then shall we enter into the spirit of the apostle when he said, "My earnest desire is that Christ shall be magnified in my body, whether by life or death." She did this act of service. What then? Jesus has embalmed her name and raised up a memorial to her, that whosoever this Gospel is preached—in China or India, far away in the backwoods of America or the depths of Hindoostan or Africa—this also that she hath done shall be spoken of for a memorial of her. When the Lord shall come again, much that has cumbered us and caused us to be careful and anxious will be unrewarded; but there will be service never heard of by those who hear of the works of the servants of the Lord, precious acts of lowly service done in the presence of the Saviour which have never appeared in papers or periodicals that shall have His approval in that day, and the root of the whole matter lies in this Book. Let us therefore get into contact through the words of this Book, by the teaching of the Spirit of God, with the Blessed Lord Jesus Christ Himself, who is therein revealed to lowly, waiting hearts.

THE FIRST EPISTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS.

NOTES OF AN ADDRESS BY J. R. C.

NOW there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. And there are differences of administrations (or ministries), but the same Lord. And there are diversities of operations, but it is the same God which worketh all in all" (1 Cor. xii. 4-6).

A list of these "gifts" of the Spirit is found in verses 8-10. It may seem to our mind peculiar that the gift of wisdom should be given to one and the gift of knowledge

to another. We would have probably bestowed both gifts on the same person! But this is not God's idea. His way is to bestow a little gift upon one and a little upon another, thus binding the members together in mutual dependence and helpfulness.

"To another faith." This is not the faith that lays hold of the doctrines of the Word of God; but special faith about special things, such as the Lord alluded to when He spoke of the faith that can remove mountains, &c.

To one He gave the gift of speaking in various languages, and to another the interpretation of tongues—in this way maintaining the idea of mutual relationship and dependence.

All this is illustrated by the figure of the human body, in which each member is fitted to perform its own function and is unfitted to do the work of another. In this way mutual dependence and mutual care are promoted.

Such is God's idea of ministry in the church. But according to man this is nothing better than confusion. His idea is to have everything done according to set rules. God's order always necessitates dependence upon Himself, and mutual responsibility, care, and dependence between the various members.

It is the Spirit of God who is here said to confer these gifts. In the wisdom of God, many of these do not now exist in the Church. On the other hand, there may be natural abilities existing prior to regeneration, which, by the Spirit of God, being sanctified, developed, and directed, are as much of the Spirit and for edification as those gifts which were more evidently supernatural.

One may be qualified to preach the Gospel; another to instruct the saints; another to care for and guide the flock. In each case the qualification is of the Spirit, and never could have existed but by the power of the Spirit. Man cannot confer such gifts; neither can they be developed by any amount of training in schools and colleges.

If there be a felt lack of any such gifts in any assembly of God, how are they to be obtained? The appeal for them must be made to God alone. It is He, by His manifold grace, who alone can qualify, raise up, and bring forward to the work.

But to have the gift, according to verse 4, is one thing; to administer or minister the gift

in subjection to the will of the Lord, as in verse 5, is quite another thing.

A man may be fully gifted for the preaching of the Gospel; but he may so fail in subjecting himself to the Lord Jesus, in the exercise of the gift, that he may be little used in conversions, or may even be wholly laid aside as a vessel unfit for the Master's use. The gift may be possessed but *neglected* (see 1 Tim. iv. 14), and so may fail of its proper utility.

Another may be gifted to minister the Word of God to the saints, but he may fail to give to the household their portion of meat in due season, or he may minister strong meat to babes. Thus, not subjecting his ministry to the Lord, he may do harm instead of good, notwithstanding that he is truly gifted by the Spirit for the work.

Another may have the gift of rule; but not exercising it in subjection to the Lord, he may assert the will of man, and lord it over the heritage of God.

Thus, when a church is come together into one place, they may be, as in Corinth, rich in gift, and yet, not having learned each one to wait upon a present Lord in the exercise of the gift, there may be confusion, barrenness, and little or no edification.

And it is this unreality, insubjection to the Lord, and consequent confusion and lack of edification, that affords the most fatal temptation to go back to human arrangements, whereby through some one man, on whom the responsibility is made to rest, a certain measure of edification is secured, and a kind of order which, though admittedly human, is thought to be better than the unreality that, assuming to be after the Divine pattern, lacks the power, and attributes to the Spirit of God unedifying attempts that are neither to the Lord nor of the Spirit.

Then, where there are gifts of the Spirit, and these ministered in subjection to the one Lord, the *operation* (verse 6) that results from such ministry—the effectual working in souls—showing itself in vigorous life, and fruit, and testimony, and increase, is of God. One may teach, another may exhort, a third may pray, a fourth may give thanks; but how are such exercises to be made effectual in the comforting and edifying of the body? This can only be by the operation of that God "*who worketh all*

in all," only as His mighty power is carrying the ministry home to every heart and conscience.

Thus are we taught that for ministry, according to God's thoughts and not man's, we are cast upon the living God Himself. We cannot get on without the gifts that are of the Spirit, the direction that is of the Lord, and the operation (or in-working) that is of God. Helpless are we, indeed, if we look to man!

But the flesh is ever ready to lean upon man rather than God. Hence how many there are in assemblies who go in and out without any sense of responsibility—professing to look to God, but *really* counting upon certain brethren to be present and to "conduct the service"; much as others in a denomination count upon "the minister," to whom they surrender all their responsibility.

May God give us grace to see that we cannot but fail of blessing unless each individual member is in living fellowship with God and truly subject to the Lord.

Verse 7—"The manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal."

There is a difference between "the Spirit" Himself and "the *manifestation* of the Spirit." Every believer in the Lord Jesus has received the Spirit. "If any man have not the Spirit of Christ he is none of His." "Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit?" He is "the Spirit of Sonship," given to us because we are sons, and enabling us from the heart to say, "Abba, Father."

But the Holy Spirit manifests His presence in various ways. His way of manifesting Himself in order to the increase and profit of the body may be, in one, by special evangelistic gift and longing for the salvation of sinners; in another, by qualifying him profitably to instruct believers in the Word of God; in another, by putting into his heart an "earnest care" as to the spiritual well-being of the saints, leading to visitation and other pastoral work.

Thus diversely, in different individuals, does the Spirit manifest His presence; but whatever be the kind of manifestation, it is of the same Spirit and for the profit of the whole body. Thus it is evident, that in the love and care of God, the Church should not on any occasion "come together" without receiving profit and blessing by the Holy Spirit's ministry.

Verse 11—"Dividing to each one severally as

He will." Here it is emphatically asserted that these distributions of the Spirit are according to His sovereign will. This is not man's idea. Do not parents often regard "the ministry" just as they would any other "profession"? A father may have three sons. He puts one to "business," one he qualifies for "the law," and the third he makes "a minister." In each case the main object in view is a sufficient and respectable means of livelihood! So, whether it be "the law" or "the ministry," the necessary qualification is the university and its appropriate curriculum. This being completed, according to man's idea each one is fitted for his particular "profession." God has as little to do with the one as the other. The "minister" may not even be a Christian!

But even if he were a Christian, and a zealous one, is that sufficient? May he not be a truly converted man, and yet, through lack of the Holy Spirit's qualifying, be utterly unfit for the place in the body that he professes to occupy, utterly unable to discharge the many functions that he presumes to monopolise. How often one hears the remark, "Our minister is a real good man, but he's no preacher!" And yet he preaches! And instead of the children of God seeing in this a violation by the will of man of the sovereign will of the Spirit of God, they submit to it, and support it, and regard it as a right and gracious thing quietly to settle down in a system that spoils "the body" of its proper sustenance and robs God of His glory.

Verse 12—"For as the body is one, and hath many members, . . . so also is the Christ." This is a wonderful expression! It is not, "so also is the Church," but "so also is the Christ." What! Does God call us, the members, "the Christ"? Yes, for Christ, the Head, would be incomplete without the members as the members would be incomplete without the Head! So Head and members together form the "one new man"—the one mystic "Christ."

In connection with this, turn to Ps. cxxxix.—"I will praise Thee; for I am fearfully and wonderfully made: marvellous are Thy works. . . . My substance was not hid from Thee, when I was made in secret, and curiously wrought in the lowest parts of the earth," &c. (verses 14-17).

The seed cast into the ground, hid in the earth, quickened there, and curiously wrought into a new organism, which springs up according to the type of its own life, is a wonderful figure of death and resurrection. To this the Lord alluded when He said, "Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit." That "Christ died and was buried, and hath been raised again the third day" is the Gospel (see 1 Cor. xv. 3, 4).

The believer also, according to God's reckoning, was "crucified with Christ" (Rom vi. 6; Gal. ii. 20), died with Christ (Rom. vi. 8), was buried with Him (Rom. vi. 4; Col. ii. 12), quickened together with Him (Eph. ii. 5), and has been raised up together with Him (Eph. ii. 6; Col. iii. 1); as He said, "Because I live ye shall live also." The name of every member of that elect body was written in God's Book—the Lamb's Book of Life—before the foundation of the world, and also "what days they should be fashioned," the very date of their conversion, and in God's own time begotten again through the Word, and united in life eternal with the risen Head. Is it any wonder that the Spirit of Christ in the Psalmist should exclaim, "How precious are Thy thoughts unto me, O God, how great is the sum of them!" As I look at a man, head and members all possessed with one life and one spirit, I see a divinely-appointed illustration of the Christ of God. When the apostle refers to it, in Eph. v. 22, 23, in connection with a kindred figure—the husband being the head of the wife, even as Christ is the Head of the Church—he adds, "This mystery is great, but I speak in regard of Christ and in regard of the Church" (R.V.).

"Oh! teach us, Lord, to know and own
This wondrous mystery,
That Thou with us art truly One,
And we are one with Thee."

MIGHT, POWER, OR THE SPIRIT.—All means which believers may use for the conversion of sinners, without the Spirit in them, are like a body without life; like a locomotive without steam; like a watch without mainspring; like nature without the life-giving power of the sun. However beautiful, unique, antiquated, united, extensive, wealthy, intellectual; however patronised by the wealthy, wise, or great: *if the Spirit is absent* from them, they will fail to accomplish the desired end. Do we not often forget this?

"SALVATION."

AN ADDRESS BY JOHN BROWN.

(Communicated by W. K.)

WE shall divide our subject into the four following parts:—(1) The glorious source of salvation; (2) The means by which it is effected; (3) The subjects thereof; (4) The blessed object thereof.

Firstly—THE GLORIOUS SOURCE OF SALVATION.—We have revealed to us in Titus ii. 11 this solemn, blessed fact, viz., that but for the grace of God salvation to man had been an impossibility. "The grace of God hath appeared, bringing salvation to all men" (R.V.). Grace, if rightly understood, is that which admits of no element of condition on the part of him who shows it, and excludes every particle of merit on the part of him upon whom it is bestowed. In the light of which, reflect for a moment that it is the mighty marvellous grace of God that bringeth salvation to all men, and hath appeared in the sight of all men, bringing from God for them salvation. This one scripture I account as being sufficient to establish the first point of the four I have named; telling us so clearly the source of salvation.

Secondly—THE MEANS BY WHICH IT IS EFFECTED.—They are at least threefold. The first you will find in 2 Timothy iii. 14, 15—"Abide thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them." The "whom" of this verse is a word expressive of the kind of persons that had been the educators of Timothy. "And that from a child thou hast known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus." We see from this passage that the Scriptures as a whole are one great means whereby salvation is effected in man.

In Acts iv. 10 you will find another means, viz., the name of Jesus Christ. "Be it known unto you all, and to all the people of Israel, that in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth . . . doth this man stand here before you whole." Observe that whereas in 2 Tim. iii. 15 we read "Christ Jesus," here it is "Jesus Christ." Christ Jesus always expresses truth as viewed from God's standpoint—it speaks of

the Lord as the Anointed Saviour; whereas Jesus Christ is that truth which, like a mighty wave from the ocean, goes swelling on until it breaks against the rock-bound coast, only to roll back to where it came from. Truth comes from God through Christ Jesus to man; having thus come, every soul that is made wise unto salvation through faith, that is in the Anointed Saviour is lifted upon the bosom of that mighty wave and taken up to nestle in the heart of God as His own saved one. And in no other is there salvation; for neither is there any other name under heaven that is given among men wherein *it is necessary* to be saved; that being the force of the word "must." Thus we see that the name of Jesus Christ is another great means whereby salvation is effected in and for man.

A third means by which salvation is effected in and for man is OBEDIENCE TO THE WILL OF GOD. 1 Tim. iv. 16—"Take heed to thyself, and to the teaching; continue in these things." "Cleave to them" is the idea here. You find a kindred expression in Acts xi. 23, where Barnabas exhorts the believers at Antioch with purpose of heart to cleave to the Lord. "FOR IN DOING THIS thou shalt save both thyself and them that hear thee." We learn from this scripture that obedience to the will of the Lord is another means by which salvation is effected in and for man.

Thirdly—THE SUBJECTS OF SALVATION, which are, the perishing of men, and the saved among men. The following scriptures refer to the first of these classes, viz., the perishing among men who are the subjects of this great salvation:—John iii. 16, which is the Lord's explanation of verse 15. Also 1 Cor. i. 18—"For the Word of the Cross (Christ is the Word) is to them that are perishing foolishness; but unto us which are being saved it is the power of God" (R.V.). "For we are a sweet savour of Christ unto God in them that are being saved, and in them that are perishing" (2 Cor. ii. 15, R.V.). "If our Gospel be hid it is hid to them that are perishing" (2 Cor. iv. 3, R.V.). We see from these scriptures that the Gospel which has come by Christ to and for men is for that one great distinct class, the perishing among men.

Salvation in connection with "the saved"

among men is presented to such as one salvation, but in a threefold view. Firstly, as being a *past*, accomplished, eternal, finished fact; secondly, as that which is *continuous* and more and more developed; thirdly, as having in the *future* a blessed consummation. Turn to a few scriptures which show us salvation in its past aspect. Eph. i. 13—"In whom ye also trusted (hoped), having heard the word of the truth, the Gospel of your salvation: in whom also, having believed, ye were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise." Some have tried to make out that these words imply that there is a lapse of time between the believing and the sealing, whereas God puts together the having heard the word of truth, (which was the Gospel of their salvation,) and having believed, they were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise. Why "of promise?" Because the Lord promised to bestow the Spirit on those that should believe on Him. "Which is the earnest of our inheritance"; that is, God's pledge that salvation will be ours for ever and ever. In passing, we may observe Eph. ii. 8—"For by grace have you been saved through the faith; and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God"—the gift referred to here is *salvation*. Titus iii. 5—"According to His mercy He saved us." This points to something that has been finished, and abides true of him that has been so saved, for ever and ever.

Turn with me now to two scriptures that give the present aspect of salvation as regards the saved. Phil. ii. 12, 13—"Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling: for it is God which worketh in you both to will—that is, to wish—and to perform of good pleasure," that which will bring about your own salvation. Because you are saved He would have you to be saved from all that is contrary to His will; and He works in you to this end. 1 Peter i. 9—"Receiving the end, or object, of your faith." Turn to two scriptures in which we find the same word—"end." "Ye have heard of the patience of Job, and have seen the end of the Lord"—that is, the object in it all. 1 Tim. i. 5—"The end of the commandment is love out of a pure heart, and of a good conscience, and of faith unfeigned." The object of the commandment is to make us real among men,

because we are real before God. "The salvation of your souls"—that is, of yourselves. The same word occurs again in iii. 20, "Eight souls—or persons—were saved through water." Then, in connection with the third aspect of the salvation of the saved, that is, its future consummation, turn to 1 Peter i. 5—"Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation, ready to be revealed in the last time." It is the salvation that is "ready" for which we are waiting, and of which Romans xiii. 11 also speaks—"Now is our salvation nearer than when we believed." We start with it, we go on with it, and its consummation is drawing nearer moment by moment.

This threefold salvation is sweetly linked together in Rev. xii. 10—"Now is come the *salvation*, and the *power*, and the *kingdom* of our God, and the authority of His Christ" (R.V.). What are the three words that go hand in hand with the Gospel, the word of truth, the grace of God that hath brought salvation? Are they not the salvation, the power, and the kingdom? The Gospel is the *power* of God unto *salvation*; the grace of God brings salvation through the word of truth that has become the Gospel of our salvation; and we who are the subjects thereof are called into the *kingdom* of God. "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." But "being," or rather, "having been born again," he can both see and enter into that kingdom. Two scriptures to show the oneness of the salvation that has come from God to man. The first is Heb. v. 9—"And being made perfect, He became the Author (that is, the mighty Causer) of eternal salvation unto all them that obey Him." The next is Heb. vii. 25—"Because He abideth for ever, hath an intransmissible priesthood, He is able to save them to the uttermost that are coming unto God by Him." It is one salvation; He who is the cause thereof is eternal, because He ever lives; therefore He is able to save completely and eternally all who by Him to God are coming.

Fourthly—THE OBJECT OF SALVATION.—In connection with that division of our subject, turn to Rev. vii. 10-12—"Salvation to our God that sitteth upon the throne, and to the Lamb." "The blessing, and the glory, and the wisdom, and the thanksgiving, and the

honour, and the power, and the might, be unto our God, for ever and ever. Amen" (R.V.). We get here the great object of salvation, brought by the grace of God to us. The words which occur in Rev. xix. 1 are very similar, and yet very dissimilar to those of Rev. vii., which let no one confuse.

There is another truth in connection with our subject that we might look at for a little. You will find it referred to in Matt. xvi. 24-26, as well as other scriptures—"If any man would come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me. For whosoever will save his life (soul) shall lose it: and whosoever shall lose his life for My sake shall find it" (R.V.). It is one thing to be a saved person, and another thing altogether to have a saved life as a saved person. Just as we may be redeemed *persons* and our *lives* not be redeemed (*cf.* Psa. ciii.). And it is because the second view of salvation—the present—which so much devolves upon us, may be hindered by us, that, if I understand aright, the will of God as told out by the Lord Jesus is this:—The man that *loses* his soul saves it. This saving of our souls (our lives) in the time that now is, calls upon us that we die daily. First, we are to die daily to ourselves, and next to everything that would keep us in any way from being obedient to the will of God concerning us, as to the manner of our spirit, the condition of our souls, and as to the use to which we put the members of our body.

"His name shall be called Jesus; because He shall save His people from their sins" (Matt. i. 21). That same ever blessed One has "passed through the heavens." His name is Jesus, the saving One who saves His people in the mightiness of being the Son of God. And God says, because of that, "What I expect of you is, that each one of you will be ambassadors on behalf of Christ." The ambassador represents the court of the sovereign whom he serves and loves. That is what each of us is expected to do. We should preach by lip and life. There is too little of the spiritual vigour of Divine ministry about us who name the name of the Lord. There are "things that accompany salvation" (Heb. vi. 9). If we have got the root, let us see that we also have the fruit.

SECOND EPISTLE TO TIMOTHY.

THE analogy in the histories of Israel and of the Church has often been noticed.

Objects of God's electing grace—the one His earthly people, the other heavenly—both have failed to maintain in the world the position proper to their respective callings. Of the former, it is written, "They were mingled among the heathen and learned their works, and they served their idols, which were a snare unto them." With respect to the latter, we have but to look around to see associated in closest fellowship children of God and the unsaved, sharing together in worldly pursuits and pleasures, in Christian work and worship, not infrequently having over them as spiritual guides, men chosen from the ranks of the unregenerate. In times of such general failure, the *man of God* is privileged to stand where *all the people of God* should have stood.

A reference to the dark day in Israel's history, which became the occasion of Elijah's call to the front, may prove helpful to some servants of the Lord in this, another day of confusion and departure from the truth. Comparing the Spirit's comments (Rom. xi. 2-4) with the prophetic teaching of 2 Timothy, some points of similarity may be noticed. The mass of the people had turned aside after Baal. Judgment, long before threatened, was at length about to fall on the nation. Of those who had not bowed the knee unto Baal there were seven thousand men, outwardly associated with the idolatry, whom nevertheless God had reserved unto Himself; and manifestly dissociated from it all stood Elijah, the man of God, known as such throughout the land. In that day he was a "vessel sanctified and meet for the Master's use, prepared unto every good work," and he was thus owned of God. Similarly in the state of things contemplated in 2 Timothy, three classes are represented. Profane and vain babblers, of whom Hymeneus and Philetus were examples, and many more described (chap. iii.), having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof, such may be classed under the first head; and of the children of God, there are (class 2) those who purge themselves, or in other words cleanse themselves by separation; and those who still remain in outward fellowship with unrighteousness. All

Christians are responsible to "depart from unrighteousness." Whoso acts upon that command he shall be "a vessel unto honour," even as Elijah was. Of the others (class 3), it is written, "The Lord knoweth them that are His." Clearly the coming out on the part of some in distinct separation from that which is contrary to the revealed mind of God does not necessarily imply that all others are unsaved; but it remains for each child of God to consider whether his or her ways are ordered in accordance with this distinct command of the Lord. The meaning of "If a man purge himself from these," is evident when taken in connection with the apostle's instructions to Timothy, who is addressed as a representative man. "These" applies to all that is contrary to sound doctrine, whether persons or things; see, for instance, 1 Tim. ii. 2—"O man of God, flee these things." In the same chapter, verse 5, where it is not even a question of fundamental doctrine, but simply one of godly practice, the command is, "If any man teach otherwise, and consent not to wholesome words, the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the doctrine which is according to godliness: from such withdraw thyself." 2 Tim. ii. 16, 17—"Shun profane and vain babblings, of whom are," &c., and chap. iii. 5—"From such also turn away."

Decision for the truth must ever be at personal cost, and the path of *separation* may become to some one of *isolation*. Thus it was with Elijah—"I am left alone, and they seek my life." He was not the only one reserved from judgment, but he was alone in the place of testimony for God. Similarly was it with the apostle Paul—"I suffer trouble as an evil doer, even unto bonds." "All they which are in Asia have turned away from me"; and for the encouragement of those who should follow in the path it is written, "Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution."

But if temporal loss is sustained, there shall also be Divine compensation. What to Elijah was the hatred of Jezebel, isolation, and poverty, compared with his gain? He enjoyed communion with God, was privileged to act for God, and was miraculously sustained by God. In transfiguration on the holy mount (Matt. xvii.), he stood in close association with the

Lord of glory, and doubtless, in the kingdom to come, he shall also occupy a conspicuous place. The apostle Paul likewise could make his boast in the Lord under all circumstances—“No man stood with me, but all forsook me, . . . nevertheless the Lord stood with me and strengthened me . . . and I was delivered out of the mouth of the lion”; and at the finish, as he reviewed the past and looked forward to the crowning day, his sufferings were forgotten in the joyous anticipation of the Lord’s approval and reward.

In this epistle little is said of saints collectively. Each individual who “will live godly in Christ Jesus” may see the path clearly defined (chap. ii. 19-22). There is nothing to encourage the idea some entertain of a fellowship wide enough to include all Christians. To the latter the command of verse 19 is addressed, “Depart from unrighteousness.” Those referred to (verse 22) have obeyed the Word, and find themselves, with others, endeavouring to walk by the same rule and to mind the same thing (Phil. iii. 16). In the first epistle (chap. i. 5) the course of declension is traced—“Love out of a pure heart . . . from which some having swerved have turned aside.” In the passage under consideration what we see is restoration in an evil day on the part of those who are said to “Call on the Lord out of a pure heart” (compare James iv.).

Epistles such as Corinthians and Ephesians present in the first place truth as to the body collective, afterwards the relation of individual members one toward another; whilst in those scriptures which relate especially to the closing days, primary importance is attached to *personal godliness*. Local separation need not necessarily interfere with “the unity of the spirit.” In so far as gatherings or individuals in the fear of the Lord endeavour to maintain the truth, and practice that which becometh sound doctrine, there will be oneness, so that whenever they do come together into one place true fellowship shall be realised to their mutual joy and edification. R. S.

Three Chapters of 1 Corinthians.

TWELFTH CHAPTER of 1 CORINTHIANS is like the machinery of a watch.

THIRTEENTH CHAPTER, the motive power.

FOURTEENTH CHAPTER, the face. J. G. M'V.

THE PRIESTHOOD of the LORD JESUS.

HEB. viii. 4 is conclusive that the Priestly service of Christ began after His death. “For if, indeed, He were on earth, He should not even be a Priest,” according to Newberry. “Now if He were on earth, He would not be a Priest at all,” according to the R.V.

In Heb. v. 5, 6, Christ is greeted by God with the titles of His Personal and Official glory. As to His Personal glory, the greeting is worded thus—“*Thou art My Son, to-day have I begotten Thee*”—as to His Official glory the wording is: “*Thou art a Priest for ever, after the order of Melchisedec.*”

If you compare Ps. ii. 7, Acts xiii. 33, Heb. i. 5, and the above text, Heb. v. 5, you will see that the quotation “*Son of Mine Thou art, I to-day have begotten Thee,*” refers to the resurrection.

So much as to the beginning of His Priestly work. What about the nature of it? The three chapters in the Books of Moses which present to us High Priestly service may give the answer. I shall cite them in the opposite order to that in which they are given, as, of course, in the types, God begins with Himself and works outward and downward.

Following the opposite order—that of time and place—we get:—

Lev. xvi. The Priesthood of *Propitiation*.

Exod. xxviii. The Priesthood of *Representation*.

Gen. xiv. The Priesthood of *Benediction*.

The Propitiation is past, the Representation goes on in the present, the Benediction will be pronounced in the future; but all belong to the ministry of Christ as High Priest in heaven, and not as Voluntary Offering on earth.

Compare as to the first of these ministries, Propitiation, ver. 17 of the 2nd chap. of Hebrews—“That He might be a merciful and faithful High Priest in things pertaining to God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people.”

Propitiation was made by the High Priest sprinkling of the blood *once* on the Mercy-seat, and *seven times* before it. *Once* on the Mercy-seat. That was to meet the eye of God; to provide for the requirements of His nature. He takes in the sevenfold perfectness of the

1 Inner workings
2 The main Spring

blood at one glance. *Seven times* before it. That was to provide for the people's need in detail.

Consider Heb. ix. 12 with x. 19 in this connection. Heb. ix.—Christ entered once for all into the Holies by His own blood. Heb. x.—We have boldness for the entrance into the Holies by the blood of Jesus.

I think you will always find that the expression "*Blood of Christ*" refers to the sprinkling on the Mercy-seat for the eye of God, while the expression "*Blood of Jesus*" refers to the seven-fold sprinkling before the propitiatory for the people's need.

The R.V. of 1 John i. 7 is important if you bear in mind the distinction I have pointed out. It reads—"The BLOOD OF JESUS, His Son, cleanseth us from all sin."

If further questions are raised as to the "when" and "how" of the Propitiation, the replies must be, perhaps, at the best conjectures. *when did the blood enter*

With all my respect for the men who have taught a Priestly entrance of the Lord Jesus into the sanctuary between His death and resurrection, or who insist on a previous private ascension supposed to be alluded to in John xx. 17, I cannot help regarding these things as matters of mere speculation.

the instance of Heb 9:12 is Not A. P. M.

THE GOSPEL OF JOHN.

CHAPTER XVI.—(CONTINUED.)

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

BUT the Lord proceeds. "For He shall not speak of Himself." Hitherto it has been the Holy Ghost speaking to our eyes, now is He going to speak to our hearts. Speaking to our eyes He says, "Look at Christ there, study Christ there, and you will see God's thoughts as to His Christ and as to you in Christ." But turn to Eph. i. 17, "That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him (here is the speaking to our eyes) the eyes of your heart being enlightened." The Spirit of God when He comes into us is speaking to our eyes, and giving us a sight to study, and from that lesson book are we to be

learning God's truth. But now it is the Holy Ghost speaking to our hearts, and it says, "He shall not speak from Himself." Though down here, permanently present with us, yet is He there with God listening to the communion between the Father and the Son, and telling us of it. He does not speak as unconnected with the Son, "but whatsoever He shall hear, that shall He speak." We find from other scriptures that there is communion between the Father and the Son. You remember the words in Psalm xl., which are quoted in Heb. x. That must have been before He was born upon earth; it was spoken in the eternal world. Again in Gen. i., "And God said, Let *us* make man in our own image." Mark the plural. With whom did God thus hold communion? We are told in Prov. viii.

Now, observe, it is about a glorified Christ. Read the next words, "He shall glorify Me: for He shall receive of Mine, and shall show it unto you. All things that the Father hath are Mine: therefore said I, that He shall take of Mine, and shall show it unto you." It looks as if God had been speaking, and in chapter xv. Christ refers to His speaking before, "All things that I have heard of My Father I have made known unto you." Thus, as They are in conversation, so the Spirit reveals it to those in whom He dwells. Not in a voice of thunder will He speak, but by the still small voice.

You remember a scripture which tells us of Christ as the "hidden manna." The manna typifies Christ in humiliation; but a pot of that manna was put before the Lord; that is, the humbled Christ glorified, and God feeding His soul upon this Christ. But when a soul says, "My God and Father, Jesus is precious unto Thee," is there no response up there? No voice, perhaps, for angel to hear there in that highest heaven, for none are so high as that; but there is the Holy Ghost, and He has come down to tell us what is heard in that Holy of Holies. Like the bells and the pomegranates upon the high priest's dress, to sound when he goes in to that Presence; a sound heard by God and Christ, and which the Spirit hears, and whispers down by the still small voice, "To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the hidden manna." It concerns us it is clear, or the Spirit would not come down to reveal it to us, to tell us God's

unutterable delight in His glorified Christ; that you cannot rest too joyfully, too happily, too perfectly in Him; that you cannot prize Him too much, but the Spirit urges you on to more.

Thus you see He listens on the one hand, and conveys to us on the other. He is in heaven and in earth too. For we read in 1 Cor. ii., "The Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God." He addresses our eyes and our ears, and what follows for us to attend to? That we are to listen. This is a point in these days of bustle and of business very needful for us to remember. The great majority of true believers act as if they thought that all they had got to do was to read a chapter and say a prayer, and then that was enough. But this implies something more—*listening* and waiting for the message. It implies that you are delighting in God, and waiting for the answer; and then there will be the still small voice. It is very hard if a father may not talk with his children. And here we see that the Father is willing to talk, through the Word, to their hearts. And what is true of the individual is true of the assembly. Prayer and praise should follow each other in succession, or it shows leanness; but let there be time for God to speak,—for the Spirit's voice to be heard. And not only of what is present, but what is future too. For the future is ours; for us, for God, for Christ, more than the present; when the wicked shall be in the place which they have chosen. And God gladdens our hearts with vistas of the future. "He will show you things to come."

"All things that the Father hath are Mine: therefore said I, that He shall take of Mine, and shall show it unto you." Here we seem to have an allusion to Gen. xxiv. As Eliezer comforted Rebekah's heart as she travelled through the desert, by telling her of the riches of Abraham's home and the love of Isaac's heart, so does the Holy Ghost reveal unto us, as we pass along this wilderness world, the fulness of our inheritance in God. As all things that the Father hath are Christ's, so does the Spirit show us that all things Christ has are ours. "That ye may know what is the hope of His calling, and what the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints."

But, now, let us turn to the second part of

our chapter. The Lord is not gone for good, the Holy Ghost is not here as the Comforter for ever, but only to lead us home to the Son. So He says, "A little while," and the word is used seven times. Observe, He dare not say how long; but the very word assumes that He would keep us in the attitude of expectancy. Therefore, for any to say that He cannot come for so long, is to go against an inner-lying principle of the Word of God. "A little while, and ye shall not see Me: and again, a little while, and ye shall see Me, because I go to the Father."

Now, I ask your attention here to a very particular point. You will remember that in verse 10 He said, "I go to My Father, and ye see Me no more; here He says, "You shall see Me," an apparent contradiction. This is one of the inaccuracies of our translation. No word in English would fully convey the meaning of the second word; generally, it is equivalent to "appear," but hardly so here. Here, the idea is of a revelation of Himself, such as the natural eye could not obtain. "A little while, and you shall not *survey* Me: and again, a little while, and you shall *discern* Me." "You will survey Me no more as a man upon earth as now; then I shall come in the glory of My Father as I am, and you shall see me so, as no unaided natural vision could see Me." It goes to show the tremendous difference between the life now and the life then. It was nothing comparatively to see Him as a man in these circumstances then; but to see Him as He is, as He can only be seen by the spiritual eye, is a sight not to be obtained by human ability.

Then we find the Lord Jesus, by parable, showing us the effect of this not seeing Him, and this future appearance of His—"A woman when she is in travail hath sorrow, because her hour is come; but as soon as she is delivered of the child, she remembereth no more her anguish for joy that a man is born into the world." I have sometimes thought that there might be a veiled allusion to the birth of the Christ mystical; when the man-child is complete then there will be no more anguish. "And ye now therefore have sorrow: but I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice, and your joy no man taketh from you." He is gone, and we are sad, because we want Him

back—want to be with Him. It is the world's festive time of joy, and we can afford to wait, because, when once shut in with Christ and God,

“Though we've been there ten thousand years,
Bright shining as the sun,
We'll have as long to sing God's praise
As when we first begun.”

No more to have our joy taken from us. Caught up to see that unclouded vision of God, and to be like Him for ever. Cannot we get so much of the glory now as to strengthen our hearts to wait till He comes?

But this second half is also sub-divided into two. One is about the two sights, the other is about the two requests. In the words here rendered “ask” there are again two words in the original, quite different words. In verse 23 the meaning of the word is either to question or to request; in verse 24 the word is “to petition.” But how are we to understand verse 24? The emphasis is evidently upon “My name.” It is more than asking for His sake. “In My name,” as representing Him. God can do nothing for Christ personally, but a great deal indirectly through His members; and we are to stand before God and say, “I am in Thy well-beloved Son.” Then the Lord says, in verse 28, “At that day ye shall ask in My name: and I say not unto you, that I will pray the Father for you.” The Lord Jesus never uses the word “petition” of Himself. The only place where it is so used is by Martha in chapter xi., and then evidently by an unbelieving believer. The word the Lord Jesus uses here is the word “request.” “At that day ye shall *petition* the Father in My name: and I say not unto you that I will *request* the Father for you.” We take the very lowest place, but He never forgets that He is the uncreated Son. “For the Father Himself loveth you, because ye have loved Me, and have believed that I came out from God.” Mark this, for we learn from it that there is not only a general love of God to sinners, and a special love for His people in Christ, but there is another feature of this love specially drawn out to them as they make much of His Christ. And it is a peculiar word that is used for love here; “the Father Himself is fond of you;” a special affection for them as they had a special affection for

Him. They had given up what little they had and clung to Him, encountering the scorn of the priests and Pharisees; but they felt His worth and it gladdened their hearts. And it gladdened God's heart, and God's heart was specially drawn out to them. The chapter ends with Christ telling us of two things. One thing we are to find in Himself, the other in the world: in Himself, peace; in the world, trouble. Abram, when he conquered the kings, got Melchisedek's blessing; Christ, when He has conquered the world, gives us His. Now it is for us to conquer it by separating from it.

“ANOTHER YEAR.”

ANOTHER year! another year
Has borne its record to the skies.

Another year! another year,
Untried, unproved, before us lies.
We hail with smiles its dawning ray—
How shall we meet its final day?

Another year, another year!
Its squandered hours will ne'er return.
Oh! many a heart must quail with fear
O'er memory's blotted page to turn.
No record from that leaf will fade,
Not one erasure may be made.

Another year, another year!
How many a grief has marked its flight!
Some whom we love no more are here—
Translated to the realms of light.
Ah! none can bless the coming year
Like those no more to greet us here.

Another year, another year!
Oh! many a blessing, too, was given,
Our lives to deck, our hearts to cheer,
And antedate the joys of heaven;
But they, too, slumber in the past,
Where joys and griefs must sink at last.

Another year, another year!
Gaze we no longer on the past,
Nor let us shrink, with faithless fear,
From the dark shade the future casts.
The past, the future—what are they
To those whose lives may end to-day?

Another year, another year!
Perchance the last of life below,
Who, ere its close, Death's call may hear,
None but the Lord of life can know.
Oh! to be found, whene'er that day
May come, prepared to pass away.

Another year, another year!
Help us earth's thorny path to tread;
So may each moment bring us near
To Thee, ere yet our lives are fled.
Saviour! we yield ourselves to Thee,
For time and for eternity.

Questions and Answers.

QUESTION 276.—1 Tim. i. 20. What is the blasphemy here referred to? When is a man delivered unto Satan? Where is the province of Satan?

To the first part of this question another verse in this same epistle may suggest the answer, viz., chap. vi. 1, where the same word occurs. Here the name of God and His doctrine are represented as liable to be "blasphemed" on account of unbecoming conduct on the part of bond-servants who had professed to be under the yoke of Christ.

The error of Hymeneus seems to have been doctrinal (see 2 Tim. ii. 17), and of such a fundamental nature that by it the name of God and His Truth were brought into reproach, and weak disciples stumbled.

Probably the error of Alexander was similar, seeing the two are so coupled together, and they appear to have been supported by a third, viz., Philetus.

But of Alexander we have further mention in 2 Tim. iv. 14, 15, where he is seen in a further development of his sin. He did Paul much evil. He withstood his preaching, and Paul thinks it necessary to warn Timothy against him.

Thus, having as the first and root evil, let go or put away "faith and a good conscience," the next stage is shipwreck of *the faith*, that which is revealed from God for the saints to embrace and contend for. Evil doctrines, dishonouring to the name of God and of Christ, are then held and taught, and finally open opposition to the Truth is developed, together with mischievous attempts to injure and harass the Lord's faithful servant.

Thus the blasphemy referred to, whilst being first against God, may also include, as a part of the general character of the men and their ways, railing against the Lord's servants.

There are only the two passages where the expression "deliver over unto Satan" is found, viz., here and in 1 Cor. v. 5. In both cases it seems to be connected with apostolic authority—inseparable from, though not identical with, putting away from the fellowship of God's assembly.

That special powers were committed to the apostles is evident from 2 Cor. x. 8, connected with i. 23, xii. 20, xiii. 2-10. These powers, whatever their nature or limit, were not given with a view to being used for destruction, but for edification; that is to say, edification and blessing was the ultimate object, although to accomplish that, deliverance to Satan and destruction to the flesh might be the necessary and painful means.

Judgment as to those *within* was committed to the saints. Jointly and severally they were responsible for the conduct of those *within*.

But those *without* were left for God Himself to deal with. "Them that are without God judgeth."

The manner of God's judgment in such cases seems to have been to make use instrumentally of Satan's malice, allowing them to fall under his power, whilst at the same time imposing limits which the enmity of Satan might not overstep.

This way of God to use Satan for the discipline and correction of His own children is seen in the case of Job, and also of Paul (2 Cor. xii. 7).

Thus, whilst the saints were to "put away from among

themselves" a wicked person, the fact of their doing so, according to the Word of God, puts that person in the outer sphere of the world—that world of which Satan is "prince" and "god"—there to be directly under the chastening of God, and that through Satan as the instrument, by bodily suffering or otherwise, as he might receive permission.

To "put away" such as the Word of God commands to be put away is still the responsibility of those who, gathered unto the name of the Lord, are seeking to act unitedly in that name. To "deliver unto Satan," being connected with apostolic authority, is a matter that may well be left with God Himself. It is folly to assume powers that are not possessed.

QUESTION 277.—May I ask if the reply to Question 275, in December "Witness," is intended to teach that the Lord Jesus died as a Substitute for every sinner?

We think Scripture teaches a general as well as a particular aspect of the work of Christ. For example, 1 John ii. 2—"And He is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for the whole world." As the propitiation, He has made atonement for *our sins*, i.e., the sins of us who believe specifically; but He is also the propitiation for "the whole world," in the sense of being *available* for the whole world.

See also Rom. iii. 22—"The righteousness of God, by faith of Jesus Christ, *unto all*"; this is the general aspect of the result of the death of Christ; the righteousness of God is *unto all* in the sense of being presented in the Gospel to *all*, and of being available for *all*. But next, there is the specific aspect of the same truth, "*upon all* them that believe."

So also with the truth of substitution. "He suffered for sins, the just for the unjust." "He gave Himself a ransom for all to be testified in due time." These and other such scriptures are general, and show that the benefits of the substitutionary or vicarious sufferings and death of the Lord Jesus are available for all, and that in the Gospel, which is for "every creature," these benefits are by the will of God so presented. Nevertheless, as to specific identification with His death as the sin-offering, it is only the believing sinner who can say, "He gave Himself for me"; "He was wounded for my transgressions, He was bruised for my iniquities, the chastisement by which my peace is effected was laid upon Him, and by His stripes I am healed." This is the specific language of faith, and of faith only.

To illustrate this doctrine from the type. In Ex. xxix. 10, a bullock for a sin-offering for Aaron and his sons was to be brought. Aaron and his sons were to "put their hands upon its head." This is faith's identification of the sinner with the substitute. Then the bullock was killed as the specific substitute for each one whose hand was laid upon its head.

But suppose that one of Aaron's sons had refused to lay his hand upon its head! There was the offering; there it stood, the divinely-appointed substitute FOR HIM. It was for him as well as for the others, and it was available for him. But could it then have been said to have died for his sins? Surely not. In the general sense, it was for him as being available for him. In the specific sense of his identification with it, it did not die as a substitute for him; his sins were not atoned for by its blood; it actually and specifically died only for those whose hands were laid upon its head.

THE THREE-FOLD JUDGMENT OF THE BELIEVER.

NOTES OF AN ADDRESS BY JOHN R. CALDWELL.

WE will commence by looking at 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 condemnation (or judgment); but is passed from death unto life." This verse teaches us very clearly, very definitely, that, as sinners, guilty before God, those who believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, immediately, according to God's reckoning, pass out from the place of judgment and death into the place of justification and life. Instead of death and condemnation their position is one of righteousness and life. What a wondrous contrast! The words might be more clearly put thus, "is passed out of death into life." That is a complete change. I do not know that any passage could possibly describe the change that takes place at conversion more definitely, more strongly, than this. We may not fully realise (I question if any one of us fully realises) the extent of this change. I question if we know, if we have more than the merest inkling, of the condemnation we were under, and the awfulness of the bondage in which we were held captive; and as little do we know, perhaps, of the grace and glory God has given us. Nevertheless, according to God's reckoning, in all their glorious fulness, these words are true of every believer. The moment the sinner puts his trust in the Lord Jesus Christ he can stand, looking forward to eternity, and know with certainty that he will never be brought into judgment for sin, for his sins were laid upon the Lord Jesus Christ, and the judgment of them was borne by Him

"Payment God will not twice demand;
First at my bleeding Surety's hand,
And then again at mine."

It is blessed thus to be able to look back to the Cross where Jesus died, and to know that God reckoned my sins to have been judged there. God reckons us, as children of Adam, to have been condemned, and not only condemned, but executed, in the person of our Lord Jesus Christ when He hung upon the Cross; and that is the force of this word, "shall

not come into condemnation" (or judgment). God says it, and there is no "if" about it—"shall not come into condemnation,"—that is, as to our sins and as to our position as sinners guilty before God; that question can never be raised again; for the soul that has trusted in the blood of Christ, it is settled for ever! The one who believes in Jesus is not only saved, he is thenceforward God's child, and just because he is God's child he comes under God's judgment, as a child, in this life—see 1 Cor. xi. 31, "For if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged." The exercise of self-judgment is the putting of ourselves at the bar of God's Word, and letting it judge us. God's Word is the statute-book. Putting myself at the bar, so to speak, and applying the plumb-line of God's Word to my soul, that is self-judgment. It is an essential part of Christian experience. If that be neglected there is no progress. There may be increase of testimony, so called; there may be the boldness that gives away tracts and stands at the street corners and preaches; but if this setting oneself for judgment at the bar of God be neglected, then there can be no true sanctification, no growth in grace. If we would judge ourselves, then there would be no need for God to judge us; but "when we are judged,"—that is, when, through our own carelessness, or our misapprehension of the mind of God, we are judged,—“we are chastened of the Lord.” Thus the Lord's judgment of those who have put their trust in Him takes the form of the *rod*, and not of the *sword*. It is not the avenging sword of justice—never! it is the chastening rod of the Father. "As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten," says the Lord. The Father says that "He scourgeth every son whom He receiveth."

The discipline of the Lord is one of the privileges of His household. Let me use an illustration which has been used before. Two children are fighting on the street; a woman rushing out lays hold of one of them, and commences to chastise him, taking no notice of the other, although, perhaps, he is the more guilty of the two. And why? Because the one she is chastening is her son, the other she has nothing to do with. Just so is it with God; because we who believe in Him are His children He chastens us, and the object is

“that we may be partakers of His holiness.” It is not a jump into holiness, perfect by faith, as some teach; but through increase of knowledge and increase of obedience—by degrees, practically, we become partakers of the holiness of God. And as God’s holiness hated and judged sin at the Cross, so, if I am “a partaker of His holiness,” I also will hate all sin, and judge it in myself. Many passages we might turn to which would show this discipline of the Father, but from those we have been considering we see that while there is judgment or chastening for the believer, this does not affect the question of the judgment of sin in John v. 24. As criminals at the bar of God, as sinners, we have been judged and condemned and executed, and “shall not come into condemnation.”

These, then, are two aspects of judgment; let us look at the third. We were sinners, and we were judged as sinners at the Cross; now we are sons, and as sons the Father chastens us. But not only are we sons; God in His infinite love has taken us into His service, and has made us His servants. When I was a boy, and had left school, I went to be a servant in my father’s office. In my father’s house I was only known in the capacity of a son; but in the office I was known in the capacity of a servant, and I had just to fare with the rest of the servants and do as I was bid. So we are first sons and then servants, not first servants and then sons. We are first sons, and that is a relationship which never can alter. And being sons, God has given us the blessed privilege of serving Him. He has taken us and put us in the place of servants to the One whom He has set over us—the Lord Jesus Christ. When a man receives the Holy Spirit,—which everyone receives when he believes in Jesus,—the very first breath of that Spirit in his heart is “Abba, Father.” He never could say that *in his heart* until he knew his sins forgiven. Is not this the case? We may have repeated “the Lord’s Prayer” with our lips, but we never breathed from our hearts the words “Abba, Father,” until, having passed from death unto life, we received “the spirit of sonship” in our hearts. Yes, these hearts, sources of all iniquity—these very black hearts are so purified by faith that the Holy Spirit takes up His abode there, and forth

from that source of all abomination comes that very cry, “Abba, Father!”

And just as the Holy Spirit teaches us to cry, “Abba, Father,” that same Spirit teaches us to own Jesus as Lord, not with our lips only, but from the heart. He would teach us that there is One on the throne of God who claims us and owns us, whose we are, and whom we ought to serve—the Lord Jesus Christ. God has put us into subjection to Him. He is our Master, and we are to serve Him—to be here in the place of servants “till He comes.” When He comes again He will remember that service, and this involves another question, the question of recompense. Wondrous truth! God in pure grace has eternally saved us from the curse and condemnation of sin and from the power of death. Is He, then, also going to recompense our service? Yes, He is. Look at Heb. vi. 10—“God is not unrighteous to forget your work and labour of love, which ye have showed toward His name, in that ye have ministered to the saints, and do minister.” Do you mean to tell me that God is bound to recompense me, a poor brand plucked from the fire? And yet is not that the teaching of this verse? It is a marvellous thing that God has coupled with our service a glorious, a specific recompense. God will be no man’s debtor. If the Lord took Saul of Tarsus and saved him, that He might show him how great things he must suffer for His name’s sake, do you think He would allow Paul to be a loser? No! Paul could say, “Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give me at that day.” That night in the prison, that night and a day in the deep, the Lord will never forget. God wrote in the Psalms, concerning Joseph, that “they hurt his feet with fetters.” God never forgets the sorrow or pain borne for His name’s sake.

Oh, dear friends, He marks our service; we are not serving an indifferent master. He is not like some masters, by whom the one who serves them faithfully and the one who serves them unfaithfully are all paid alike. The Lord Jesus is not like that; He marks all our service, and takes special note of that which costs much. He marked the two mites which the poor widow cast into the treasury.

He knew that it was all she had, and it was more precious to Him than the ten thousands of the millionaire, who gives out of his abundance. Once, when speaking of recompense, He said that even a cup of cold water given for His name's sake should not lose its reward. He did not say "a loaf of bread," that might cost fourpence, but a cup of cold water would cost nothing. Whatever is done through constraint of His love He will never forget; He marks it for recompense.

Are we not apt to forget and lose the joy of this. For instance, I have come out here to address this meeting to-night. I may do so as a matter of course, I may be very pleased to do it, but where is the blessing of it in my own soul unless as I am doing it for the Lord? As an instance of this essential in service, which is so apt to be forgotten, look at Philippians iv. 15—"Now, ye Philippians, know also, that in the beginning of the Gospel, when I departed from Macedonia, no church communicated with me as concerning giving and receiving, but ye only. For even in Thessalonica ye sent once and again unto my necessity. Not because I desire a gift: but I desire fruit that may abound to your account. But I have all, and abound: having received of Epaphroditus the things which were sent from you, *an odour of a sweet smell, a sacrifice acceptable, well-pleasing to God.*" That odour of a sweet smell is just the very thing that was spoken of the Lord Jesus Christ. What was it that was so well-pleasing to God? These Philippian saints had sent Paul several things that he needed; just as you might do now-a-days, making up a box for a servant of God abroad. Some of the women would knit stockings; others would make and contribute other necessary things. Something of this sort was done for Paul, and this was the value that God put upon it; it was "an odour of a sweet smell, a sacrifice well-pleasing to God."

Now, dear friends, are you in the habit of giving, and how do you do it? Is there a fumbling in the pocket for the smallest coin, and then, just as you are going in at the door, you drop it into the box, and there is no more about it? If so, you would be far better to keep your penny or your sixpence; there is no value in it to the Lord. And if,

on the other hand, you take out of your earnings an offering unto the Lord, and with deliberation give it to Him; this, being done unto the Lord, ascends like sweet incense up to the throne of God, and He smells it with delight.

Some people do not like this line of teaching; they say it is bringing in recompense as a motive. I do not look upon it as a motive, but as an encouragement. God brings it in. He says, approvingly, Moses "had respect unto the recompense of the reward." God speaks about it; and, surely, we ought to consider it. Those who have not respect unto the recompense of the reward are not in sympathy with the thoughts of the Lord Jesus Christ who promised it. Think of His joy as He gives it to us.

But, now, the very fact that our service is thus to be recompensed, necessitates something else, namely, that our service must be judged. Recompense involves judgment. So now we come to the third thing I have been aiming at. *First.*—As sinners we were judged at the Cross, and that judgment will never be repeated; it is settled for ever. *Secondly.*—As sons we are judged under the chastening rod of the Father during our lifetime here. And, *thirdly*, as servants of our Lord Jesus Christ we have to give an account of ourselves at the judgment-seat of Christ.

Now, turn with me to 2 Cor. v. 8—"We are confident, I say, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord." That is not the language of so-called "honest doubt," of which we hear so much in this nineteenth century. Neither is it the language of legal fear; to be "absent from the body" is to be "present with the Lord." There is no doubting there. "Wherefore we labour, that, whether present or absent, we may be accepted of Him." Now, just let us contrast for a moment that verse with Eph. i. 5—"Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will. To the praise of the glory of His grace, wherein He hath made us accepted in the Beloved." As regards our being accepted by God, that was settled once for all when He justified us from all things. He made us at the same moment "accepted in the

Beloved." We became objects of His favour in the person of Christ. He did not merely take us as guilty sinners and blot out the sins that were against us, He also brought us into the very highest favour, even the favour which He bears to His own beloved Son. But Paul, in 2 Cor. v., is not speaking about being accepted before God, but about acceptable service to the Lord Jesus Christ. In order to make his meaning doubly plain, turn to the epistle to Titus ii. 9—"Exhort servants to be obedient unto their own masters, and to *please them well in all things.*" The expression here is exactly the same as that in 2 Cor. v., which may correctly be read, "Wherefore we labour, that, whether present or absent, *we may please Him well*": whether in the body, or out of the body, to be well-pleasing unto Him. That was the supreme desire of Paul, that he might please Him well. He had respect unto the recompense of the reward. He looked forward to the day when His service would be taken account of.

(TO BE CONTINUED).

PROPHETIC PAPERS. No. 2.

BY F. C. BLAND.

HAVING explained our diagram in the last lecture, I would begin by making a few preliminary remarks, and would lay down certain principles for prophetic interpretation of the Scriptures which must be kept definitely before us if we would rightly divine the Word of Truth.

The first is—That prophecy always relates to the earth, and to the earthly people (the Jews) as a centre; and has a reference to the surrounding nations (more or less definite) according as their history was connected with that of Israel.

While Israel is in the Holy Land, and recognised by God as His people, the prophetic dealings of God with the earth are continued. When they become "Lo-ammi," or not a people, His dealings with the earth as *the direct subject of prophecy* cease; and are only taken up again when the Jews are back in their own land, or, in other words, when the platform, on which all God's prophetic

dealings are enacted, is again restored to its place; and so definite is the distinction made by Jehovah between the time when His people are owned by Him and located again in Judæa, that, as another has remarked, all the prophecies which were uttered while they were in the former condition are addressed to them *directly*, whilst those which were spoken while they are "Lo-ammi" are spoken *about* them, but never *to* them. Just as if, speaking with reverence, God ceased to be on speaking terms with His people when they forgot Him.

I have said that prophecy relates to the earth; not to heaven. I know of only one prophecy which speaks of heaven (Rev. xii. 4), and even that has reference to the earth, telling that Satan is cast out into the earth, and his angels are cast out with him.

The next important thing to keep before us in the interpretation of prophecy is its literal fulfilment. We have no warrant for spiritualising away the fulfilment of a prophecy. Every prophecy which has as yet been fulfilled has been fulfilled to the very letter.

It was prophesied about our Lord, that He should make His grave with the wicked, and with the rich in His death; and He was crucified between two malefactors, and buried in a rich man's tomb. It was prophesied that He should ride into Jerusalem on an ass's colt (Zech. ix. 9). Who would have thought that Israel's Immanuel King would so come? But the Scriptures must be fulfilled. Again, it is written that one of His garments should be rent, and that upon the other they should cast lots. What! says some spiritualiser; doth God take care of garments? But these things the soldiers did that the Scriptures might be fulfilled. These instances could be multiplied many times, but this will be sufficient to prove our case. There are, of course, symbolic prophecies, such as the great image in Dan. ii., but they are symbols of realities; and, as it has been rightly remarked, "while the figure may be a symbol, the subject of the prophecy *never is.*" Thus, to spiritualise the promise that Christ is to sit on David's throne, and to say that it only means that He is to be enthroned in His people's hearts, is to take a most unwarrantable liberty with Scripture. Christ has indeed a right to reign in our hearts: but that is not

David's throne, which is to be in *Jerusalem*, and not in the Christian's heart.

We begin the history of the earthly people with Gen. xii., where Abraham is called out by God to be the head of a new family; or rather, of two families in the earth; and the promise to him is, "In thee shall all the families of the earth be blessed." The word is not in the singular, but in the plural; indicating, I think, that both the natural and spiritual seed are contemplated in this promise. In chap. xiii., where the promise is reiterated to him in connection with the possession of the land on which he stood; his seed is likened to the sand which is upon the sea shore for multitude; but in chap. xv., where God declares him to be justified by faith, he is told his seed shall be as the stars of heaven; and the point here seems to be that he is addressed as the father of the vast family of faith who have righteousness imputed to them on the same ground that it was imputed to Abraham. Hence the stars, as indicating the heavenly family, are spoken of. But in chap. xxii. 17, where Abraham has received Isaac back from the dead, "as in a figure," God joins these two together in the promise, and says, "As the stars of heaven, and as the sand which is on the sea shore, so shall thy seed be"; because Christ, Abraham's seed, of whom Isaac was a type, takes up in resurrection both of these, and the promise becomes sure to *all* the seed (Rom iv. 16).

Now Christ comes first as a minister of the circumcision for the truth of God; to conform certain promises made to the fathers (Rom. xv. 8); but Israel, the natural seed, rejects Him, and He takes up the heavenly seed for the present time, while Israel is disowned; and this is the dispensation of the mystery of the body before alluded to, and to which Eph. iii. 2, 3, refer; but God will take up Israel again when this dispensation is ended, and, according to Romans xi., the natural branches, the Jews, will be grafted again into their own olive tree; or, in other words, brought back to the blessings and privileges they had forfeited through their unbelief.

I often illustrate it thus: Suppose that I am driving through some mountainous country,

and that in the midst of all the barren waste I see a green spot. I ask the man who drives me what is the reason that all around is brown and arid while that one spot is green; and he tells me that there is a stream which rises high up in the mountain, and flows down to that farm, and the man who lives there has brought it all over his fields and irrigated them with it, and hence the difference. Now, suppose some one comes to the owner of the farm and says to him, "I will send you a steward who will take entire control of your farm; and, fruitful as that river makes it now, he will make it a thousandfold more fruitful. In fact, it will be so rich that it will not be able to contain its riches, and the river will overflow all its boundaries, and will make the rest of the mountain as green as your farm is now." But the man says, "I will have none of him; and would rather turn the stream away than let it water any other fields than mine." Well; in the fulness of time, the steward is sent according to promise, but the farmer kills him and casts him out; and, lest the stream should flow out to the thirsty land around, he builds up a great bank to stop its course altogether. He cannot stop the stream, for its source is above him, but he turns it away from his own farm, and it continues to course outside it. The mountain all around becomes green, and the only brown and arid spot is the farm over which once the fertilising stream flowed.

These are the two things Israel did. They killed the Prince of Life, and forbade His messengers to speak to the Gentiles that they might be saved (1 Thess. ii. 16). They cannot, blessed be God, stop the stream, for its source is in the heart of God; but it breaks out beyond the narrow limits of Judaism and flows out to the Gentiles. And so Rom. xi. tells us, "that the fall of them has been the riches of the world, and the diminishing of them the riches of the Gentiles"; but, by-and-by, the stream will return to its strength again, and, breaking down the barrier of unbelief which has made Israel appear in the place of enemies for our sakes, will flow through them as the channel, to the surrounding nations; and the day of receiving of them again (the day of Israel's fulness) will be as life from the dead. Now, it is important to remember that

the calling of the Gentiles into blessing was strictly in accordance with Old Testament prophecies and promises; nay, even the casting off of the Jews for a time was often alluded to, and even foretold, as in Hos. ii., iii.; but the peculiar form or shape which grace was to take in this dispensation, viz., a body, of which the risen Christ is the Head and we the members, *was hidden*; and this I take to be the mystery of Eph. iii. 3, which will come in for consideration in its proper place in these lectures.

It is not spoken of *directly* in the Old Testament; for it was, as we are told, "kept secret since the world began"; but we shall find room left for it in many scriptures and in Jewish history, to which we will have to refer in more or less detail by-and-by.

Now, for the practical study of prophecy, we begin with the book of Daniel. The ten tribes, as we have stated in explaining the diagram, have, on account of the sin of Jeroboam and the golden calves in Bethel and Dan, been sent into captivity into Assyria (2 Kings xvii.), and Shalmaneser, who took them captive, sent peoples from other nations into Samaria instead of them. The Jews in Jerusalem did not know therefore whether these were of their own nation or not; and hence, the Jews had no dealings with the Samaritans. These are what are commonly called the ten lost tribes. Hidden away amongst the nations; but God knows where they are, and will bring them back into their own land, as Isa. xlix. tells us in such touching language—where Zion, who has been a captive, and wandering to and fro, wonders where all these have come from, and where they have been—a chapter full of interest when read in connection with the fifteen Psalms from cxx. to cxxxv., called "the Songs of Degrees," which give us the experiences and exercises of heart, uttered prophetically, of these same ten tribes when they are about to return, or are probably on their way back to Jerusalem, in which their feet are shortly to stand.*

Then, as we have before stated, the two tribes are sent into captivity to Babylon, on account of the sin of Manasseh and the idolatry which he led them into, just as the ten tribes were sent before into Assyria. Amongst these Daniel is a captive, and he understood by books that these 70 years of captivity were at an end, and he asks God to tell him what will happen his own people after the 70 years of desolations are accomplished; and, after uttering that wonderful confession and prayer, both personal and national, in chap. ix., God tells him that at the beginning of his supplication the command to answer him went forth, and Gabriel is sent to show him what shall come to pass in the latter days.

He then asks how long it is all to be, and he is told that 70 weeks, or heptads, are determined on *His people*, that is the *Jewish people*, as the time in which God is going to accomplish all His prophetic dealings with them, from the time they were to come out of captivity up to the time when the kingdom and dominion is to be given to the Jewish saints under their promised Messiah, who is presented to us here as "Messiah the Prince, who is cut off and has nothing" (as the true translation of the words, "but not for Himself," should be). He is the same who is spoken of in chap. ii. as "the stone cut out of the mountain without hands." That chief corner-stone of Psalm cxviii., the elect and precious stone of 2 Peter ii., and the same with which the Lord identifies Himself in the Gospels of Matthew and Luke, saying, whosoever shall stumble at Him (that is, every one who will not believe in Him now) shall be broken, or perish; but, alluding to the time when He comes in judgment, He says (referring to the nations who reject Him by-and-by), on whomsoever it shall fall it will grind him to powder.

This is the aspect in which He is presented to us in the book of Daniel. Now, in answer to Daniel's desire to understand the future of his nation, God gives him a sketch of it in the book, and makes him the depository of the whole prophetic history, not of the Jews only, but of all the great Gentile Empires that have had to do with *His people Israel*. This He does by symbols; for instance—like

* Books without end have been written to prove that the inhabitants of the United Kingdom are the ten lost tribes. I would refer those who are interested in the subject to a little pamphlet written by Mr. Wilkinson of Mildmay, which seems to settle the question beyond yea or nay.

the great image of chap. ii., the four great beasts rising out of the sea in chap. vii., and the ram and great rough goat of chap. viii.; and He explains what each symbol means—in the chapter in which it is—so that there is no difficulty about understanding them. But the explanation of these symbols we must leave to the next lecture, merely asking that it be borne in mind that all this refers to the earth and the earthly people, the Jews.

That the Church of God in its Ephesian sense, as the mystery hid from ages is not contemplated here, is evident; for the whole of God's dealings with the nation of which Daniel is speaking, only extends over 70 heptads, or 490 years; whereas there have been nearly 1900 years since the birth of Christ alone up to this time. It is plain, therefore, that room must be left somewhere for this vast gap, and I think we will be able to show by-and-by that it comes in between the 69th and 70th heptad of Dan. ix.

THE GOSPEL OF JOHN.

CHAPTER XVII.

NOTES OF ADDRESSES BY W. LINCOLN.

(Communicated by J. S. H.)

IN the four preceding chapters the Lord has been telling us about the Father: in this He talks of us to the Father; and hence any child of God can see that in these chapters He does, as it were, open up His heart altogether. This chapter is often entitled the Lord's Prayer. Prayers are found here and there scattered up and down in it; but it is a very inadequate view to regard it as a prayer. In fact, the Holy Ghost never uses that word of our Lord, but rather the word "request"; or here, even, "I will." The chapter is better entitled the Divine Servant of God rendering up the account of His service when His work was done, interspersed with requests on behalf of those for whom that work was performed; and the two together are most precious in their blending.

There are many ways of looking at the chapter: we can only consider one or two now; on another occasion we may look at others. "These words spake Jesus, and lifted up His eyes to heaven." We have several hints in

the New Testament as to how we should demean ourselves, bodily, when we draw nigh to God. Here do we read of the lifting up of the eyes, elsewhere of the lifting up of the hands, of the bowing of the knees, making supplication with the voice; but we are not to be fettered by any one, nor let the bowing of the knees over-ride the other three. The moment that the bowing of the knees puts us into discomfort, we are unwise to persist in it; for the great point is to have the mind fully occupied with God and undisturbed by aught else.

Now, in looking down the chapter, we see in the Servant rendering up the account of His service, seven particulars; then several prayers blended therewith. I will name these seven:—(1) "I have glorified Thee on the earth, in finishing the work which Thou gavest Me to do"; (2) "I have manifested Thy Name"; (3) "I have given unto them the words which Thou gavest Me"; (4) "I kept them"; (5) "I have sent them into the world"; (6) "I sanctify Myself, that they also might be sanctified"; (7) The glory which Thou gavest Me I have given them." A word on each.

First, "I have glorified Thee on the earth: I have finished the work which Thou gavest Me to do." What a new sight that must have been to every spiritual intelligence in heaven, to see God glorified upon earth, perfectly, and by a Man. Perfectly, I say; no patchwork, no fragmentary affair as ours is at the best, but one beautiful, single whole, without break or interruption, from the moment that He came into the world till the moment that He surrendered His spirit to the Father. God obeyed, ever obeyed, where none obeyed before; and voluntarily obeyed by that Divine Servant.

Observe that the Lord begins with God; next He goes on to speak of Himself; next He speaks of us. The order again is beautiful. He begins with God, and does not bring in anything about conquering the devil, or putting away sin. That single fact of glorifying God is seen by the Lord in Divine light, so that everything else seems comparatively insignificant. He next speaks of Himself, and puts His own imprimatur upon His own work. In a sense (I would say it reverently), this is

the beginning of the day of judgment of Christ; only, observe, He judges His work Himself; and then the Father adds His approval to these words of Christ when He raises Him from the dead and puts Him upon the throne. So with us, in our measure, we should ever be able to say, "I am doing the work which Thou hast given me to do, and seeking to glorify Thee"; and at the end be able to say with the apostle, "I have finished my course, I have kept the faith"; so living as to know that our work meets with the Divine approval. And the Lord Jesus will ratify that judgment when He puts the crown upon our brow.

"I have finished the work which Thou gavest Me to do." Hence do we learn that there were covenant transactions between the Father and the Son unknown to men; just between the Persons of the Godhead. God gave Christ a work, Christ accepted it, began and went on with it, and here by anticipation speaks of the Cross as passed: "I have finished the work." So He asks that He may be glorified. "And now, O Father, glorify Thou Me with Thine own self with the glory which I had with Thee before the world was." And that He may glorify God again, when at His right hand, as we shall see. But notice the different way in which the Lord Jesus speaks of heaven, and that in which Paul, or Peter, or John speak. Peter speaks of heaven very vaguely, as if he did not know much about it. Paul enters far more into particulars about it, as in Ephesians i.; but Paul speaks as if he were dazzled: "I heard unspeakable words which it is not possible for a man to utter." Jesus speaks as if He were quite at home there, and quietly about the very grandest things.

But we go on to the second: "I have manifested Thy name unto the men which Thou gavest me out of the world: Thine they were, and Thou gavest them Me; and they have kept Thy word." There have we another glimpse of those eternal transactions. In the first we had the work given; here He comes nearer to souls, revealing God's name. God was glorified, whether man knew it or not; now He speaks of having brought God to them, so that they know Him. Then how beautiful of the Lord to edge in that last expression. We learn from it how easy it is to gain His praise. The devil would tell us that it is very hard: "I

knew that thou wast an hard man." All the Lord wants is identification with Himself; and they had followed Him, and clung to Him, though they made many mistakes.

Then follows the third: "For I have given unto them the words which Thou gavest Me; and they have received them, and have known surely that I came out from Thee, and they have believed that Thou didst send Me." The point is that nothing originated in this matter only from Christ. In the heart of God was all the love that Jesus told out. Jesus did not love us a whit more than He knew the Father did. Hence it seems in this verse to refer all back to the fountain from whence all came; in other words, that God loved the world and His people, and His heart was moved to give up His Son. I think we ourselves are slow to yield to it. "I came because I loved them; but also because *Thou* didst." There was not a thing that Jesus said or did that was not arranged between the Father and the Son before the world began. Look at that verse at the end of chapter xii.—"For I have not spoken of Myself; but the Father which sent Me, He gave Me a commandment, what I should say, and what I should speak." Then again, about this work in all its details, turn to 2 Cor. v. 18—"All things are of God, who hath reconciled us to Himself by Jesus Christ." The thought is that which we have expressed in our hymn:—

"What raised the wondrous thought,
Or who did it suggest,
That we, the Church, to glory brought,
Should with the Son be blest?"

"Oh God, the thought was Thine,
Thine only could it be."

The cost was Thine; the gift was Thine; the glory shall be Thine.

The fourth we have in verse 12: "While I was with them, in the world, I kept them in Thy name: those that Thou gavest Me I have kept, and none of them is lost, but the son of perdition; that the scripture might be fulfilled." The word of the Lord Jesus is twice, "I have kept." It shows how we need keeping. And it is striking, further, that the two words are different in the original Greek; the first is rightly rendered "kept," but the second should be, more properly, "guarded." Kept for God, guarded from evil. Kept for Thy love, guarded

from what Thou hatest. He has to do both; guard us from what deadens us, and from all that hinders us in the enjoyment of His love. Borne upon His shoulder, on His breast, graven upon His hands; and He comes before God and says, "Here they are, and I keep them for Thee." What a rebuke to us when we walk carelessly. If we are saved for heaven it does not imply that there are no dangers around us, that there is no flesh within us, that there is no devil like an angel of light; on the contrary, they are ever about us, and the moment we are off our guard we cannot tell where we may be. It reminds me, too, of that passage in Jude, "Keep yourselves in the love of God. . . . Now unto Him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy."

JESUS IN THE MIDST.

JOHN XX. 19-24.

WE have here recorded in a few brief words the first meeting of the disciples after Christ's resurrection, to remember Him on the first day of the week; and for us who follow their example the narrative is full of instruction and help.

First notice, we are told, "The doors were shut . . . for fear of the Jews." How often it has been that after leaving a prayer-meeting or Bible-reading, or even, perhaps, "the breaking of bread," there has been a feeling of disappointment. We had hoped to have a time of sweet communion with the Lord, and our hearts refreshed and strengthened; but the blessing we wished for did not come, and so we have gone empty away, thinking, perhaps, how cold and dull the meeting had been. Had the door been shut? Had the heart been closed to all else but Jesus? Or had it been filled with wandering thoughts and ideas? If so, then there was no room for Jesus; and is it any wonder He was not revealed to us?

But when the door was shut, with the disciples gathered inside, we are told, "Then came Jesus and stood in the midst." What a beautiful thought it is, that throughout the length and breadth of earth or heaven, wherever Jesus *might* have been, there was one spot that even-

ing where He *must* be; must, because His word had been given—His word, which can never be broken—"Where two or three are gathered together in My name, *there am I* in the midst of them." Thomas might be absent, but Jesus never. And surely the words are as true and as binding upon Him now as then. When we gather in His name, there need be no doubt as to His presence. Loved ones may be absent, and the number may be small, but that blessed promise remains sure and steadfast—"There am I." Oh, if Thomas had but known what he was missing, methinks his place would have been filled; and if we beloved fellow-believers only realised the fact of Christ's presence when we meet together, and that each time we abstain from coming we have lost an opportunity of "seeing the Lord," perhaps our places would be more regularly filled than they are, and our walk would be more as becometh the Gospel of Christ.

And then His message. Ere He went to Calvary, with those lips so soon to be closed in death, He had said, "Peace I leave with you, My peace I give unto you"; and now, in all His resurrection power, He reiterates the blessing, "Peace be unto you!" What a joy must have filled their hearts! No wonder we read, "Then were the disciples glad when they saw the Lord." And what do you and I, beloved, know of this joy? This is the cure for the weary head, the anxious heart. Oh, if you are bowed down with trouble, or worried with doubts and fears, go, and with the door shut, see Jesus. He is waiting to meet you, and the peace and gladness He gave to the disciples He will give you too.

Then, after revealing Himself to them, after filling them with His own peace and joy, He sends them forth to make other weary hearts glad, to point others to the paths of rest and peace, into which He had led them; first, however, breathing upon them the Holy Spirit, by which alone their work could be of any avail. May we never forget this, that if Christ has saved us, if He has blessed us, it is that we should go forth, in the steps which He has trod, to seek the lost and wandering ones, and bring them, too, to Jesus. Our path will then indeed be "as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day."

C. H. M.

SOLOMON'S CLOSING PROVERBS.

Chap. xxx. Nothing is known respecting the persons here named. Some understand Agur to be a public teacher addressing two of his disciples. Others, taking the interpretation of the names, understand it to be Solomon confessing his own ignorance, and showing that his real delight, in his latter years, was in God. Thus we might read, "The words of the Gatherer (*i.e.*, collector of wise sayings), the Son of the Pious One—even the prophecy which the man spake unto Ithiel (the one with whom God is)—even unto Ithiel and Ucal (the one who overcomes)." Some render the verse thus (R.V.), "The words of Agur, the son of her who toiled in Massa. Thus spake the man: I have toiled for God (*i.e.*, to comprehend God). I have toiled for God, and am ceased. For I am," &c.—Verse 2, &c.

V. 2-4 show his lowly confession of his ignorance even of the works of God, and he asks if there is any one who can explain them. There is One who can, and He claims so to do—see John iii. 13, where the Lord refers to this very passage.

V. 7-9. He desires inward purity and outward competence; giving as his reasons that wealth often produces self-sufficiency and leads men to forget God, while poverty frequently leads to dishonesty and murmuring against Him.

V. 11-14 point out four hateful and sadly prevalent vices: filial ingratitude, hypocrisy, pride, and oppression or extortion.

V. 15, 16 illustrate, by a fourfold comparison, the insatiableness of those just mentioned.

V. 18-20 show four things most difficult to trace (God only knowing), and these resemble a fifth—the treachery of an adulteress.

V. 21-23. Four intolerable things: a servant raised to dignity; a fool prosperous, and therefore proud; an ill-natured woman who, *after* marriage, displays her real character; and a handmaid (like Hagar) who supplants her mistress in the affections of her husband.

V. 24-28. These four teach us not to judge by outward appearance; for wisdom and industry can make up what is wanting in strength. The ant's "exceeding" wisdom lies in its preparing its meat in summer when there is plenty to be found—2 Cor. vi. 2. The coney, feeble though it is, hides in the

rock for safety—[Isaiah xxxii. 2; Ps. lxi. 2. The locust shows its instinctive wisdom by acting in bands—"Without Me ye can do nothing." The "spider" or "lizard" (see R.V.) obtaineth a place in the king's palace, and is tolerated there because it clears away other insects—John xiv. 2, 3.

V. 29-31 show four things stately or comely in their bearing or walk, and serve to illustrate the walk of God's children. The noble and courageous lion—see Ezek i. 5-10; Rev. v. 5. The greyhound or war-horse, girt in the loins for speed—1 Peter 1-13; Eph. vi. 14. The he-goat—the rock-climber, going from crag to crag. "They go from strength to strength," "changed from glory to glory." The king whose word inspires reverence—"Kings and priests unto God."

V. 32, 33. "As churning produces butter, and as wringing of the nose brings forth blood, so pressing of anger—strife. Therefore (verse 32) do not open your mouth when angry, or strife will surely follow."

Chap. xxxi. The words of King Lemuel (created by God). Who Lemuel was is not known. Probably Solomon thus speaks of himself, and describes his mother's (Bathsheba's) longing desire for him, and then depicts the true woman and wife, whose fear of the Lord and whose excellency would prove such a blessing to men. It is an alphabetical poem, delineating the excellences of a true woman. Some read the verses as illustrating the Church of God in her ways on earth.

V. 2, 3. "What shall I say to thee, my son?" &c. These are the heart utterances of a true mother to her son, for whom she had prayed and vowed, and for whose future welfare she is most anxious. Her instructions tend to produce both personal virtue and kindly excellence.

V. 4-9. Wine perverts and clouds the mind and enervates the frame. A king must always be ready (verse 8) to judge for the poor and needy, and to plead for the orphans—those left desolate—see R.V.

V. 16. Her industry and economy not only provide for the household, but even add to the husband's possessions.

V. 25. Her chief ornaments are her strong mind and good name. She is not anxious for the future.

V. 26. She is kindly-spoken also.

V. 28, 29. Her children and husband join in her praise, saying, she excelleth all others.

Compare with this the lovely character of a Christian woman as given in 1 Peter iii., Titus ii; and learn that abiding in Christ bringeth forth these excellences, and that "the fear of the Lord" is the beginning and the ending of all wisdom and goodness, and the substance also of the "Book of the Proverbs."

A. O. M.

MY FATHER KNOWETH.

I.

Precious thought! my Father knoweth
In His love I rest,
For whate'er my Father doeth
Must be always best.
Well I know the heart that planneth
Nought but good for me;
Joy and sorrow interwoven,
Love in all I see.

II.

Precious thought! my Father knoweth,
Careth for His child,
Bids me nestle closer to Him
When the storms beat wild.
Though my earthly hopes are shattered,
And the tear-drops fall,
Yet He is Himself the solace—
Yea, my all in all.

III.

Sweet to tell Him all He knoweth,
Roll on Him the care,
Cast upon Himself the burthen
That I cannot bear.
Then, without a care oppressing,
Simply to be still,
Giving thanks to Him for all things,
Since it is His will.

IV.

Oh! to trust Him then more fully,
Just to simply move,
Onward in the calm enjoyment
Of the Father's love.
Knowing that life's chequer'd pathway
Leadeth to His rest,
Satisfied the way He leadeth
Must be always best.

A.

SUBSTITUTION.

MUCH exercise of heart and mind has been caused in various parts of the country by the consideration of the doctrine of Substitution, arising chiefly from the insipid character of the Gospel that is often preached, which tells unsaved men that "their sins are all forgiven, *if they only believe it,*" &c.

This question, like all others in Scripture, has two sides, *i.e.*, a Godward and a manward; which, if not carefully distinguished, leads to inaccuracy of expression, and oftentimes to doctrinal error: and this is, we believe, the cause of diversity of judgment on this point, *e.g.*, some maintaining that Christ is the Substitute of every man, and others rejecting the doctrine of Substitution *in toto*.

It is contended that the preposition "for" does *not* mean "instead of," but "in behalf of"; and while leaving your readers to judge of this kind of argument for themselves, would only say that the word "for" in English affords no help, seeing that it is the translation of at least six or seven particles, all of which have more or less different shades of meaning.

Regarding the word used by the Spirit to express the relationship of the work of Christ to us, there can be no possible doubt; although no one with any knowledge of the flexibility of Greek prepositions would dogmatise as to the exact shade of meaning, without first having studied the context carefully.

As to the meaning of the word *hyper*, I cite Liddle & Scott's, Greenfield's, Parkhurst's, and Bagster's Greek Lexicons, which all give, among other renderings, the following:—"for, *i.e.*, instead of, in the room of, on account of, because of, in behalf of, for the sake of, in the name of, &c."

In 2 Cor. v. 20, and Philemon 13, we have the word translated "instead of," and rightly so; as in the former we see the Lord's servants acting for Him, and in the latter Onesimus for Philemon. Exactly the same thought occurs in John xi. 30; Rom. v. 7, and ix. 3; Heb. viii. 27, and ix. 7; and 1 John iii. 16 (latter part), where the same word is used.

In these eight passages we see that the *uniform* meaning of the word is,—one taking

the place of another, or, becoming their Substitute. This being the word used relative to the Work of Christ, we will look at it in three aspects, viz:—

I.—TO THE WORLD.

“Christ died *for* the ungodly” (Rom. v. 6); “Christ died *for* sinners” (Rom. v. 8); “Who gave Himself a ransom *for* all” (1 Tim. ii. 6); “That He . . . should taste death *for* every man” (Heb. ii. 9); “The just (One) *for* the unjust (ones)” (1 Peter iii. 18).

This shows the *object* of His death on the Cross,—*i.e.*, the Godward side; because, by that work He satisfied every claim that the unbending righteousness of Jehovah could exact, and did so vicariously. If Substitution is taken away, then He must have died for His own sins (awful thought), with no resurrection, or His death degenerates to a mere sentiment.

But this does not warrant unsaved men to call Him *their* Substitute. When by faith they accept Him, *then*, and not till then, can they truly say, “He is my Substitute, my Saviour.”

II.—TO THE CHURCH.

“He giveth His life *for* the sheep” (John x. 11); “I lay down My life *for* the sheep” (John x. 15); “He made Him sin *for* us” (2 Cor. v. 21); “But delivered Him up *for* us all” (Rom. viii. 32); “Christ loved . . . and gave Himself *for* it” (Eph. v. 25); “Who gave Himself *for* us” (Titus ii. 14).

III.—TO THE INDIVIDUAL.

“Who loved me and gave Himself *for* me” (Gal. ii. 20). These two latter aspects show faith’s apprehension and appreciation of the former, so that both the church collectively and the saint individually can say, “He died instead of me.”

Never do I remember reading of God encouraging the unsaved to apply these latter aspects to themselves; but everywhere in Scripture does He encourage them to accept Christ in the former as both Substitute and Saviour.

“The words, “and upon all them,” in Rom. iii. 22, with “for us,” in 1 Pet. iv. 1 are rejected by the best MS. authorities; while the words used in Gal. i. 4; Heb. x. 6-8; 1 John ii. 2, and others, is *peri*, which means “concerning.”

I would commend those passages where the same word is used to the careful study of any who may be exercised about this matter, remembering that the Spirit uses words uniformly, and not indiscriminately as we sometimes do.

WM. LAING.

BE IN EARNEST.

AN APPEAL TO CHRISTIANS.

AS soon as Zion travailed she brought forth her children (Isa. lxvi. 8).

When the Church of God wakes up to her responsibility, and manifests real earnestness for the salvation of sinners, God’s work will revive.

When Christians leave off grumbling, and betake themselves to praying and working, saints will be quickened, and sinners will be saved.

We want more of this travailing in birth for souls. Of how many can we say, “In Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the Gospel.” Beloved fellow-Christians, this power is ours if the ungrieved energy of the Holy Spirit is only allowed to work in us and through us.

And while we would deprecate any attempt to revive the activity of the flesh, yet would we seek to rouse to the highest pitch of holy enthusiasm every heaven-born impulse of the **NEW MAN**. May God show us what we are capable of doing, and what we are responsible to do.

And although “No man can come to Christ except he be drawn of the Father” (John vi. 44), yet God is pleased to use human instrumentality to accomplish His purpose. John the Baptist testified of Christ as the Lamb of God, and two of His disciples followed Him; Andrew, one of the two, findeth his brother, and brought him to Jesus; Philip findeth Nathanael, and saith unto him, “Come and see.” And thus it has ever been in every age when real work for God has been accomplished, the earnest endeavours of His people have been energetically put forth.

No one knew better than Paul, "That as many as were ordained to eternal life believed" (Acts xiii. 18), and that all believers are "Chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world" (Eph. i. 4). Yet did he devote himself to the ministry of the Gospel with as much earnestness and determination as though the salvation of each soul depended on his own efforts; "persuading Jews and Greeks, reasoning in the synagogue" (Acts xviii. 4); "persuading them concerning Jesus out of the Scriptures, from morning till evening" (Acts xxviii. 23); "and so spake that a great multitude believed" (Acts xiv. 1). So while the CHOOSING and ORDAINING belong to God, the SO SPEAKING and PERSUADING are committed to us.

Then let us awake from sloth and indifference; let us no longer be content with the ordinary commonplace Christianity we have been accustomed to: but by vigorous, aggressive action carry the Gospel into the enemy's lines, and by the two-edged sword of the Spirit bring down the God-defying giants of opposing wickedness, while we hew to pieces the Agags of fleshly pride within ourselves, and so become "vessels meet for the Master's use." Our opportunities for service on earth will soon be ended, time is passing, eternity is approaching, souls are perishing, "Hell hath enlarged herself" to receive the multitudes that are thronging thither (Isa. v. 14), and shall we put forth no effort to rescue them?

In commercial affairs a good salesman exerts himself to the utmost to secure purchasers; shall we be less zealous in urging sinners to accept God's Unspeakable Gift, and to take the "unsearchable riches of Christ, without money and without price." Beloved in Christ, let us try to realise our responsibility to set forth the infinite value of this "great salvation" to the perishing souls around us in such a manner that they may be induced to become partakers of it, before it be for ever too late.

"A little while to sow the seed with weeping,
Then bind the sheaves and sing the harvest-song."

IN PLENTY. — "They shall be abundantly SATISFIED with the fatness of Thy house."

Correspondence.

PENANG,
STRAITS SETTLEMENTS, NOV. 25, 1887.

To the Editor of *The Witness*.

Dear Brother,—Though your readers may have learned from other sources of ill-health having sent me for a while to these distant parts, and of my wish to make this an opportunity for visiting lonely Gospel labourers in India and the East, I still am glad to say something about such in your own columns. To avoid a threatened return of bronchitis we left London on 28th December last, and avoiding Atlantic cold weather by overland to Suez, we reached Madras on 27th January, leaving again the same day for Cocanada, the only seaport of the large and populous Godavery Delta, in which for some fifty years past precious Gospel labour has gone on in the joy of direct dependence on God for both Divine guidance and for temporal supplies. Nursapoor, Palcole, and latterly also Chittepettah, are the headquarters of this precious work. At Nursapoor there were till lately both John and Charles Beer, successors to the grace and the labours of their father, George Beer, of many years ago; but our brother, John Beer, fell asleep some three years ago, after many years of faithful work for God. Our brother, Charles Beer, labours on at Nursapoor; also our brother and sister Heelis, so helped of God for some thirty years past, and our brother Miles, his son-in-law. Our brother and sister Macrae, of Palcole, after nine years' labour had been compelled to return to Great Britain in much broken health before we left England, but we saw in Palcole, &c., the fruit of their labours. Our brother, Edwin Bowden, who treads in his long-since-departed father's Gospel foot-steps, and his wife, met us at Cocanada, and by their help we reached Nursapoor just in time for the large Antrivady Annual Hindoo Festival, at which so many thousands resort to the river Godavery, at its mouth, for religious bathing. Here it was our privilege to stand in that crowd for three days, along with the above-named brethren and some twenty-five native brethren and sisters, to tell the "Old, old Story," yet ever new. Our sisters, including Miss R. Lynn and Miss A. Taylor, getting each day groups of women around them. This one opportunity was worth all the voyage and the toil. But Godavery district yielded much more: we had days of special meetings with dear Telugu fellow-saints, both at Nursapoor and at Chittepettah, at which, whether for baptism or the Lord's Supper, or the ordinary ministry of the Word, our brethren's gifts in Telugu enabled them to interpret for me fluently. Our three weeks in Godavery Delta passed rapidly, and were deeply in-

teresting; indeed we could have wished them three months; but India's hot season was approaching (April and May), and we hastened on to Calcutta and Bengal, not only to meet with the few who assemble in Calcutta for worship and the Lord's Supper, but also to visit our brother and sister Cornelius, who labour among the Santhals, some 200 miles N.W. of Calcutta, at Jamtara. Our brother's fourteen years' labour in that country has been cheered by the conversion and baptism of a good number, who meet together in the Name of the Lord. This visit effected, and more fellowship brought about between Jamtara and Calcutta, we retraced our way to Southern India, and *via* Madras to Kolar, in the Mysore Territory, to have what time we could with Miss Anstey and her helpers—English and native—before the heat would oblige us to take refuge on the Nilgiri Hills. Warm, indeed, was the welcome given us at Kolar, warm enough to make us wish others also could leave British Isles for a time and visit it. The special feature at Kolar is that advantage was taken by Miss Anstey of the awful famine in Mysore Territory in 1876, when about a million and a quarter natives died of famine,—about one-fifth of the entire population,—to begin an orphanage for the dying children. Of these Miss Anstey took altogether about 1150, but in such dying state that only some 350 have grown up to young men and women. Her ten years' care is rewarded by their present vigorous state physically, and by God's sovereign and abundant mercy, which has made many of them His children by Christ Jesus. Thus it was that in the large central hall of the Orphanage I had each Lord's-day some 150 to whom to speak God's Word, and after it some 80 remaining for the Lord's Supper; a large Sabbath school in the afternoon, and a small evening meeting, in English. Visits to the three or four farms which Miss Anstey has established for her young men's labour, and daily Bible-readings with the band of preachers and teachers among them, together with evening meetings and some evangelising in the Mysore country, filled up our time at Kolar—both for three weeks before the necessary three months on the hills and for nine weeks afterwards; including, however, visits to Bangalore and to Malvalli, where our brother and sister Redwood have so good an opening in the Mysore country. Our three months on the hills were also rich with intercourse with fellow-saints and with fellow-labourers in the Gospel. Partly those who assemble both at Ootacamund and at Coonoor to remember the Lord's death, and partly by Bible readings with such Gospel labourers as resort almost annually to the Nilgiri Hills for cooler air, to avoid having to leave India for health. Our last greeting of fellow-

saints in India was at Madras, where out-door and other preachings among Eurasians and Mahometans were a privilege, all being interpreted for me, as also at Kolar, by our brothers, Lukshman Rao, Kodend Rao, J. Venkatachellum, and Enoch Kassem, &c. Our final stay at Madras included a few days' visit to Punrooty, which gave us refreshing intercourse with Miss Reade, whose patient and godly toil among Tamil-speaking people holds on its way spite of past and present difficulties. Thus passed over eight months in India, and on Sept. 29 we left for Burmah, that country of the well-known labours of the American brethren of other days—Judson, Boardman, Mason, and others. Rangoon and Moulmein are still the chief places of the labour of their successors. During our twelve days at Rangoon we visited some twenty who there seek to make known God's message of mercy both among Burmese and Karens. Very affecting was the sight of the idolatrous worship of Guadama, and Burmah's *many* pagodas to his honour; enough to make one weep as the Master did over Jerusalem. Our seventeen days at Moulmein happened to be at a time when Burmah Gospel labourers were assembled for three days' special prayer for the Holy Spirit's power on their work—a prayer with which one could so fully sympathise. Leaving Moulmein, Nov. 9, four days' smooth sea brought us to Penang, this busy and populous central island of the Straits Settlements. We miss our dear brother Macdonald and wife, the fruit of whose years of labour in Penang we see around us. Our brother has gone to Tasmania for a time for his family matters. But our brother Hocquard has come here from Singapore in our brother Macdonald's absence, and his Gospel and pastoral activity, both in the islands of the Straits and on the mainland of the Malacca Peninsula, only makes us pray the Lord to long uphold him in health and strength. Greatly has he helped us in getting acquainted with those assembling here and around; and on Tuesday next we hope for his similar help at Singapore, thirty-six hours from here, before we leave thence for Australia. If this sketch of our happy time in the East should lead other elder brethren to similar visits, and especially if it should lead younger brethren to give themselves for God's Gospel among Asia's many millions, in simple dependence on the Lord, we shall rejoice.—Yours in eternal and blessed bonds,

HENRY DYER.

THE EMPTY SOUL.—“Wherefore do ye spend money for that which is not bread, and your labour for that which SATISFIETH not?”

CALEDONIAN BIBLE CARRIAGE.

AT last the work in connection with the Bible Carriage has been brought to a close, or more strictly speaking, the carriage has been put under cover until spring comes round, although the work of the Lord, of which it has been the channel, has not been brought to a close. The marvel is how our two brethren, E. Stack and A. B. Gardner, have been able to carry it on so far into the winter season, as, until the sixth of December, missing very few days, wet or dry. They began work at Broxburn, near Edinburgh, on the 14th of May, and finished up at Gateshead, near Newcastle-on-Tyne, at the date named above, having thus been nearly *seven months* engaged this season. It is very easy to write this, and to many who may read it this fact may not appear of great interest; but for one who has watched the work and followed it with prayer, the thought arises in the mind, "What hath God wrought?" Surely, indeed, without God's manifested help and favour, those two brethren could not have gone on as they have done in the face of many difficulties and discouragements. Tracing their journey on the map we find they left Edinboro' in the middle of May, working their way through the county of Linlithgow, then into Lanarkshire by way of Airdrie, spending about three weeks in this shire. A remarkable coincidence was their being at Hamilton on the 28th, when the terrible Udston disaster took place at Blantyre, and on which occasion our brother Stack visited the bereaved, and sought to minister, in the painful and heartrending circumstances, as God enabled him. Then, leaving these parts, they entered Renfrewshire, returning again into Lanarkshire by way of Wishaw and the town of Lanark, where they found the Royal Militia encamped on Lanark Moor; then on to Douglas (upper ward). Entering Dumfriesshire by way of Moffat and Lockerbie, they tarried at Dumfries and Annan, and reached Carlisle about the end of July. Then across the border rolled the carriage, through Cumberland, visiting Maryport, Workington, Whitehaven, Penrith, &c., into Westmorland. Then on to Darlington in county of Durham, and from thence to the district around Newcastle-on-Tyne, where they spent about six weeks, finishing up at Gateshead on December 6th.

This hurried sketch may convey some idea of the service that has been done for the Lord; but God alone knows the foot-steps of His servants as they plodded on in their important mission. Now scattering the good seed in quiet country districts; these they now and

then issued from, only to pass into some large town, and there, night after night in the open square, dispose of their precious merchandise, and make known the good news of salvation. At Kirkby Stephen they were present at the annual Horse Fair, where crowds of men from all parts of the country came to buy and sell, and in the midst of it our brethren sold to them the Scriptures and preached the Gospel. These are stray references to their work; which is with the Lord, the Great Worker; and if He is pleased by such instrumentality to accomplish His purposes of grace and mercy to out-of-the-way sinners, then the praise is His, and His name will be glorified.

Our brethren have kept very meagre notes of their work, mere scraps. The following are a few specimens:—"Coalbridge fountain. Had to wait on a teetotal lecturer. Splendid meeting. Crowds attentive. We slept in carriage over night." Many places are noticed simply by the remark, "Good meetings." Under Strathaven—"The people greatly moved and interested. Eternity will reveal results." East Kilbride—"At cattle show, carriage hemmed in with stalls and booths." A remark is made at one place—"Awakened inquirer." At another—"One saved." At one place in Cumberland, no preaching was allowed; remark is made—"Many Roman Catholics read Scriptures on carriage, and we repeated texts while exposing Testaments for sale. Met an old woman at this place, aged 105." At another place—"Roman Catholics bought New Testaments." Another place—"Two professed conversion." At a Fair—"Thousands read Scriptures on carriage." At another place—"Barmaid professed." Then again—"Many anxious faces and inquirers," at another place. Facts such as these may well commend the work to God's people for praise and prayer, so that our brethren may be encouraged to take up the work again in the spring months if the Lord will. At present the carriage is being touched up and varnished, so that our brethren may go forward again in the work and service of the Lord.

T.M'L.

Questions and Answers.

QUESTION 278.—What warrant have we from Scripture for "breaking bread" every first day of the week?

In reply to this we would first refer to one scripture which seems to us sufficient to settle the question, *i.e.*, Acts xx. 7. From the construction of the verse it is evident that it was the habit of the disciples to do so. We believe that this incidental allusion to the custom of the churches is not an accident, but full of instruction to the simple who have no human theory to maintain.

It is the custom of all Christendom, and has always been, for professed Christians to assemble together on the first day of the week. Roman, Greek, and all Protestant denominations are at one upon this—the observance of the day, and that by publicly assembling together.*

The question then to be decided is not whether it is scriptural to assemble upon that day, but for what purpose and after what order such should be convened.

The scripture referred to settles the first point—the object of the *coming together* of the disciples was “to break bread.”

Turning to 1 Cor. —the epistle in which we have set forth in order, and fully, the mind of the Lord as to the assembling of the saints—we find an allusion to this ordinance in chap. x. 16, 17, the terms of which imply that it was a recognised custom, although in this passage the frequency is not indicated.

Again, in chap. xi., it is more fully alluded to and connected five times with the words “come together,” showing thus, as we believe, that when “come together,” whatever there might be of ministry or other exercises, the object and centre of the gathering was “the Lord’s Supper”—the “showing” of the Lord’s death in the appointed way.

And here again is one of those incidental teachings which have a very distinct voice for those who have ears to hear. A special word is used to characterise this Supper, viz., THE LORD’S (Kuriakos). In only one other passage in the New Testament do we find the same word, Rev. i. 10, viz.—“I was in the Spirit on THE LORD’S day.” Thus definitely are the two, the Supper and the day, linked together.

The day of the Lord’s resurrection was the beginning of such assemblings. Is it not worthy of note that upon that very day the expression “breaking of bread” first occurs after the institution of the Supper by Himself? At Emmaus, with the two disciples, He took His place as Lord at that evening meal, and “He took bread and blessed and brake and gave to them.” He was thus “known of them in breaking of bread.” The two were there, with Jesus “in the midst,” and blessedly He made Himself known.

The same evening He appeared in the midst of others of His own, and showed them His hands and His side, and spoke peace to their hearts.

Eight days after, the next first day of the week, “again His disciples were within,” and again “Jesus stood in the midst” and showed His hands and His side.

The next recorded first day of the week is the Day of Pentecost. This Levitical ordinance is found in Lev. xxiii. 15, 16. It was “the morrow after the Sabbath,” therefore “the first day of the week,” as fifty days before the sheaf of first-fruits was waved on “the morrow

after the Sabbath” (verse 11), the very day of the Lord’s resurrection—“the first-fruits of them that sleep.”

Thus by the outpouring of His Spirit He again selects that day and honours it by special manifestation of Himself to His assembled disciples.

But passing from 1 Cor. xi. to 1 Cor. xiv., which gives Divine principles for regulating the exercise of gifts, we still find the “blessing” and “giving thanks,” which are appropriate to the Supper, as a part of the exercises contemplated.

In the Tabernacle, the table of show-bread represented the spiritual truth of communion. Without going into details we would draw attention to the fact that the bread was renewed upon the table “every Sabbath” (Lev. xxiv. 8, 9). It was to be eaten in the holy place by Aaron and his sons. Thus the priestly family of old had a weekly feast of communion provided for them; an analogy that is at least interesting.

But perhaps the most conclusive ground upon which “the Lord’s Supper” is identified with “the Lord’s-day” is the significance of the appointment.

The Supper of itself contains no allusion to resurrection. In baptism the rising up out of the water speaks as evidently of *resurrection* as the going down into it speaks of *death*. Circumcision on the eighth day is another instance of the same principle. The Lord, in speaking beforehand of His death, habitually coupled with it His resurrection (Mark x. 34, Matt. xvi. 21, Luke ix. 22, John xvi. 22). How Divinely fitting and beautiful, then, that the ordinance which so perfectly represents His death should be associated with the day that so gloriously celebrates His resurrection.

On three occasions every year all the men of Israel were to appear before Jehovah, viz., the Passover; the feast of first-fruits; and the feast of ingathering (Ex. xxiii. 17, 18). Each of these “feasts,” when Jehovah gathered His people around Him, foreshadowed some “good thing to come” that was dear to the heart of God. Plainly, the Passover pointed to the Cross (1 Cor. v. 7); the first-fruits to the resurrection of Christ (1 Cor. xv. 20); and the ingathering to the time of “our gathering together unto Him” (2 Thess. ii. 1).

Local gatherings of all saints not being suitable for the world-wide character of the grace of this dispensation, the Lord in wisdom appointed one feast to supersede all the Old Testament convocations, but beautifully combining in it a reference to the very same three events previously foreshadowed.

We show his death (the Cross) in the breaking of bread.

We celebrate His resurrection by observing it “on the first day of the week.”

We do it in anticipation of His return—“till He come.”

We do not say that all these considerations together amount to a Divine command, but we challenge all those who observe any other interval, be it once in six months, once in three months, once a month, or, as we have even known, once a fortnight, to give any Scripture precept, example, type, or Divine significance for any other arrangement than “the first day of the week.”

Failing this we can only judge all such as human devices, tending to obscure the glory of the ordinance, to deprive saints of the blessing, and to stumble the weak who are seeking after the ways which be in Christ.

*We here quote Dean Alford. “Upon the first day of the week.” We have here an intimation of the continuance of the practice, which seems to have begun immediately after the Resurrection (see John xx. 26), of assembling on the first day of the week for religious purposes. Perhaps the greatest proof of all that this day was thus observed may be found in the early (see 1 Cor. xvi. 2) and at length general prevalence, in the Gentile world, of the Jewish seven-day period as a division of time—which was entirely foreign to Gentile habits. It can only have been introduced as following on the practice of especial honour paid to this day. But we find in the Christian Scriptures no trace of any *Sabbatical* observance of this or any day. The idea of the transference of the Jewish Sabbath from the seventh day to the first was an invention of later times.”

THE LOST HOPE.

THE promise of John xiv. 3, is on the eve of being fulfilled; the threefold summons of 1 Thess. iv. 16, will soon be heard; the wise and foolish virgins of Matt. xxv. are about to be eternally separated: in short, *the Lord Jesus Christ is coming again.*

That promise, first falling from His own lips in John xiv., formed the substance of a special revelation given to Paul (1 Thess. iv. 15), and was thrice repeated in the *last* message which a glorified Christ sent down to His waiting bride (Rev. xxii. 7, 12, 20).

Did the Lord intend these words to be an empty sound, devoid of meaning, power, or effect upon the hearts of His loved ones; or were they not rather uttered to kindle there a responsive flame of joyous expectation? And this *was* the effect upon the hearts of the early believers.

The Lord's return was to them a "BLESSED HOPE." It was no visionary prospect, but a reality which commanded their affections and could be seen expressed in their every-day lives. They "waited for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Cor. i. 7); they "waited for God's Son from heaven" (1 Thess. i. 10).

It was this that made them practically a heavenly people. Links with earth were broken; connections with the world were severed. Earth's wealth and splendour, its empty toys and trinkets, its gilded attractions, all its bewitching sorceries have lost their charm and power over a man who knows the Lord Jesus Christ as his Saviour, and who is continually expecting that Saviour's voice to translate him in a moment to endless glory. He is so dazzled by the bright visions which pass before "faith's transpiercing eye," that all this world's empty glory seems only dull and dim. So the early Christians were a separate and an unworldly people. Their hearts had been touched by a Saviour's love; they knew that His precious blood had washed away all their sins, and their whole souls were fired by the expectation of seeing His face and being with Him and like Him for ever. The language of their hearts was—

"Oh! worldly pomp and glory!
Your charms are spread in vain!

I've heard a sweeter story;
I've found a truer gain.
Where Christ a place prepareth,
There is my loved abode!
There shall I gaze on Jesus;
There shall I dwell with God!"

True; their heavenly-mindedness drew down upon them the scorn, contempt, and violence of men. By their separation from the world they testified against it that its deeds were evil, and the world hated, despised, and rejected them, thus affording them the high honour of fellowship with their Master. They could afford to "take it patiently," knowing that His coming drew nigh (James v. 7, 8), when His own approving smile would more than compensate for all the contradiction of sinners they had to endure. Ah! the Lord's coming was not to *them* a mere doctrine, or a theory, but a HOPE of strengthening, sanctifying, transforming power.

Satan sought by every means to quench their testimony. The fiery sword of persecution was unsheathed against them with relentless severity, until Satan found that the blood of the martyrs was the seed of the church, and, "the more they afflicted them, the more they multiplied and grew." So when violence failed he tried corruption, and began to seduce the church by offering her the very things which Jesus had refused—the world and its glory.

Would she have them? Would she accept flattery and aggrandisement at the hands of the world, those very hands which were stained with the blood of her rejected and murdered Lord? Alas! she forsook her first love. She laid aside the gory crown of martyrdom and assumed the glittering tiara of earthly grandeur and supremacy. As the world crept in, the hope of the Lord's return died out. That hope which *had* burnt with such a vehement and ardent flame gradually grew dim. The heart ceased to long for Him; the eye ceased to watch for Him. Solemn words, "*While the Bridegroom tarried they all slumbered and slept.*" A worldly church could not cherish the prospect of the Lord's return. At the same time, the glorious truths of eternal redemption, the present forgiveness and justification of all believers and their possession of eternal life in relationship with the Father as His children, were obscured, perverted, or denied; so that all certainty and assurance was

taken even from those who were really the children of God; and the thought of the Lord's coming became a terror for the conscience rather than a delight for the heart.

The Lord's coming was referred to the end of the world, and invested with ideas of terror and judgment, which plainly proves that the church had sunk down to the level of the world. The world's guilty conscience can only predict a day of certain judgment if Jesus comes again. But *believers* know, or ought to know, that there is no judgment for them (John v. 24); Jesus has borne their sins at His first coming, and has whispered the wonderful love-secret into their ears that He is coming again to receive them "unto Himself, that where He is there they may be also." He is coming for us not as a Judge, but as a Bridegroom. Coming that He may have us where every affection of His blessed heart can flow out unhindered upon us. How strangely sad that such a hope should have been lost? Yet so it was for more than fifteen hundred years.

Theologians wrote of the Lord's coming, it is true; but how did they write? They wrote of His appearing as the Judge of quick and dead; of His solemn session on the Great White Throne; of His dividing the sheep from the goats; and they spoke of that day as being the time when we should know whether we were saved or not; for they had not the present knowledge of forgiveness or salvation (which God gives in His Word to all believers—see John v. 24; Acts xiii. 38, 39; Col. i. 12-14).

It is quite true, and awfully solemn for the world, that Jesus will appear as the Judge and every eye shall see Him, but this is not the character of His coming for believers. Before He comes as the Judge to the world, He will come as the Bridegroom to call away His saints. Hence we find that when He appears in glory and power, His saints appear *with* Him (Col. iii. 4; Jude 14; Rev. xix. 8-14). His coming as the Bridegroom is the hope of the church, and this was lost sight of when the church became worldly in the time of Constantine, and all through the dark ages of papal supremacy, and even in the brighter days of the Reformation, it was never recovered and might truly be called

THE LOST HOPE.

A little over half a century ago, God was

pleased to restore many precious truths from the obscurity into which they had been driven. Amongst others, the full present knowledge and enjoyment of the forgiveness of sins, and the possession of eternal life, were seen to be the portion of every believer on the Lord Jesus Christ. The perfection of the atoning work of the Son of God in clearing all believers from all their sins was apprehended more fully than before. The fact that believers are seen of God as dead and risen with Christ, and now by the Holy Ghost have power to *reckon themselves* dead indeed unto sin, was discovered to be the secret of liberty and a holy life. It was also seen that believers are indwelt by the Holy Ghost, and thus united to Christ in glory as the members of His body; then shone forth again that blessed star of hope which had been hidden so long by clouds of worldliness and unbelief.

THE LOST HOPE began to burn again in a few loyal and devoted hearts. The midnight cry began to ring out—"Behold the Bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet Him."

It was at once felt that conformity to the world's fashions, customs, and conversation was inconsistent with THE HOPE; in fact, as it was cherished it exerted its purifying effects (1 John iii. 3) upon the hearts and lives of those who had it, and they were marked by separation from the world, by simplicity in life, and by Godliness in conversation. Their watch-word seemed to be, "Let us watch and be sober." They were a holy, happy, heavenly people.

Years passed on. From those in whose hearts the cry first sounded, it went forth to a sleeping church. What numbers of slumbering ones were aroused by that cry! What a trimming of lamps; what a girding of loins ensued! Thousands will have cause to bless God throughout eternity that it reached their ears. Professors who had but an empty lamp, were led to obtain a supply of the precious oil of which they were destitute; doubting believers to rest in the finished work of Christ, and to rejoice in a known and accomplished salvation; and many dear saints of God saw new glories in Christ as the Head of His Body, the Church. God was preparing the way for the return of His Son.

Yes, fifty years and more are passed, and that "blessed hope" remains unfulfilled. The Lord Jesus is still seated on His Father's

throne, and His people await the moment of His rising and descent into the air. Precious and true as ever is His closing word—"Behold, I come quickly"; and He surely looks for the fitting response—"Even so, come Lord Jesus."

Can it be untimely or inappropriate to ask, is this the present attitude of His bride? Alas! even yet many saints are actually ignorant of the fact that "the coming of the Lord draweth nigh"; and by not a few His return is stoutly denied; while the scoffer asks boldly, "where is the promise of His coming?" On the other hand, multitudes in Christendom have heard that Jesus is coming, and have been convinced from Scripture of the truth of the doctrine. Some have heard that midnight cry, and it has had the effect of causing them to "go forth to meet Him"; hence, for half a century small companies of believers have been gathered to His name, to remember Him who was once offered to bear their sins, and who will appear the second time, apart from the question of sin, to effect the salvation of the body; to these latter a few words are now addressed.

Are you, beloved, WAITING and WATCHING? Is such the character which is expressed by your lives? Very loath should we be to give up the *doctrine* of the Lord's coming, but do we know the reality of it as a HOPE? Let the truth be faced and owned. Do our words, our ways, our surroundings, bear testimony to our profession that we have "turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God, and to wait for His Son from heaven"? Does He who reads our hearts and discerns our secret thoughts know that we dearly cherish this precious truth, possess in power this blessed HOPE, and day by day eagerly await its fulfilment? Must we not confess that in many cases where the *truth* of the Lord's coming is held, it fails to detach the heart from the world, to separate it from earthly things, and connect it with brighter things above? Surely, in such cases, though the *truth* is held,

THE HOPE IS LOST.

For aught we know, the Lord may come to-day. If so, in what state will He find us? With what are our hearts taken up, and on what subjects are our tongues moving? The Lord Himself? His unchanging love? His speedy return.

The Lord grant that we may be in a state—
"Like that which was found in His people of old,
Who tasted His love, and whose hearts were on fire,
While they waited in patience His face to behold."

And what was the spiritual state of that "people of old"—the Simeons and Annas of that day? The Spirit of God tells us (Luke ii.) that they were "just and devout," "serving God with fastings and prayers night and day," "speaking of HIM to *all them* that looked for redemption in Jerusalem," men and women in the power and current of the Holy Ghost.

Oh! saints of God gathered to the Name of His Son, what course can we adopt other than to bow low before Him, and own that we have lost the reality and freshness of "that blessed hope"; that we have allowed the things of earth to enter our hearts, and frustrate its separating power; meanwhile praying that in His great mercy He will revive again in our hearts, and restore in sanctifying power to our souls, this most precious HOPE? Nor let us forget that cheering word—"Blessed are those servants, whom the Lord, when He cometh, shall find watching: verily I say unto you, that He shall gird Himself, and make them to sit down to meat, and will come forth and serve them."

Oh! beloved saints, let us awake to the fact that He is just about to return; let us re-trim our lamps, and if need be, again and again; let us "be filled with the Spirit," that we may possess, enjoy, and exhibit the effects of this HOPE in living power; meanwhile seeking, in the power of the same Spirit, to "occupy till He come."

THE LINK OF SYMPATHY.

"He that toucheth you toucheth the apple of His eye."—Zech. ii. 8.

A LITTLE Christian girl lay suffering in an hospital ward having recently undergone an extremely painful operation without the aid of chloroform.

Moved by her tale of sorrow, the lady who was visiting her exclaimed, "Poor child, how you must have suffered!"

With deep reverence and much earnestness in her tone, she replied, "Ah, but it hurt *Him* more than it hurt me!" E. B. S.

THE THREE-FOLD JUDGMENT OF THE BELIEVER.

NOTES OF AN ADDRESS BY JOHN R. CALDWELL.

(SECOND PAPER).

TO come back again to the illustration I was making use of. I was in my father's office, and at first I was careless; but, by and by, when I grew a little older, I began to see that it was very important that I should attend to my duty. I saw that, if I pleased my father well, I might get on in the business. That was a fresh light to me. I saw that I had a position to gain, and I acted accordingly. A time came at last when my father had to choose between me and another, as to which he would put in the place of responsibility, and he put me in it. So, Paul says, "I am looking forward to the time when my service will be tested." The Lord is not denying us a place in the kingdoms of earth now, to leave us out in the cold altogether, as it were. He has a kingdom; and, though to abide with Him may mean Adullam's cave now, what will it be when He comes to the throne? A place of trust and of nearness to Him in His eternal, His glorious kingdom. Is this a fact? Yes, it is a fact. It is a greater reality than that the Prince of Wales shall sit on the throne of England; aye, a much greater certainty, for that is not certain at all.

It is something for us to look forward to, that we shall reign in His kingdom. So, Paul here is looking forward to the future, and mark what he says in 2 Cor. v. 10—"For we must all appear." It is not all the world. Get rid of this thought. All the world shall be judged, every man shall give an account unto God; there is no doubt about that. There is a time of judgment coming for all men; but in this chapter the world is not in view; it is the saints. "We must all appear before the judgment-seat of Christ." Every one must be manifested; not simply put in an appearance, but be manifested thoroughly, inspected and opened up before the judgment-seat of Christ. That judgment-seat is different altogether from the "great white throne" of Revelation; that is the mighty throne of Judgment, the throne of God; but

this is the judgment-seat from which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will inspect, will test, will make manifest the service of His servants, and apportion to each his own reward or blame.

These bodies of ours are just instruments to be used by us for the Lord Jesus Christ; our lips, our hands, our feet, our eyes; and all the things "*done in the body*" will pass in review at the judgment seat of Christ. Don't let us suppose that our actions are done with in this world; they will all be brought up then, that every one may receive for "the things done in the body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad."

The next verse runs thus—"Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord." It is to be deplored that our translators put in the word "terror" here. You will find the same word in 2 Cor. vii. 1—"Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the *terror* of God?" Ah, no, that would spoil it altogether. "*Perfecting holiness in the fear of God.*" Now let us read this verse in the same way—"Knowing therefore the fear of the Lord, we persuade men." Our life's testimony among men in the Gospel will be manifested in its true character. It will not then be a question of eloquent preaching; it will not be a question of boldness, perhaps impertinence, in testimony. No! But did we, in the fear of God, seek to persuade men to turn to the Lord Jesus Christ. "Knowing therefore the fear of the Lord, we persuade men." If I am guided by the fear of the Lord to persuade men, I will not go in for means and methods of backing up the Gospel which bring it into ridicule and disrepute.

It is not *terror*. The idea of terror was as foreign to the mind of the apostle as it possibly could be, but he knew "the fear of the Lord"; and God grant us to know more of it; then we will be more happy, more wise, and more well-pleasing unto Him.

Now, concerning the expression, "good or bad," turn to 1 Cor. iii. 11—"For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ. Now if any man build upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble; every

man's work shall be made manifest (it is the same word as 'appear'): for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is." Now, that is not "purgatory;" it is not *the man* that is to be passed through the fire, but his "work." It is the idea of a builder putting up a building, and the question is, will it stand the fire? What sort of a building is it? Well, there is a day coming in which, just as a house is tested by fire, our life's work will be tested by fire, and it will be seen what will, and what will not, stand the fire. "Every man's work will be made manifest, and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is. If any man's work abide, he shall receive a reward." If it is a solid work done for God, and done through God, then it shall receive a reward. "But if any man's work be burned," what then? "He shall suffer loss: *yet he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire.*" Saved as Lot was saved, dragged out of Sodom. "He himself shall be saved." Mark, the question of salvation does not come into view here at all. Salvation is a settled thing, and God never brings it up again, even though a man's *work* be bad; but he suffers loss; and, mark you, it is eternal loss. He suffers the loss of recompense, of honour, of privilege, of responsibility; he suffers loss that he never can regain. So you see that it is a solemn and a serious thing to be working for the Lord here, and not to be serving Him in His own way. I believe much that now passes current for able, blessed, and self-denying service to the Lord, will then be burned up, because it was not done according to the will of the Lord. This is remarkably brought out in 2 Tim. ii. 5—"And if a man also strive for the masteries, yet is he not crowned, except he strive lawfully." This passage refers to the strivings of the wrestlers in the Grecian games. There were certain limits laid down, just as now in a football or cricket match there are rules which must be observed, and if these rules are transgressed—if, for instance, at a regatta on the Clyde, a yacht took a short cut and came in first, do you think that yacht would get a prize? No, if it did not sail according to the rules of the race. Except a man strive lawfully he is not crowned. If I am striving to

serve the Lord in His way I shall get a reward, but if I am doing it in my own way, instead of doing it according to His rules, I miss the reward and suffer loss. I would rather be the means of winning one soul, and of leading that one soul into obedience to the Lord in all things—in Baptism, the Lord's Supper, and to the scriptural fellowship of His people, than by going out of the path of obedience to the Lord win a thousand. "A man is not crowned except he strive lawfully."

There is another passage I wish to consider, which you will find in 1 Cor. iv. 1—"Let a man so account of us, as of the ministers of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God. Moreover it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful. But with me it is a very small thing that I should be judged of you, or of man's judgment; yea, I judge not mine own self. For I know nothing by myself; yet am I not hereby justified: but He that judgeth me is the Lord. Therefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come, who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the hearts: and then shall every man have praise of God." Now, if anything were needed to settle the question as to whether the judgment-seat of Christ had anything to do with the question of salvation, surely this scripture would be sufficient, because the period, the time of this judgment of the Lord Jesus will be when He comes; and when He comes what is the first thing that will take place? "We shall be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye"; so that when we stand before the judgment-seat of Christ it will be in our glorified bodies, and then the question of our salvation cannot possibly be gone into. It is the question of our service, our life service to the Master, that will be tested. "Therefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord comes;" He will "bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the heart: and then shall every man have praise of God." I do not know a more solemn verse in the Word of God for Christians than that. There are hidden things of darkness among God's children. Are there not things that are kept in the dark, things that it is hoped time will efface? And are these things

forgotten by the Lord? Do you think that these things are forgotten by Him, because forgotten by men? Do you think that the mischief that has been made among God's children is going to be forgotten at the judgment-seat of Christ, because men have slurred it over? Nay, verily! The hidden things of darkness will be brought out to the light, and what else? He will manifest the counsels of the heart. Do you know what that means? Were you ever brought to a period in your life when you had to decide which course you would take? When the government of this country is brought to a point at which it must decide, a cabinet council is held as to what is to be done; one side is argued, and then the other side; and at last they come to the conclusion, that this, that, or the other thing must be done. Have you ever had such a counsel in your heart, when the flesh said one thing, and the Spirit said another? You have been on the point of going one way or the other, and at last you decided for sin and self. But there is a time coming when the counsel of your heart will be made manifest. It will not be your outward act, but that heart's counsel that will be brought to light. Do you think that apparent prosperity in such a course is God's prospering? I am sure you have sometimes felt that you were misjudged by those who looked at you. Sometimes you were condemned when you ought to have been justified, and sometimes you were justified when you ought to have been condemned. Sometimes we are looked up to by men for the very thing we have been dishonouring God in. But let us get into God's presence, and how sick we get of it all, and we can thank Him that there is a judgment-seat of Christ where everything will be judged. These evil things will be burned up, and never be raised up again for all eternity. "Then shall every man have praise of God." God praising His children, not His children praising Him.

Dear friends, have you ever thought of this? Take up the New Testament Scriptures; take up the names of the Old Testament saints mentioned there; take up the whole list of them, and find me one that God says one word against. I cannot find one. I read of the faith of Samson and of Gideon; not a word of their sin. I read of David's confi-

dence in God when he took the shewbread, and of Solomon's wisdom and glory; but not a word about their sins, so black and shameful. I read of the faith of Jacob and Abraham; not a word of their failures. I read of "righteous Lot" dwelling in Sodom, and not a word about the worldliness that led him there. Is it not like God? and this is just a specimen of what God will do to us throughout eternity. He will find something to praise where we can find nothing. He praised Sarah for calling Abraham "lord," and when we turn to that passage we find that she uttered the word with a laugh of unbelief. Do you and I take up the little grain of faith to praise? I tell you we are not like God.

Oh what a blessed eternity we will go away into, with God praising us instead of condemning us! This is a great subject that we might get much more in, but I leave it to you to search it out for yourselves to see if what I have said is the truth, and may God give us all more light upon it!

PROPHETIC PAPERS. No. 3.

BY. F. C. BLAND.

WE closed our last lecture with a reference to the 70 heptads of Daniel ix., or "weeks" as they are called in our translation, which is a most misleading one, as it naturally gives the impression that the word "week" means a measure of 7 days. The word heptad, or hebdomad, as mentioned before in the explanation of the diagram, designates any measure of 7, and might mean 7 miles, or 7 of anything. Here it means 7 years, as we hope by-and-by to show, so that the 70 heptads of seven years each, indicate a period of 490 years, which are divided into 3 periods of 7, 62 and 1. The details in figures of these dates appeared in last lecture, and may be recapitulated here as follows:—The first (C.E.) 7 heptads or 49 years extended as we read, from the going forth of the commandment to restore and build Jerusalem to the end of Malachi.

We will see in reference to Neh. ii. that there Artaxerxes gives commandment to Nehemiah to restore and build Jerusalem; the date there being 446 B.C., from which,

if we take Malachi's date, 397, we get 49 years, which makes seven sevens of years, or our first 7 heptads. This seems to be a period specially marked by God in Israel's history, as the time when He ceased to plead with them by His prophets: and His voice is silent until He speaks to them again by His Son. The 62 heptads extend from this period to the time when according to the prophecy of Zech. ix., Messiah the Prince came into Jerusalem riding on a colt the foal of an ass (Matt. xxi. 5), making with the first 7 heptads 69, or 479 years, to which must be added 4 years for difference of reckoning between our time and that of the Jews, making altogether 483 years, which divided by 7 years, or a heptad, makes our 69 first heptads.

The last or 70th, as stated before, awaits its fulfilment, and must be looked for in the book of Revelation. The points where these dates begin and end are definitely stated in the Scriptures; and so it must be distinctly understood that we do not seek to prove them from the dates in our Bibles; but rather to show that the dates in our Bibles are correct, because they agree so wonderfully with these prophetic periods.

Now we may ask, why is there this gap of nearly 2000 years between the 69th and 70th week? Why is it not included and made the subject of prophecy? Simply because the Jews or earthly people are "Lo ammi," and the heavenly people are now the subject of God's counsels; a people with heavenly hopes, as distinguished from earthly ones; a heavenly priesthood and a heavenly inheritance; while the subject of Daniel's enquiry is about the earthly people.

I often illustrate it thus: Suppose a rich man directed his agent to buy a property for him in a certain county, and after it is intimated to him that his wishes have been carried out, he asks to be shown the property which now belongs to him. It consists of 70 fields all in a row, each marked off by its own fences. Now suppose that between the 69th and 70th field a river ran; the agent has not purchased this river for his employer,—the right of fishing it, or navigating it, or the right of its water power; and he does not name it, as not belonging to that which

directly concerned the purchaser of the 70 fields. Now may we not take this as a fair illustration of the mighty river of grace, which has come in during the time of Israel's blindness; carrying away on its bosom every believing Jew or Gentile of this dispensation, to form that "body" to which we have before referred. Israel has its dates and its heptads; but there are no dates in this timeless gap in which the church of this dispensation is found; times and seasons have nothing to do with our stay here. It may have been noted, how very definitely this gap is marked in many parts of scripture; whilst the character of that which it contains is kept a secret. It is evident the Lord Himself recognised this great dispensational gap of which we speak, when in the 21st of Luke He is instructing His disciples about coming events, for in verse 24 we read that the Jews were to be carried captives into all nations, when Jerusalem should be taken by the Romans; and that the city was to be trodden down by the Gentiles "till the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled." One might have supposed that here we should have had a full exposition (prophetically) of all the events of the present time, which has already extended to nearly 1900 years; but in the very next verse (25), we are told of events which occur immediately before the end, when the dispensation has got into the rapids, if I may so express it; and signs in the sun and in the moon are succeeded by other events in quick succession; until suddenly all is ended by the coming of the Son of Man.

Now suppose there happened to be a godly Jew in Jerusalem at the time the city was taken; and that he read the words of our Lord about his people being taken captive into all nations; and that he went and hid in a cave, intending to escape when he could. But suppose that he falls asleep, and sleeps for these 1800 years, or until the very end; and that he wakes up just as the signs spoken of begin to come to pass. *He would not have missed, according to this scripture,* any of the events that have occurred since that time. The church would have been called out and taken away; our scriptures—Ephesians, Corinthians, Colossians, and Hebrews, would have served their purpose

as teaching the order of God's House, which is now "the habitation of God through the Spirit;" and the Jew would awake to find himself face to face with the book of the Revelation and the opening of that sealed book which Daniel was told to seal up until the time of the end. The thread of prophecy would, *as far as he knew*, be unbroken, and God would be found dealing with the earth again when the Jew awoke after his more than 1800 years' sleep.

Again, in Matt. ix., we have a foreshadowing of this in the case of Jairus' daughter, and the woman who touches the hem of His garment, which though so well known, we may be pardoned for referring to in passing. Here a Jewess, a type of the nation, lies dead; the Lord is on His way to raise her to life again, when a poor woman, moved by faith in Him, comes and touches the hem of His garment. The whole procession stops while He heals her, and she comes forward and confesses Him before all (just as those who believe in Him now are called to do); and then He goes and raises the dead Jewess. So will it be by-and-by, for we are told in Acts xv. that God is now visiting the Gentiles to take out of them a people for His name; but *after this* He will return and build the tabernacle of David, which is fallen down, and restore the ruins thereof. We find this interruption of Jewish history in many Old Testament scriptures, and very strikingly shadowed forth in some of the types. As to the former, viz., the interruption of their history, even during the short time they were in Babylon their history seems to cease, and it is worthy of remark, that the last verses of the book of Chronicles, which close the account of the captivity in Babylon, are word for word the same as the two first verses of the book of Ezra, which tell of their return. It would seem as if time had stood still as far as Bible history was concerned, while God's earthly people were in captivity in Babylon, as if God knew no history on earth except in connection with those to whom the promises were made.*

We may, before leaving this subject, refer to one type out of several, where this dispensation is shadowed forth. I allude to Lev. xvi., where in the great day of atonement the children of Israel are told to take two goats for a *sin-offering*. One of these goats is slain, and its blood taken in and sprinkled on the mercy seat, and before the mercy seat; after that is done, we hear no more of the other goat until we have gone through ten verses of the chapter, which are occupied with the sacrifice of the bullock for Aaron and his priestly house; a type of the church of this dispensation as priests to God. They occupy the place of worshippers until the whole priestly service is done; and then, but not till then, is the live goat brought; and Aaron declares to the nation of Israel publicly that their sins are put away. And is not this exactly the order of the dispensation, Christ and His priestly House fill the place of worshippers, while the veil is on Israel's heart, a worship which is not one of form or ritual as it will be again by-and-by, but a worship "in spirit and in truth;" a worship which is not either in Jerusalem or in the mountain of Samaria, as that worship will undoubtedly be, when according to Rev. xi., the temple of God is again seen in Jerusalem, and inside worshippers are recognised by God.

Now, therefore, as we before stated, the form which grace should take in this time, viz., a body, was hidden; the gap which it should fill was shadowed forth; and it is remarkable that the prophet Daniel in the very next chapter (chap. x.), seems to have got a glimpse of it, for it says "a thing was revealed to me, Daniel, and the thing was true, but the *time was long*." He sees that the restoration of his people was assured by the promises of God, that it was *all true*; but the time of the fulfilment was far off, and he faints at the prospect, and ate no pleasant bread for one-and-twenty days.

Now, it would not be profitable to go into too much detail in explaining the visions in the book of Daniel; they have been so often

where it is shown that during the times of the Judges, when Israel was delivered into the hands of other nations for punishment, and was in subjection to them, the time of their subjection is ignored in the chronology of their history.

* A very striking instance of this principle of the interruption of the chronology in connection with Israel's history, will be found in Dr. Anderson's very remarkable book, "The Coming Prince," page 79,

explained, and indeed are so plainly told in the Book itself, that it would only occupy time, and weary those who are familiar with them; we may, therefore, shortly refer to each. The first vision is that of the great image composed of four metals—gold, silver, brass, and iron. Verse 38, chap. ii. tells us that Nebuchadnezzar's kingdom of Babylon is represented by the head of gold; chap. v. 31 explains to us what the breast and arms of silver or the 2nd kingdom are intended to foreshadow, viz., the Median Kingdom, afterwards united with the Persian; and we shall not have much difficulty in recognising the kingdoms of Greece and Rome in the haunches and thighs of brass, and the legs of iron; scripture further on will throw light on this, so we need not dwell at any length on them now. But the feet and toes, partly of iron, and partly of clay, require a little more extended comment; but one thing we have definitely stated for us here, viz., that they are *Kingdoms*, for verse 44 says that in the days of *these Kings* shall the God of Heaven set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed, which shall break all that is opposed to it, and it shall stand for ever.

There is only one dominion which will stand for ever, and that is the Kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ; the stone cut out of the mountain without hands referred to in last lecture, and identified with the Christ who takes the kingdom which never passes into any other hands, until having put down all rule and authority and power, He delivers it back to God even His Father. But we must note one thing about these kingdoms, which is referred to very definitely in other scriptures, *i.e.*, that their destruction is the work of Christ Himself at His appearing; we read of them again in Daniel in chap. vii., under the symbol of 10 horns in the head of the 4th beast or Roman Empire, and they come up again in Rev. xvii. under the same figure of 10 horns, and that up to the time the book of the Revelation was written, "they had received no kingdom as yet." Now, with regard to the two substances of which these "feet and toes" are formed, I do not think any one disputes that they signify constitutional kingdoms like our own, or in prophetic phrase, clay-iron kingdoms;

that is, kingdoms which are governed by the people as well as the King. The more the popular element enters into the Government, the weaker it becomes; and I may say, in passing, that the last Reform Bill put more clay into the toes of the image than anything that has occurred since England became a Kingdom. The difficulty of Government is increased a thousand-fold by being put into the people's hands. Have we not painful examples enough of it in the difficulty of putting down anarchy and crime in Ireland? If the righteous administration of the law is put in force on any occasion when Parliament is sitting, the representative of anarchy will ask fifty questions in a night, as to the right of the powers that be to put down crime and preserve life; and the business of the first legislative assembly in the world can be brought to a stand still for weeks by the representatives of the clay in this constitutional kingdom.

May not the time be near at hand when the ten Kings of Dan. ii. and vii., and of Rev. xvii., will have to declare that they cannot govern their people, and will agree to give their power into the hands of one, to whom the devil will give his power and his seat and great authority, and after whom the whole world will wonder. These are solemn thoughts, dear friends, and we would do well to take heed to the words of the Lord Jesus when He says, "Ye can discern the face of the sky, but how is it that ye cannot discern this time?"

THE GOSPEL OF JOHN.

CHAPTER XVII.—(CONTINUED.)

NOTES OF ADDRESSES BY W. LINCOLN.

(Communicated by J. S. H.)

THE **fifth** of these seven particulars we have in verse 14—"I have given them Thy word; and the world hath hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world." And then we have the sixth in verse 18—"As Thou hast sent Me into the world, even so have I also sent them into the world." Obedience, separation from evil (verse 17), then sent into the world: mark the beautiful order of God. People

have the idea that we are to begin with trying to get out of the world; but if we believe in Christ, we are dead, buried, and risen; we *are* out of it. Then, *secondly*, we are put into it. This is really what is not seen by a great many; that we are only in the world as heavenly men, are made heavenly before we are made servants, a heavenly man before I have anything to do with blessing the world. Again, the contrast with the other gospels is remarkable in an expression like this—"A prophet is not without honour save in his own country and in his own house"; or again, "He came into His own city." Observe the grace in these expressions—Jesus speaking of some little town as His own city, of some country as His, when He was Lord of heaven and earth. There was the grace of the Lord, He who filled heaven and earth thus to come down so low. Now look at the other side and you will see grace again. By nature we belong to Walworth, or to some other very humble place it may be; here the Lord speaks as if our proper home was heaven, as if we had been there before He sent us into the world, and in this sense we have. It is a blessed thing for us to be here because Jesus put us here. I hope there is not one of us, as Christians in our daily sphere of work, who does not know that he is where God has put him. He who put the stars in their places has put that soul to shine brighter than the stars, behind that counter, or to sit at that desk, or to work in that kitchen.

Then, *sixth*, we come to verse 19—"For their sakes I sanctify Myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth." Some think that there is some obscurity in these words. To sanctify is to separate. "For their sakes I separate Myself, &c." For their sakes I take another stand from an earthly stand; I take My stand at Thy throne, that I may lift them up to Thy throne too. Of course we are not to sit upon the throne of God, our calling is to sit upon the throne of Christ; it is ever well to keep this distinction before us, and to clearly apprehend that, albeit the intense love with which we have been loved, we shall never be God. We shall be filled with all the fulness of God; still we are the re-

ceivers, and God the giver to all eternity. Now the Lord is acting as the High Priest, a work begun when taking His new place as Head of the heavenly family, on purpose that He might lift up the members of the family to that throne. And observe the little expression, "through Thy truth." That is, as the truth of the love of God, of the grace of God, dawns upon our hearts and souls, so we are more and more content with the calling of God, and do not want the things of the world. Separated through the knowledge of the love of God, of the calling of God, of the fatherhood of God.

Then the *seventh* we have in verse 22—"And the glory which Thou gavest Me I have given them." He stops at nothing. His own inherent glory He gives to none; it is the glory given, acquired; the other we can only gaze upon and see what it is. Jesus as the Divine servant has so glorified God that, in recompense, God has lifted Him up to where He was before. He could not do more; so we read in Hebrews i.—"Being made so much better than the angels, as He hath by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they." He obtained it by inheritance. What, then, does Christ obtain? All that glory into which He is lifted up as Son of Man, and which He shares with us. Look at Rev. xxi. 10, 11—"And he carried me away in the spirit to a great and high mountain, and showed me that great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God, having the glory of God: and her light was like unto a stone most precious, even like a jasper stone, clear as crystal." Beautifying, blessing, enriching creation through the glory streaming upon her.

So He begins with God; next asks that He may be glorified, "with Thine own self, with the glory which I had with Thee before the world was"; and then He is engaged with lifting us up there. And this request of our Lord's is going on now, it is unfulfilled; it has been spread before God for these eighteen centuries, and still it is unfulfilled.

But let us look now at the chapter in connection with another point, which is also contained therein. The Lord Jesus finally introducing His saints into the presence of God. I have no doubt that this 17th chapter

has a peculiar connection with chapter xx., which is virtually this: in chapter xvii. it is the Lord, if I may so say, introducing His saints to God; in chapter xx. it is the Lord introducing God to His saints. He could not fully reveal God to His saints until the Cross was an accomplished fact; He does introduce His saints before, because in God's account the work is done. There is a little word which occurs in this chapter some seven or eight times, which shows how He introduces us to God, that word "even as." In effect it is the Lord saying, "I and the children whom Thou hast given Me." Happily these things have so many of them been taught us in practice by the Holy Ghost Himself, that I need not linger long upon them. But that is not to diminish the greatness of the Lord Jesus in thus joining us to Himself; and this "even as" we find to be

A COMPARISON OF HIS SAINTS WITH HIMSELF
IN SEVEN PARTICULARS.

First, there is the same life. "As Thou hast given Him power over all flesh, that He should give eternal life to as many as Thou hast given Him. And this is life eternal, that they might know Thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom Thou hast sent." He says this on purpose to press that point upon our attention. For bear in mind that the Lord Jesus says that He uttered this address audibly on purpose that we might overhear, because it concerns us. The living God, eternal life coming out from God, and His people with eternal life given to them. How do we get this eternal life? Do we get it by knowing God, or is this its way of sustentation? I think that we shall see that life is produced in the soul by the revelation of the Son of God, and faith is produced by that revelation; and the moment the eye turns and sees that blessed Lord Jesus, there is life. Take the case of Abraham. The God of glory appeared to him in Charran; Abraham looked to the revelation of God, and the moment of his looking was the moment of his deliverance from the world. Thus are we beginning to know God in Christ, and so the life is deepened and sustained by feeding upon this revelation of God, knowing Him more and more.

Again, **secondly**, Holy Father, keep

through Thine own name those whom Thou hast given Me, that they may be one, even as also we are one." Whence we learn that all His saints have one common life, that makes them brethren with each other, and virtually one altogether. The passage is important in another way. Though we are one, yet are we twenty, a hundred, or more, and conscious of our own individuality though the Lord says that we are one. So we learn that God and Christ are one, but must not let this doctrine militate against the other that they are two. God is one, and God is three.

Thirdly, "They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world"; and the Lord says it twice, and we understand how that is true. Keep these two points together: all that we were we have died out of; all that Christ is we live into. The Lord when He says we are not of the world, even as He is not of the world, appends two remarks: First, as we are not of the world, we must be hated by the world, like Himself. The world will love its own, and separation unto Christ it cannot bear. But with us it must be no sect, no party, no name, no division, nothing but Christ; and wherever Christ and His people are, there are we to be; and this very separation will make the world hate us. And then, they are not of the world, and therefore will keep aloof from the ways of the world. "I pray not that Thou shouldst take them out of the world, but that Thou shouldst keep them from the evil."

"BLESSED IS THE MAN THAT
TRUSTETH IN THE LORD."

PSALM cxlii.

THIS is a Psalm giving instruction. David having been brought into circumstances of trial, sought God. It is good for us when trial so exercises our hearts as to lead us to God.

"I cried unto Jehovah with my voice" (verse 1). God delights to hear the cry of His children, as in faith and conscious need they make their requests known unto Him. When ignorant and unconscious of our need, God has often to put us into the furnace of

trial, that we may learn our need of His all-sufficient grace.

"I poured out my complaint before Him; I showed Him my trouble" (verse 2). David's faith is brought into exercise through the adverse circumstances into which he had been led. He tells out to God his trouble, in the confidence that He would undertake for him. Thus we are taught through the Lord's discipline to trust in Him, and have no confidence in the flesh. How our hearts are relieved from many a burden and care by casting them all in faith on Him.

"When my spirit was overwhelmed within me, then Thou knewest my path" (verse 3). David had been looking at circumstances apart from God; therefore his spirit was dismayed within him. Is that not very often our own experience? Difficulties confront us, we look at them and then at ourselves, and we are discouraged. But when we look in faith to the living God, we triumph over them all. To faith all things are possible with God. Every event and circumstance in our lives are known to Him; yea, He permits them to happen for some wise and gracious end. Although we can see only one step before us, let us commit our way unto the Lord. However perplexing and difficult our path may be, He will lead us along safely. The road may be rough and thorny, but—

"Home in prospect still can cheer me,
Yes, and give me sweet repose;
While I feel His presence near me,
For my Father knows."

"I looked on my right hand and beheld, but there was no man that would know me; refuge failed me; no man cared for my soul. I cried unto Thee" (verses 4, 5). If in our troubles we seek human help, it is well for us when such is withheld. God would thus shut us up to Himself. It is said that "man's extremity is God's opportunity."

"I said, 'Thou art my refuge and my portion in the land of the living.'" David confesses God to be his refuge. How blessed to know Him as such. Ere God could be the refuge of the believer, His well-beloved Son must be exposed to the awful tempest of His wrath on the Cross, where

"He braved the storm for us,"

that we might have an abiding refuge in the riven Rock of Ages, where there is

"Perfect refuge, surest safety,
Sweetest rest amid alarms."

When Abiathar, one of the sons of Ahimelech, fled to David to escape the sword of Doeg, the Edomite, whom Saul employed to slay the priests of Jehovah, David said to him, "Abide thou with me, fear not; for he that seeketh my life seeketh thy life: but with me thou shalt be in safeguard" (1 Sam. xxii. 23). He was under the protection of God's anointed. We also are in the safe keeping of God's Christ, whose presence is salvation. "The eternal God is *thy refuge*, and underneath are the everlasting arms" (Deut. xxxiii. 27). May we abide in Him, and walk in the light of His presence day by day, and thus our minds shall be kept in perfect peace, and be saved from many snares and seductions of the adversary.

God is not only our refuge, but He is also our abiding portion. We may confidently sing—

"Thou, my everlasting portion,
More than friend or life to me."

May we by faith eat of the flesh and drink of the blood of the Son of Man continually. Spiritual life was imparted to us when at the first we accepted Christ as our Saviour. As we feed upon Him, day by day, our souls are kept fresh and happy. The portion of the peace sacrifice set apart by Jehovah for Aaron and his sons, was the breast and shoulder (Lev. vii. 28-34). Christ is the Autitype of the peace-offering, and God has given Him entirely to us. The breast is the seat of the affections, and the shoulder is the place of strength. "Christ loved the Church, and gave Himself for it." All the billows and waves of Divine wrath which passed over His righteous soul could neither quench nor drown His love to His Church. He gave Himself for us, because He loved us. At the Cross that love was manifested; as He appears in the presence of God for us, that same love is engaged on our behalf; and "in the ages to come He shall show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness towards us through Christ Jesus" (Eph. ii. 7).

His almighty strength is also the portion of His people. Israel sang on the resurrection

side of the Red Sea, "Jehovah is my strength." Towards the close of David's eventful life, he confidently exclaimed, "God is my strength." And all the saints, whether in the Old or New Testament, bear the same blessed testimony, that "in the Lord is righteousness and strength." As we pass through the wilderness of this world, may it be leaning on the arm of our Beloved, while He comforts our hearts with His love, and unfolds His unsearchable riches, and tells us the joys of that home to which He is leading us.

"Attend to my cry, for I am brought very low" (verse 6). That is where God can bless us. Where pride and self-sufficiency are mortified, and the fruit of the Spirit abounds—

"He that is low need fear no fall."

In the valley of humiliation the soul prospers as we rest in His love.

"Deliver me from my persecutors, for they are stronger than I" (verse 6). It is good to know that we cannot meet the enemy in our own strength. How often we have tried it and have been overcome. God causeth us always to triumph in Christ. He spoiled principalities and powers, triumphing over them all in His Cross.

"Bring my soul out of prison that I may praise Thee" (verse 7). How often we seek to get out of our trials because we don't like them. David desires deliverance that he may have occasion to praise God. He closes this precious Psalm with the assurance that Jehovah will deal bountifully with him. Thus faith honours God. In all our trials, let us seek Him in the confidence of faith and hope, expecting a blessing through them. David says elsewhere, "My soul shall make her boast in the Lord: the humble shall hear thereof, and be glad. O magnify the Lord with me, and let us exalt His name together" (Psalm xxxiv. 2, 3). WM. K.

"MINE."

ISA. xliiii. 1.

IN this first verse, "Fear not" is very beautifully connected with the words that follow, "Thou art Mine." If one prizes anything enough to address such words to it, it is sure to be cared for proportionally to the

ability of the possessor. One would not think of saying to a trifle not much cared for, "Thou art mine." Sufficient interest would not be taken in it to do so. But one much attached to another—for instance, a mother, with her dearly-loved child, as she watches it, how plainly her looks say, if her lips do not, "Thou art mine." And we at once know that the little one will have nothing to fear so long as the power and wisdom of the mother are not out-matched. God will take care of those who are so dear to Him as to be thus claimed. Because they are His,—precious to Him, He will abide near. "Fear not, I am with thee." With this assurance who can fear? Not that His presence will make the Christian's path all smooth. He will not save *from* trouble till this earth-life is over, but He will save *out* of it. The rivers will overflow sometimes, but He will keep His own from being carried away by the flood.

God does not, in His Book, use words with which we are familiar to attach to them a special meaning. He uses every-day words, with their every-day meanings. Therefore, when He talks about love, we know that it is the same all-powerful principle we recognise by that name among ourselves. When one says, "I love you," speaking from the heart, as alone God does speak, we expect to see every effort put forth for happiness and safety. Let us transfer the same expectation to Him, for He intended to convey the same impression, and never disappoints. It is possible to be disappointed by fellow-creatures, because what was trusted to as love may not be love at all; but we know it is not so with Him. In calling us His, He takes upon Himself certain obligations. He must, and most certainly will, fulfil the obligations devolving upon Him from the relations in which He reveals Himself, as standing toward us, according to the common meaning of those relations. That we might count upon Him to fulfil them was His purpose in revealing them.

Then let us never doubt, when passing through the fire, that He is taking that way with us because for some reason He knows no other would have been so good. But He is with us all the way through, loving us too much to lose sight of us; trying to speak comfort, though often our sobs and cries drown His

voice, and longing even as we do for the end, because it is grieving to His heart that we should suffer.

How gratified He must be when one knows Him well enough to trust Him even in the furnace, putting the hand in His and looking up into His face, saying, "I will not fear, for Thou art with me." M. M. A.

CHRIST'S HUMANITY.

IN recent numbers of the *Witness* we have had before us seasonable truth as to the Deity of Christ, the only-begotten Son, eternally one with the Father and the Holy Spirit, God over all, blessed for ever. May we not with profit consider also His perfect humanity, and the place in the counsels of God which the Christ occupies and shall fill throughout ages without end.

The Gospel by John opens with—"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." . . . "And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, full of grace and truth." Therein was mystery. "God was manifested in the flesh"—"Emmanuel." The Evangelist Luke enters more into detail; and from the angel's communication to Mary we learn that the incarnation was effected by the direct agency of the Holy Ghost, and "Therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God." He who thus came into the world in a manner out of the ordinary course was truly man, flesh and blood, yet distinct from sinners—holy humanity—and to Him as such was due the title, "the Son of God." In order that He might assume the form of a servant in the likeness of men (Phil. ii.) He had laid aside the outward glory of His person; nevertheless the nature, ever Divine, remained the same in the Babe of Bethlehem—the eternal life which there was manifested in human form (1 John i.) had a nature proper to itself which change of circumstances could not alter, and that clearly was evidenced as the heavenly Man passed on through the world, personally unaffected by aught of its defilement.

As the only-begotten Son in the bosom of the Father He declared God in a manner hitherto unknown to man. "We beheld His

glory" (said the beloved disciple), "glory as of the only-begotten from the Father." And as He took His place with the nation, under the law, by a life of obedience He exemplified what man ought to be.

As lord of this lower creation, under God, Adam had been set; but that place of dignity he soon lost when, through disobedience, he surrendered to Satan, and self became his object alone. Into this, which long had been the scene of God's dishonour, man's ruin, and creation's groans, at length came the second Man, the Lord from heaven (1 Cor. xv. 47). Through man God had been dishonoured and Satan allowed to gain a temporary triumph; by man, also, should he be vanquished and God be infinitely more glorified, sin be atoned for and captive man redeemed, creation be delivered, and all be established upon a new and everlastingly secure foundation.

Christ Jesus, the perfect Man, stood for God where man, the first, had fallen, and then, in wondrous grace for guilty man, He took the sinner's place at Calvary.

In resurrection, a stage further towards the accomplishment of God's eternal purpose has been reached—the life of humiliation under trial is ended—the Cross, with its solemn accompaniments, is past—now the glorified Man occupies the Father's throne (Rev. iii. 21). There yet remains for future manifestation the full results of the finished work and the victory gained (Heb. ii. 14). The heavens shall witness to the value of the precious blood, which can alone be measured by the dignity of the person of Him who thus voluntarily surrendered Himself to the death of the Cross; and a glory of God never yet revealed shall be displayed (Eph. ii. 7) when, in response to the call of the Son of God, the vast company of sinners saved by grace shall arise, clothed in resurrection beauty, to stand forth with the Lord in His glory manifestly one (John xvii. 22, 23).

The earth, too, must own His title—"King of kings and Lord of lords." Yet a little while, and the kingdoms of this world shall have become the kingdom of our Lord, and of His Christ; and He shall reign for ever and ever (Rev. xi.). "All kings shall fall down before Him; all nations shall serve Him" (Psalm lxxii). Satan shall be confined to the

bottomless pit until the earth has enjoyed her Sabbath, which creation then shall celebrate with joyous song" (Psalms xcvi., xcvi.)

Hell beneath shall also know and acknowledge the authority of the Man, Christ Jesus. Because He is the Son of Man, authority to execute judgment hath been committed to Him (John v. 27); from His face the earth and heavens shall flee away (Rev. xx.); at His command Death and Hades shall deliver up their dead to judgment, and at His fiat Satan, Death, Hades, with those whose names are not written in the Book of Life, shall pass away into the lake of fire. "And when all things shall be subdued unto Him, then shall the Son also Himself be subject unto Him that put all things under Him, that God may be all in all" (1 Cor. xv. 28).

In the new heavens and new earth which shall succeed those of the first creation (Rev. xxii.), righteousness shall be established (see 2 Peter iii. 13), and nought shall ever disturb that happy home where God Himself shall dwell with men and be their God; and then shall Christ occupy His proper place as Man, universal Head and Lord of all creation, under God—Father, Son, and Spirit (see Col. i. 15-19). And there with Him in closest association shall the Church enjoy, throughout eternity, that high destiny unto which she was chosen, in Christ, before the foundation of the world (Eph. i. 4, and v. 25-32). Well may we adopt the inspired prayer of the apostle, "That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto us a spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him: having the eyes of our heart enlightened; that we may know what is the hope of His calling, what the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, and what the exceeding greatness of His power to us-ward who believe, according to that working of the strength of His might, which He wrought in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead, and made Him to sit at His right hand in the heavenly places, far above all rule, and authority, and power, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come; and He put all things in subjection under His feet, and gave Him the Head over all things to the Church, which is His body, the fulness of Him that filleth all in all."

May the Christian reader, as well as the writer, find increasingly their all in the glorious Christ at God's right hand above, until this dreary desert scene, where He is not, shall be left for the joy of His presence yonder. Thus shall they be for Himself for the "little while," preserved alike from antichristian error and from every world idol.

R. S.

Correspondence.

DEAR BROTHER,—Permit me through the medium of your valued paper, *The Witness*, to notice what appears to some to be a retrograde tendency amongst brethren. I refer to the practice, which of late has become more general, of announcing beforehand subjects, and fixing as to speakers on ordinary occasions when children of God congregate for mutual edification, several servants of the Lord qualified to teach and exhort being present. I say ordinary occasions, admitting that possibly there may at times exist special need when saints should be invited to consider together some one particular line of truth. That, however, would be exceptional, whereas now there is cause to fear that pre-arrangement is becoming the rule; and in view of defection on every hand, have we not need to watch against the beginning of departure? Some ask, is it wrong to pre-arrange as to subjects and speakers? Should we not rather inquire, whether is it more honouring to the Lord and consistent with the truth that we should do so or not? If we believe that the Lord is Head of His Body, the Church; that He lives to nourish and cherish it; that wherever His people are gathered together in His name there He is in their midst; that the Holy Spirit is present to divide to each severally as He will; and that each servant of the Lord is directly responsible to Him for the faithful exercise of his gift for the edification of the body without waiting for sanction from man. This being so, is it not the happy privilege of children of God, when gathered together, to wait upon the Lord for ministry in the Spirit according to the need as known to Him who searcheth hearts? And is it not well that faith should be in exercise, and for the glory of God that it should be so? Without doubt there has been failure in our effort to act upon Divine principles—meetings have been found unprofitable, and liberty may have been abused. This should cause us much concern, and stir to self-examination so as to ascertain the cause of lack of power. There may have been confidence in the flesh; possibly hearts have not been duly exercised before the Lord; or on part of His ministering servants there may not have been diligence in prayer and in meditation on the Word. But have we now no resource but to fall back upon man and studied addresses? May our gracious God stir up the hearts of His people to lay hold afresh of the truth in order to perseverance therein until the Lord comes, remembering His word, "Behold I come quickly, hold that fast which thou hast." It would be encouraging to hear an expression of mind from others who may likewise have been exercised with respect to the important matter referred to.—Yours in Christ, affectionately,

R. S.

Questions and Answers.

QUESTION 279.—In the November Number of the "Witness," the teaching on page 174 (Half-Hours with a Concordance) seems to be that in New Testament times "a Church of God" in any given locality did not include all recognised believers therein. If this be so, would it be scriptural for an assembly of twenty believers gathered to the Name of Jesus in a town, to claim to be the Church of God in that place, notwithstanding that there are 1000 recognised believers not so gathered?

It is our conviction that whenever an individual or a gathering claims to be *anything*, there is a principle at work that God will never own. See Gal. vi. 3; I Cor. viii. 2; 2 Cor. xii. 11.

The assertion of a claim to being "the one assembly of God," is soon followed by the Divine judgment so manifestly, that it is silenced.

At the same time, surely none who honestly desires to please the Lord, would assay to join himself (Acts ix. 26) to that which he did not believe to be "an assembly of God."

In Acts xx. 30 it is foretold, that from among these Ephesian elders, men would arise speaking perverse things to draw away the disciples after them. Would anyone dare to say that a gathering of such perverted ones, with their perverter in their midst, constitute "an assembly of God?" We do not deny that it might be a gathering of Christians, but would it on that account be a Divinely gathered assembly? Would it not rather be a sect in which the authority of Christ was practically disowned? Nay, more, is the command not plain and explicit; "mark them that cause divisions and offences *contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned*, and avoid them. For they that are such, serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly; and by good words and fair speeches, deceive the hearts of the simple."

"Now, we command you brethren, in the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly, and *not after the tradition which he received of us*." "By this we know that we love the children of God; when we love God and keep his commandments." "Now I praise you brethren, that ye remember me in all things, and keep the traditions as I delivered them to you." "Yet am I with you in spirit, joying and beholding your order."

All these scriptures show the importance of being associated with that only in which there is room for the entire teachings of the Word of God, and where the Divinely appointed order of the House of God can be carried out. Thus, whilst it is our business to be joined to that only which bears the marks of being "an assembly of God," it is not our business to claim to be anything more than a company of sinners saved by grace, who are seeking to carry out the instructions given in the Word of God, and who gladly welcome all who desire to do likewise.

There may be only twenty such, and in doing so they may be separated to their deep sorrow from the "1000 recognised believers" in the sects; but love can desire nothing less for these 1000 saints, than that they may be delivered from the bondage of human tradition, "be filled with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding," and that they may "stand perfect and complete in all the will of God."

QUESTION 280.—To questions upon 2 Peter ii., we reply—

In the first chapter of this epistle we have two classes of believers referred to, viz., those who are "adding" growing, "neither idle nor unfruitful"; and on the other hand, those who are "blind and cannot see afar off, and have forgotten that they were purged from their old sins," &c.

In chapters ii. and iii. we have two classes of un-saved, viz., in chapter ii., the religious professor; in chapter iii., the sceptical scoffer.

All through chapter ii. it is men professing to serve and minister for the Lord like Balaam, yet walking after their own lusts. Or else, those who through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour, had escaped from the gross idolatry and abominable practices of heathendom; and yet, after a time, had gone back to what they had left. It is noticeable that these are not said to have been "purified by faith," but to have "escaped through knowledge." And the illustration that follows is in accordance therewith. The sow washed, the dog that has vomited. Both unclean animals—figures never applied to the regenerate. The sheep might fall into the mire and be for the time as filthy as the sow, but its nature never is to *wallow in it*.

And most appropriately, it is in this chapter which shows so fearfully the danger of a false profession that we have mention of "righteous Lot." Showing that however a child of God may depart from the path of fellowship with God, yet God never disowns him. A David may *give occasion to the enemy* to blaspheme, but the erring child is never *classed with the enemy*.

We believe that our Question Page might be made a means of much greater usefulness than at present. With a view to this we propose to print from time to time a selection from the questions sent to us, and we invite the help of our readers in replying to them.

We do not engage to publish all the replies sent, but we should like to publish a considerable number, and in order to this we urge the necessity of their being short, pointed, and scriptural. When different views of a subject are taken, we propose to print replies fairly representative of both sides. In such cases, with the replies before us, we may be able to add a note, helping to reconcile the two, if reconcilable, or if not, to show where either or both may be at fault. Hitherto we have not been able to notice one-tenth of the questions sent to us, but we hope in future to overtake a larger proportion.

We do not engage to publish questions that are not of somewhat general interest, or that we do not judge to be for general edification.

We invite replies to the following questions:—

What is the meaning of Mat. xii. 31-32, "The blasphemy against the Spirit"?

Are believers warranted from Scripture to effect insurance, either upon life or goods?

What are the "earthly things" and what are the "heavenly things" referred to in John iii. 12.

What is the meaning of 1 Cor. xv. 29-30, "Baptized for the dead"?

THE FIRST EPISTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS.

By J. R. C.

1 Cor. xii. 13-31.

FOR in one Spirit were we all baptised into one body." So verse 13 is correctly rendered in the Revised Version.

The Spirit is thus shown to be the element in which they were baptised, not the baptiser. It is the Lord that baptises in the Holy Spirit—see Matt. iii. 2, where "with water" and "with the Spirit" should be "*in* water" and "*in* the Spirit," according to the margin of the Revised Version.

The reference is to some past action, and it is interesting to trace the instances recorded in Acts of the baptism of the Spirit. In Acts ii. the subjects were Jews; in Acts viii. 17, Samaritans; in x. 44, Gentiles; in xix. 6, disciples of John. But in all cases it was "the same Spirit," and by baptism into that one Spirit all were constituted one body, whatever their nationality or social position. And that Spirit in which they were baptised, and by which they were constituted *one*, is the same of which they drink. In Acts ii. the Spirit "filled all the house where they were sitting"; but they also were "filled with the Spirit." They were in the Spirit, and the Spirit was in them.

These two things are true of every child of God. In the Spirit they are constituted members of one body; one with Christ the Head, and one with every fellow-member. And not only so, but that same Spirit dwells in every child of God; differing, doubtless, in measure, but not as to the fact, which is true of all. Some may be, and doubtless are, possessors of the Spirit in scant measure. Others there are who may be full. It is the Lord's command and our privilege to be *filled*. There is no limit on God's part. The limit is like that of the vessels of old when the oil was poured out (2 Kings iv.), only our capacity to receive. Hence, so often, the need of emptying first in order to being filled with the Spirit.

Who that has formed any conception of this Divine thought of the oneness of the body of Christ, through the baptism and indwelling of

the Spirit of God, can fail to be amazed at the spectacle now presented in Christendom with its hundreds of sects, each professing to constitute in itself a body, with a distinct membership, and practically denying both the unity constituted by the Spirit and the power for edification that is provided by the indwelling of the Spirit.

But in spite of all man's failure, this unity remains intact according to the purpose of God. "There is one body and one Spirit." The prayer of the Lord "that they all may be one" was heard, and is answered even now, though it yet remains to be manifested at the appearing of the Lord with all His saints. Man cannot introduce into that one body, neither can he separate from it. It is altogether of God, a Divine work in which man can neither make, nor mar, nor meddle.

Not so the assembly of God on earth. That is entrusted to the responsibility of man, to human builders, who, alas! have departed from the heavenly pattern and marred the entire fabric.

From verse 14 to 27 the figure of the body is made use of to illustrate most perfectly the Divine character of ministry, showing the mutual dependence of all the members one upon another, their mutual care one for another, and the manifested result, "no schism."

In verses 15 and 16 the thought is *no independency*. A member of the body may desire to take an independent position, and to rid itself of responsibility toward the rest of the body; but though it may deny, it cannot dissolve its relationship. And the lesson here is an important one; for however separate the position into which obedience to the Word of the Lord may lead us, our relationship to all saints as members of the one body remains, with all its privileges and responsibilities.

Verse 17 teaches *no monopoly*. However important the function of any individual member, as for instance the eye or the ear, yet must that member know and own that there are other members, with perhaps less important functions, that are necessary for the well-being of the whole.

Thus are we taught that for any one to act in the church as if he had all the gifts necessary for the edification of the whole,

and so practically hinder the exercise and development of other minor gifts, is a violation of the Divine idea of ministry.

Verse 18 shows another truth of the utmost practical importance, viz., that the place and function of every member is assigned to it by God Himself. It is therefore the business of each individual to ascertain what place and function God has apportioned to him. Man's qualifications and credentials are therefore of no account, except as they may be simply the acknowledgment of the gift that God has bestowed.

Verses 19, 20, show that the multitude and diversity of the members affords no real obstacle to the manifested oneness of the whole.

Verses 21, 22, show the mutual dependence of each individual member on every other member for supply of some of its many wants. In our vanity and conceit of gift, how apt we are to despise the weak, the ignorant, the little ones! But here is a rebuke to such offensive pride—the *feeblest* are the *most necessary*.

Verses 23, 24, pass from the thought of supply of need to the thought of bestowing honour. For Divine fellowship has its courtesies as well as its necessities. Those to whom we in our vanity might assign the *lowest* place, may be those who, through inward grace, are in God's sight worthy of greatest honour. Thus are we taught rather to cover and adorn than to expose the weakness or uncomeliness of our fellow-members.

Verses 25, 26—Thus, through mutual dependence, mutual supply, mutual honour, mutual care, and finally, mutual sympathy in suffering and joy, are we taught how dreadful is the sin of schism, and how much must be endured rather than yield to it.

Alas! *division* is becoming the ready short cut out of troubles that God permits, in order that our faith and His grace may be proved. It is Satan's device, ever present in times of difficulty to the carnal mind, a door of exit from the trial always open; but which, instead of healing, tends to multiply and propagate the mischief far and near.

We do not say that division is *never* a necessity. It is written, "There must also be schisms among you, that they which are

approved may be made manifest among you" (chap. xi. 19). But we are persuaded that in most such cases, had there been a breaking down before God, a realising of the awful sin and dishonour thus done to His name, and a waiting upon Him for light and grace, most of these sorrows that rend the very hearts of the faithful might have been averted.

Having thus illustrated the *general* ministry of the body—a ministry in which every member has its part—the apostle passes to another line of truth, and points out certain *special* ministries which God has set in the assembly: "First, apostles; secondarily, prophets; thirdly, teachers; after that, miracles; then gifts of healings, helps, governments, diversities of tongues."

Apostles, prophets, and teachers, lay the foundation of *doctrine*. Miracles and gifts of healing were a witness of the power and presence of the living God (Heb. ii. 4). Helps and governments are for the ordering of the House of God, and "diversities of tongues" for Gospel testimony (see chap. xiv. 21, 22).

In a general sense, all are to be teachers (see Col. iii. 16), "in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another"; all are to be pastors (see Heb. xii. 15), "looking diligently," or, literally, "episcopizing" or "over-seeing"; all are to be exhorters (Heb. iii. 13); all are to be evangelists (Acts viii. 4; Phil. ii. 15, 16). Such is the general ministry of the body in which line we are responsible, "as good stewards of the manifold grace of God," debtors to all men.

But great mischief often results from failing to distinguish between the general sense in which all are ministers, and the special sense in which some only are qualified to minister.

The thought of the Scripture seems to be that the general ministries of the body are to be in daily exercise in all places and circumstances.

The *special* ministries seem rather to be for the assembly, and to be exercised among the saints chiefly, though not exclusively, when they "come together into one place." God hath set the one "*in the body*." God hath set the other "*in the assembly*."

"It pays to keep in with God."—D. Ross.

PROPHETIC PAPERS. No. 4.

BY F. C. BLAND.

HAVING explained briefly the dream of Nebuchadnezzar, related in Daniel ii., the next symbolic vision which we have to refer to is contained in chap. vii. The vision of the great image was given, as we read, to Nebuchadnezzar, and interpreted for him by Daniel. This vision of chap. vii. is given to Daniel himself.

It has been remarked, and I think truly, that the vision of chap. ii. represents things as man might see them; and the symbols given are metals, some precious and others useful. But the vision of chap. vii. gives these kingdoms as God sees them, viz., as beasts, varying only in destructive power and ferocity.

I doubt not that these shadow forth the history of the same empires that were spoken of in chap. ii. The description of the first empire, or Babylon, described as a lion with eagle's wings, may be easily identified with Nebuchadnezzar, as described in chap. iv., verses 34 to end.

The kingdom of the Medes and Persians which "made itself one dominion" (as the translation of "raised itself up on one side" should be), identifies it sufficiently with that kingdom which took the throne of Babylon (and of the world) from Belshazzar (chap. v. 31).

The third beast, with its four heads, will be recognised (chap. viii.) in Alexander the Great's kingdom of Greece, and the four heads, with his four generals who divided his kingdom between them after his death, to which we will have to refer again in its proper place.

The fourth beast can be none other than the Roman empire, because speaking from history, it was the only other great empire that filled the throne of the world from the time Daniel wrote up to the days of our Lord; but we have a more sure word of prophecy to identify it in Rev. xvii., where the beast with ten horns is again seen, and we are told that these are ten kings which had not, in the days of St. John, received any kingdom, and who give their power to the beast. We have not the Roman empire named as we have the Medo-Persian, and Grecian, in

chap. viii., as we shall presently see; but it is not the way of the Spirit of God to write down everything in detail for us, for then all that God is about to do in the world could be "made up" in question and answer, as one would do for a competitive examination; and the infidel might be as well made up in it as the Christian. There must be something left for faith to search out; some necessity for waiting upon God, and a need for searching His Word day by day in dependence on the teaching of His Spirit.

Nor do we who seek to expound those things profess infallibility concerning them. We have all much to learn, and, it may be, much also to unlearn; and if there is one thing above another that the search into prophetic truth teaches us, it is that we know nothing yet as we ought to know. There are many difficulties connected with the subject of prophetic interpretation; and it is those who have studied the subject most deeply who will be the most ready to admit this. But the wise man said, "It is the glory of God to conceal a matter, but the honour of kings to search it out"; and if we enter on the study of prophecy in this spirit, feeling that it is an honour which God permits His people to acquaint themselves with His counsels and His ways; He will help us in our search after His hidden wisdom, and reveal even to babes the things which He hides from the wise and prudent.

There are many prophetic truths of which we may affirm that they are "*most surely believed amongst us*," and there are others about which we may have what some one has called "a pious opinion," and which we may hold to with firmness as far as we ourselves are concerned, without forcing it on the faith of others; and there are many things about which we wait for light, and that with patience; and perhaps it may be said of us "that we cannot bear them now." But to return to our chapter.

We find in verse 8 that out of these ten kingdoms another arises, designated here as "a little horn," evidently another king, for he has eyes like the eyes of a man, and a mouth speaking great things. Here the narrative about these kingdoms is interrupted to introduce us to another vision of great

majesty and solemnity, viz., the investiture, by the "Ancient of Days," of the Son of Man with dominion, glory, and a kingdom. We can all recall to our minds our Lord's parable in Luke xix., where He tells us that a certain nobleman went into a far country to receive for himself a kingdom, and to return. Here Daniel sees in a vision of glory what the Lord teaches by a parable in Luke; and what takes place and is celebrated in song by heavenly hosts in Rev. xi. 16, &c., where Christ takes His great power and reigns. And I may be permitted to digress for a moment to point to a very remarkable typical foreshadowing of this in the first book of Kings, where Adonijah, a usurper (typical of the antichrist), seeks to place himself on David's throne; but Solomon, the true heir of the kingdom, is brought before the old king (typifying here the Ancient of Days), and receives from him the full investiture of the kingdom. Adonijah is slain, and Solomon reigns as son of David and purges out of his kingdom all things that offend. Joab who slew the righteous unavenged, and Shimei who cursed David in the time of rejection from his kingdom, are both slain, and the labour and love of Barzillai the Gileadite, hitherto unrecompensed, receives its reward; and so will it be by-and-by.

The explanation of this vision begins at verse 17, and is continued with great plainness to the end of the chapter, describing the blasphemous words spoken by the little horn, or the antichrist, against the Most High—referred to, as we know, in very similar language in 2 Thess. ii. 4, and again in Rev. xiii. 6 in like terms. The kingdom is then given to the saints of the Most High—Jewish saints—who are the subjects of Daniel's inquiry, and the inheritors of the earthly kingdom; and in verse 26 the dominion is taken away from the usurper.

In verse 25 we get the time during which antichrist is allowed to reign, "a time" (one year), "times" (two years), "and half a time" (a half year), or three years and a half, the last half of the 70th week spoken of in Daniel ix. 27.*

* I may throw out for consideration before closing this 7th chapter, the thought brought out before by others, as to whether this vision may not have a future

Now we come to chapter viii., in which we have symbolic visions of two of these four kingdoms referred to in chapter vii. Whatever difference of opinion may prevail as to the identity of the kingdoms shadowed forth in the previous chapter, there can be none about these, for verse 20 tells us that the ram having two horns are the kings of Media and Persia (I suppose the higher horn, which came up last, represents the Persian kingdom, which, though the younger kingdom of the two, was the strongest), and the great rough goat is the king of Grecia, and the horn between his eyes is the first king. This can be none other than Alexander the Great, for the four kingdoms which stand up in his stead clearly enough indicate his four generals—Ptolemy, Seleucus, Cassander, and Lysimachus, who divided his kingdom amongst them after his death. Ptolemy taking Egypt; Seleucus, Syria; Lysimachus, Turkey; and Cassander, Greece.

The introduction of these four kingdoms here, and especially the Grecian, seems to be to identify to a certain extent the place out of which the little horn or the antichrist will arise. He is spoken of in chap. ix. as the one who thinks to change times and laws, referring probably to some changes which he proposes to make in the Jewish worship, which, it must be ever remembered, must be established again in Jerusalem at this time. Here it is definitely stated that he takes away the daily sacrifice; to which is added, chap. xi. 31, that he shall place the abomination that maketh desolate. That the Lord alludes to this, and to nothing else, in Matt. xxiv. 14, is too evident to need any comment.

In verse 13, one saint asks another saint how long it shall be concerning this vision of the daily sacrifice, and the treading down of the sanctuary, and he is answered, "Unto two thousand and three hundred days"; adding, "then shall the sanctuary be cleansed."

fulfilment in the last days, and whether some four great Gentile empires now politically interested in the Eastern question, so called, on the shores of the Great, or Mediterranean Sea, may not again emerge from an agitated sea of political troubles, and contend with each other until the ten kingdoms are formed, out of one of which comes the little horn, or the antichrist. See an interesting note to this effect in "The Coming Prince."

I do not pretend to having any definite light as to when this period begins; but it appears to me that the most prominent thought here is the "cleansing of the sanctuary," which probably is not fully completed for some little time after the end of the 70th heptad.

Some have thought that this prophecy had its fulfilment in the history of Antiochus Epaphanes, while others have referred it to Mahomet; but while we do not deny that the principle of double fulfilment has many examples in Scripture, the expressions, "the time of the end," and "the last end of the indignation," are sufficient to claim for it another and darker fulfilment, and coupling these two expressions with the words, "the latter time of their kingdoms," we gather that these same four kingdoms,—Syria, Turkey, Egypt, and Greece,—will have a future and definite existence *as kingdoms*, and that they will form four of the ten kingdoms which will be on the scenes in the last days, which are designated by the ten toes of the image, and by the ten horns on the beast in Daniel vii.

Five of these kingdoms would be in the west of Europe, and will probably be England, France, Germany, Italy, and perhaps Spain and Portugal, which may, in the words of Daniel vii., "make one dominion." There must be five more in the east of Europe, four of which we have already designated, viz., Syria, Turkey, Egypt, and Greece, to which must be added a fifth, which may possibly be Bulgaria.

As we are on the subject of this kingdom, I may digress here for a moment before closing this chapter, to remark how rapidly these constitutional kingdoms seem to be forming in the compass of the prophetic earth.

Some years ago, quite within our own memories, Italy consisted of some twenty small states, and in a war of a few weeks' duration, she becomes *one* constitutional kingdom. Again, what is now the consolidated German empire consisted even at a later period of some six-and-thirty small principalities, which in an incredibly short space of time were transformed into another "clay-iron" or constitutional kingdom. I may mention that a friend of mine was giving this matter of the ten kingdoms some careful study about the year 1870. Referring

to Genesis x. 31, he noted that the nations were divided according to their races and speech. He inferred that on the same principle the nations at the end would be distinguished from each other in the same way. He took a pen and carefully marked on the map the places in the east where the Slavonic language is spoken, and it marked out, almost exactly, Bulgaria; and some ten years afterwards Bulgaria became a kingdom. I merely mention this as a remarkable coincidence, and one which may lead to further thought on the subject.

But to return (verse 23), this person who understands dark sayings, &c., is, we are told, "mighty, but not by his own power," an expression which fits very significantly the description given in 2 Thess. ii., of that "wicked one" of whom it is said his coming is *after the power of Satan*; and again, in Rev. xiii., when speaking of the beast, it says, the devil gives him "his power, and his seat, and great authority." Again, he stands up against the Prince of princes, "but he shall be broken without hand." This may indicate that his destruction is not by human agency, but as we are told again in 2 Thess. ii., the Lord shall destroy him with the spirit of His mouth, and by the brightness of His appearing.

We have referred in some detail in a previous lecture to chap. ix., in which the most important thing to note is the chronology, and especially the break which comes in between the 26th and 27th verses. The period of three score and two weeks which began at the end of the Old Testament, or at the close of Malachi's prophecy, ends with the cutting off of the Messiah; and in point of time will synchronise with the last verses of Matt. xxiii., where the Lord takes a final leave of Jerusalem, and tells the Jews that they shall not see Him again till they shall say, "Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord." (A note on this point will be added in our next, for which we have not space here.)

The 27th verse gives the history of the 70th heptad, during which the One who now becomes the central figure in the actings of the last days—that One who comes in his own name and is received as the Messiah,—makes a covenant with the many for one heptad, or the last 7 years of this dispensa-

tion, and in the midst of the heptad, or after $3\frac{1}{2}$ years he declares himself to be God, and sits in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God. Who "the many" spoken of here may be, I must leave my readers to judge, whether they are many of the Jews who are in Jerusalem, and who are deceived by him, while the elect are not (Matt. xxiv. 24), or whether they are many of the nations of Europe who agree to give him a septenate rule over Judea, is a matter on which I have no light; but it appears to me that it is very characteristic of the present time to limit the possession of power to a certain time, as for instance, in France and America; and the jealousy with which the whole of Europe looks on the possession of power in the east, may be a reason why the nations interested in the Eastern question would agree to a sovereignty over Judea, on the condition that its duration was limited.

TWELVE PARABLES FROM THE GOSPEL OF LUKE.

FROM chapter xiv. 1 to xvii. 10 inclusive, forms a section or division of Luke's Gospel. This section is subdivided into four discourses of the Lord Jesus, which are addressed as follows:—

- Chap. xiv. 1-24, to the Pharisees.
- " xiv. 25-35, to the multitudes.
- " xv. 1-32, to sinners.
- " xvi. 1 to chap. xvii. 10, to disciples.

Each of these discourses contains three parables, that is to say, comparisons. These comparisons are presented, sometimes in narrative form, sometimes as questions, and sometimes simply as counsel.

Throughout these chapters the Lord Jesus is seen as the Perfect Man, and as God's Witness. As the Perfect Man, He mingles with the human, social, every-day life of others. As the Witness for God, He flatters no man, insults no man, but always, and in all places, testifies to the truth, whether that truth is calculated to awaken the slumbering conscience or to bind up the broken heart.

I. The first discourse turns on the contrast between the feast of man and the feast of God. "He went into the house of one of the chief

Pharisees to eat bread on the Sabbath." Man was showing himself at his best; amiable, and sociable, and conformable to the standards of politeness set up by the world. But to the observant One, who moved in their midst, all this was "not of the Father, but of the world." Man at his best estate, civilised, educated, and religious, is exposed by the presence and words of this Man. And so the Pharisees watch Him, and He takes note of them.

First, there are certain Pharisees outside the house, and a dropsical man. It is neither human sympathy nor the desire to behold a manifestation of Divine power that keeps these Pharisees waiting. They desire to turn the miracle of healing into a subject of accusation against the Healer. He works the miracle and answers the Pharisees, so that they found nothing to say to Him again.

Inside the house it is no better. There are the guests choosing the chief reclining-places, and jealous of one another. "He put forth a parable to those who were bidden," warning them against this spirit of ambition, and exhorting them, when invited to any festivity, to go and recline in the lowest place. "For whosoever exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted."

Nor is the host animated by higher motives than his guests. He invites his rich neighbours, hoping to be invited by them in return. He has calculated carefully; but "the resurrection of the just," of which our Lord speaks to him, has not entered his calculations. Thus man's feast, stripped of its gaudy decorations, resolves itself into a lamentable exhibition of *pride* (vv. 7-11) on the one hand and *selfishness* (vv. 12-14) on the other.

One of them that reclined at the table, smitten, it may be, with compunction, exclaims: "Blessed is he that shall eat bread in the kingdom of God!" The Lord replies by uttering the third parable of this series, that which we have entitled the feast of God. Here all is different. The Host spreads His table for those who can give Him nothing in return. The guests approach, none of them having any reason to glorify themselves at the expense of the others. But, while as many as are bidden flock to man's feast, none who are merely bidden will come to God's.

"They all with one consent began to make

excuse." Doubtless these excuses are typical of the excitements, the labours, and the pleasures which fill up men's lives, and keep them from feeling their need of the Gospel. A brother, now with the Lord, used to describe them thus :—(1) The man who had bought a piece of ground without having seen it was a *speculator*, and represents the many, in our days, who pass their lives in a feverish excitement, often staking all they have on the success of a venture without knowing how it will succeed ; (2) The man who had bought five yoke of oxen, and went to prove them, was a *commercial man*, absorbed in his daily work, and having no time for the things of God ; (3) The third was a *family man*, a lover of the social hearth, finding within the four walls of his home enough to occupy his affection and shut out the thought of eternity. Evidently, if God is to have guests at His feast, He must "compel them to come in."

II. The keyword of the foregoing parable is to be found in the invitation : "Come ; for all things are now ready!" This is a concise statement of the Gospel. Truly, the law, as a creditor demanding something from man, was given through Moses ; but grace, with its rich provision for our deep need, came through Jesus Christ. "All things are now ready!" and all is freely offered. The sinner has nothing of his own to add. His only qualifications are to be *poor*, that is, unable to bring anything ; *maimed*, that is, unable to do anything ; *halt*, not able to walk ; and *blind*, not able to see.

"And there went great multitudes with Him" (v. 25). This is quite a usual result, when the grace of God is clearly proclaimed to those who are not accustomed to such preaching. For a time, at least, the multitudes are attracted. But the Lord remains undazzled by the numbers ; nor does He, like many of His followers in our days, bring pressure to bear upon those who seemed willing to listen to Him in order to persuade them to make a public profession of faith in Him. He preaches grace, but His words are seasoned with the salt of the truth. He speaks to the multitudes of the stern realities of discipleship, in such sort that the hypocritical and the half-hearted first revile and then leave Him. All this is full of instruction for us, who are commanded, indeed, to make *disciples* (Matt. xxviii. 19), but who are

nowhere commanded to make *believers*. If the lesson of the three parables of the tower (vv. 28-30), the king (vv. 31-33), and the savourless salt (vv. 34-35), had been better learnt, many an "awakening" and "revival," much talked of while it lasted, would have ended in a way less discouraging for the labourer and less dishonouring to the Lord. The false professor, in a moment of religious excitement, counts on his own strength, and rushes forward to meet dangers and temptations which he is unable to overcome. The true believer, knowing that natural force of character and favourable circumstances are of no avail (for the disciple must hold himself ready to forsake all), counts upon God, and triumphs by the power of His might.

III. The immediate effect of the three preceding parables is to split the crowd into two parties. On the one side were the tax-gatherers and sinners, who "drew near unto Him to hear Him" (xv. 1). On the other, the Pharisees and scribes—those who had riches and reputation to lose—who "murmured, saying, This man receiveth sinners, and eateth with them" (v. 2). These two verses give the key to the interpretation of the "two sons" (vv. 11-32), the first verse explaining the "younger son," and the second verse the "elder son." In other words, the story of the prodigal may be taken as the life-history of the repentant sinners spoken of in verse 1 ; while the sneers of the elder brother are only a paraphrase of the murmurs of the opponents in verse 2.

The certain man who had two sons—the third parable of the third series—is introduced by two short parables in the form of questions. One of these questions—that concerning the lost sheep—is addressed to the *men* in the crowd (vv. 3-7). The other—concerning the lost silver coin—is addressed to the *women* (vv. 8-10). The appeal made to each is founded on the leading interests of their daily life ; to the men the care of the flocks and herds, and to the women the care of the household expenses. The Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost ; and here He justifies His work on the simple, human ground, that an object *lost* multiplies its value in the eyes of the loser, while a lost thing found brings joy to the heart of the finder. "I say unto you, That likewise

joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine just persons, which have no need of repentance" (v. 7). "Likewise, I say unto you, There cometh joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth" (v. 10).

He might have defended His action on other grounds, but the argument He presents is unanswerable, and the Pharisees must have found it so. It has been suggested that, as in the scene John viii. 2-11, "they went out one by one," this may be the reason why they are first referred to as *ninety-nine* righteous persons having no need of repentance; then as the *nine* silver drachmæ which were never lost; and lastly, as *one solitary individual*—the elder son—who continues obstinately their worn-out mockeries and criticisms.

"And He said, A certain man had two sons" (v. 11). What was the difference between the younger and the elder sons of the parable? in other words, between the sinners and the self-righteous among the Lord's audience? Only a difference of time and place. Both owed everything to God, of whom they were (Acts xvii. 28) "the offspring." Both desired selfish pleasures, in which the Father had no place. The younger son seeks his pleasure in a "far country," away from everything that could remind him of the paternal authority; and there "he wastes his substance in riotous living (v. 13; cf. Job xxi. 14, 15). The elder son, on the contrary, only desires an occasional merry-making with his friends—doubtless respectable friends; a comparatively inexpensive rejoicing, and near by the father's house (v. 29). The father's *presence* at one of these little friendly repasts would have been as insupportable to him as it would have been to the prodigal in the full swing of his debauchery. Each son "goes astray," each "turns to his own way," as we all have done in times past, or, if still unsaved, are still doing. But the "way" chosen by the younger son is that which leads, even in this life, to ruin. The completeness of his ruin obliges him to reflect; reflection brings repentance, and he returns to his father, saying—"Father, I have sinned against Heaven, and in thy sight: and am no more worthy to be called thy son" (v. 21). He had meant to add—"Make me as one of thy hired servants"; but

the father interrupts him, giving full course to his joy over the son "who was dead, and is alive again; who was lost, and is found."

Meanwhile, the elder son wraps himself round in his self-righteousness, saying, "Lo, these many years do I serve (literally, slave under) thee, neither transgressed I at any time thy commandment" (v. 29). He has naturally no sympathy with the joyous welcome accorded to the returning prodigal. He is angry, and is not willing to go in. A. P. M.

TO BE CONCLUDED.

FROM EGYPT TO CANAAN.

BY JOHN RITCHIE.

THE SMITTEN ROCK.

"Thou shalt smite the rock, and there shall come water out of it, that the people may drink."—Exodus xvii. 6.

"That Rock was Christ."—I Cor. x. 4.

"MY soul doth thirst for God, the living God" (Psalm xlii. 2). "O God, Thou art my God; early will I seek Thee: my soul thirsteth for Thee, my flesh longeth for Thee in a dry and thirsty land, where no water is" (Psalm lxiii. 1).

These are the breathings of a saint of God in the wilderness; the outgoing of that Divine and heavenly life which has its source and supply in the living God. It may be truly said of it, that it came *from* God and *goes* to God. Like the water rising again to its level, its aspirations and longings ascend to the God from Whom it came, and nothing short of this will afford true satisfaction to the "new man" in the believer. Dead forms and ceremonies of religion may satisfy lifeless souls who have only a name to live while they yet are dead, but the truly heaven-born soul will pant—as the thirsting hart pants after the water brooks—for direct, personal dealing with the living God, and it will break through each rank of opposing powers of darkness until it gain its object. This will be true in less or greater measure in every child of God. It is one of the distinctive marks between the man of the world and the child of God—between those who have the Christ-life within them, and those who are dead in sin.

The lifeless professor can go on year after year using the same stereotyped forms of prayer, chanting away at the same mechanical sounds of religious words, and listening to the same barren and Christless preaching, without feeling them to be the least irksome. They suit him exactly, for he is dead to God; dead in trespasses and sins. But how different with the man who has been made a partaker of Divine life! When things are at low ebb, either in the worship of God, or in His service, he will at least feel the dearth; his soul will be unsatisfied, and he will *thirst* for God. And this is a distinctive mark between a backslidden child of God and a mere professor. The child of God may have wandered far, and grievously sinned, but he never can be happy in such a state; the professor can rest in spiritual dearth, self-satisfied. In the one case a *lamb* has stumbled into the mire and soiled its snow-white fleece, and it bleats until it is again made clean; in the other, it is the *sow* returned to her wallowing in the mire, and showing how congenial she finds it.

Thoughts such as these crowd upon the soul as we read the opening verses of Exodus xvii., and see a murmuring camp in the midst of a barren desert without a drop of water. It was unbelief that led them to complain, for their eye was off Jehovah, their God, and yet the very failure was a proof that they were out of Egypt and in the desert with God. We never read of Egyptians complaining so, nor did the sons of Israel, so long as they sat by the river of Egypt. Now they were in the place of need, where faith is tried, and where, alas! it so often fails. In spite of all their murmurings, the Lord was there and ready to satisfy the thirsty camp with water, as He had satisfied the hungry camp with manna in chapter xvi.

And so we have oftentimes found it since we began our desert life, beloved fellowsaints. Moses was commanded to take the rod wherewith he had turned the river of Egypt into blood, and smite the rock in Horeb. The rock was smitten, and the water gushed forth. The very rod, whose stroke was judgment to the Egyptians, was used in grace to bring the refreshing stream to the many thousands of Israel.

The spiritual import of this to us is very plain. "THAT ROCK WAS CHRIST" (1 Cor. x. 4). Christ smitten in judgment on the Cross for our blessing. The water is the type of the Spirit given to us, as the fruit of Christ's death and completed work. Had the rock not been smitten, the stream would have been pent up within it; and had the blessed Lord not borne the heavy stroke of judgment for us, there could have been no salvation, no possession of the Spirit of God. But blessed be His peerless Name, He who was once "stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted," has now gone up on high to be glorified in the highest heaven. The Spirit has come down as the witness of His exaltation, and of the purging of our sins (John vii. 39; Heb. x. 15); and He dwells in all believers as the Strengtheners and Sustainer of their Spiritual being.

Of Israel we read, "they did ALL drink the same Spiritual drink" (1 Cor. x. 4); and of believers now that they have been "ALL made to drink of one Spirit" (1 Cor. x. 4, R.V.). This is the birthright and the heritage of every member of the family of God. There is no such thing as a believer in Christ who has not received the Spirit. We know there are some who deny this, and endeavour to teach that certain of the people of God have not received the seal of the Holy Spirit; but this is alike opposed to the teaching of the Word, and to the experience of the saints of God. What we learn there is that—"As many as received Him (Christ), to them gave He power to become the sons of God" (John i. 12); and "*Because ye are sons*, God hath sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father" (Gal. iv. 6). It is not "because you know this or that doctrine," or "because you have attained to this measure of devotedness, or to that of holiness," but "because ye are sons," and "Ye are ALL sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus" (Gal. iii. 26, R.V.). "The Spirit Himself beareth witness with our spirit that we are children of God" (Rom. viii. 17, R.V.); and "If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is *none of His*" (Rom. viii. 9).

But we must distinguish between things that differ. The Scriptures distinguish between believers having "received the Spirit,"

and "being filled with the Spirit" (see 1 Cor. ii. 12 with Eph. v. 18); there is also a distinction made between life and growth. The life is the same in all, but the development of that life may be different in each; the Spirit of God dwells in every son of God, but He may be there in varied measures. The newborn babe has life *in Christ*, and there is no other life. Such terms as "The Higher Life," "The Heavenly Life," are misnomers, and they convey unscriptural thoughts; the life is the same in character in all, although it may vary in development and manifestation in each. The Scriptures speak of the "weak" and the "strong" (Rom. xv. 1); the "carnal" and the "spiritual" (1 Cor. iii. 1); but here it is a question of development and not of the *character* of the life received. Some, because of worldliness and false teaching, like the Corinthian and Galatian saints, are retrograding; and others, like the Thessalonians, are "growing exceedingly" and abounding in the graces of the Spirit. Such distinctions, too, are marked concerning the Spirit of God. Stephen and Barnabas were men "full of the Holy Ghost" (Acts vii. 55, xi. 24); while some at Corinth were only "babes," envying and striving with one another (1 Cor. iii. 1-3), yet even they are addressed as "sanctified in Christ Jesus, called saints"—their bodies the temple of the Holy Ghost (1 Cor. i. 2, vi. 13). We all know the difference between the tiny brook and the mighty stream overflowing its banks, although the water be the same in both. May it be ours, dear brethren, to "be filled with the Spirit" (Eph. v. 18), and to walk in the Spirit (Gal. v. 16); this is what our God has commanded us, and those who, through grace, know most of the blessed experience of this, will have the least to say about it. Like Moses, when he descended from the mount with the skin of his face shining, it will be manifest to all, and we shall not require to tell it; it will tell itself. The weary and thirsty souls we come in contact with as we pass along the desert, will get the benefit of it, for if we be drinking deep at the fountain ourselves, the living waters will flow out of us in rivers (John vii. 37, 38). This is the great need of the present hour among all who minister the

Word among the saints, and preach the Gospel to the world without. The Lord preserve us from being satisfied with sound and orthodox preaching, devoid of the quickening and life-giving power of the Spirit of God. To walk with God and serve Him thus, we need to give heed to the weighty admonitions, "Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God" (Eph. iv. 30); "Quench not the Spirit" (1 Thess. v. 19). Alas! we often do so, and this is the cause of our weakness and barrenness.

In Numbers xx. 7-11, we get further mention made of the rock. Here Moses is commanded to "*speak* to the rock, and it shall give forth its water." There was to be no second *smiting*; it was smitten once for all, and now the word was "*Speak* to the rock." But Moses *spoke* to the people—unadvisedly too—and *smote* the rock. He disobeyed God, and for this he was not allowed to enter the land of Canaan as Israel's leader. Our Rock has been once smitten, and as the result, the Spirit has been given. We do not need to ask Him to "come down," or plead with God to send Him down to dwell in us. As the *Witness* of the perfect purgation of our sins (Heb. x. 15), as the *Seal* of our present redemption, and as the *Earnest* of our future glory, He is *in* us. As the well in the garden supplies moisture to the plants, and as the river amid the fields of husbandry causes the seed to spring and grow and bear its fruit, so is the Spirit of God in the believer. He who draws nigh to God, and "speaks to the Rock," will lack no moisture; his leaf will be *green*, and like the palm tree, he will be full of sap and flourishing. The words he speaks will refresh the weary saints, and from him shall flow the stream of life to needy sinners all around. His soul shall be "like a watered garden, and like a spring of water whose waters failnot."

Dear young believer, covet to know the fulness of the Spirit of God; to drink deep of the stream that giveth health and causeth fruit; and O, eschew and shun whatever would lure you from the smitten side of Him with whom is "the fountain of life" to the "broken cisterns" of the world that fail to satisfy.

OUTLINES OF RUTH.

THIS book is a brief record of family life, and contains typical prophecy.

We have, in the first chapter, six persons mentioned whose names are significant.

Elimelech (to whom God is king); Naomi (pleasant); Mahlon (sickness); Chilion (wasted); Ruth (beauty); Orpah (neck).

Naomi—typical of backsliding Israel restored (Hosea xiv.); also, illustrative of the individual backslider restored to the full blessings of the promises of God in Christ Jesus (Luke xv. 18, 19; Psalm xxiii. 3).

Ruth—typical of the calling out of the church to be the bride of Christ (Mark x. 29, 30; Phil. iii. 14; Heb. iii. 1; Eph. i. 18; iv. 4).

Orpah—typical of the professor (John vi. 65-67; Acts xxvi. 28).

The kinsman—symbolical of the "Law"; the elders—of the "ten" commandments (Rom. vii. 10; Gal. ii. 16).

Boaz (in him is strength)—type of Christ our Redeemer, and the heavenly Bridegroom united to the bride, His church (John xvii. 20-26; Eph. v. 30; Rev. xix. 7-9).

Chapter 1.—We have Ruth's choice (verses 16-18). Chapter ii.—Her work (verse 17). Chapter iii.—Her rest (verse 1). Chapter iv.—Her honour (verse 13.) The result of the union was Obed, the ancestor of David, from whence came Christ (Matt. i. 3-6). S. B.

MATTHEW XI.

NOTES OF AN ADDRESS BY R. C. CHAPMAN.

THE least disciple of Pentecost understood the Cross of Christ better than John the Baptist; he knew Christ as the Lamb, but not as the Lamb slain.

The doctrine of the Cross does not need any proof as to its truth; man could never invent it.

Pentecost was the setting up the Kingdom of God to the eye of faith.

Chorazin, Bethsaida, and Capernaum were more wicked than Sodom, because God reckons men to be under obligation according to revelation of Himself; therefore He says, "If the mighty works which were done in you had been done in Sodom it would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes."

When the Jews cried out "Away with Him,"

their guilt was greater than any guilt seen before. When God's servant, Stephen, was stoned, he cried, "I see the Son of Man standing" the Lord of Glory rising from the throne of God to serve His suffering servant. In stoning Stephen there was the rejection of the risen Saviour and the rejection of the Holy Spirit. Their *guilt was even greater than the deed* of "Away with Him, crucify Him."

When Christ came in the flesh He shows God as the God of grace. As there is peculiar revelation of God made, so those who reject Christ will be visited with peculiar judgment. Now God says to all as to Saul, "Why persecutest thou Me"—why neglect. Don't mistake a slumbering conscience for a peaceful conscience—by God's grace made peaceful.

Men think that danger is not near because not dreaded. Men mocking at judgment brings it near. When Pharaoh was secure in his own judgment, he was nearest his destruction (Ex. xiv. 5-8). God's justice can never bend: could not bend to Christ. Can the sinner put away sin when he appears before the great white throne? Impossible. He will judge the world in righteousness by that Man whom He hath appointed. People never think who rise up morning by morning rejecting Christ that they are more guilty than those who said "Crucify Him."

How blessed that we are called to win sinners now instead of judging.

The word "give," in verse 28, suits the Giver, who is rich, and the sinner, who is poor, and all who know themselves will call themselves beggars. I delight to think that God never leaves the beggar on the dunghill.

We must break through Satan's opposing powers to get at Christ. His power lies only in this: when I think "what good thing can I do to reconcile myself to God?"

A child of God may have blessed assurance of having become a child of God and yet be troubled by self-will, by many outward causes of restlessness; but there is a *second rest* which we may all enjoy by taking the yoke of Christ upon us. We must distinguish between the yoke of Moses and the yoke of love. The Lord gives rest, and having become His children, bearing the yoke of the risen Saviour, seeking grace from Him to do His will, and to work out our own salvation from all that dis-

pleases Him. So there is nothing in our cup but sweets—rest from the bitterness of offended pride, rest from the vexation of thwarted self-will, rest from all gloomy forebodings of unbelief; salvation from everything that is not according to the mind of Christ.

If believers don't seek this rest they are always finding fault with circumstances. When we take His yoke, circumstances don't seem to us the hedge of thorns, but we find them to be servants and occasions to faith.

Christ was not only meek in His humiliation, He is now the same lowly One as in the days of His flesh.

Christ never refuses the communion of His love to those who seek it with self-abasement.

MAKE THY GLORY KNOWN.

By ALEX. STEWART, author of "Lord Jesus Christ, we seek Thy face," &c.

"Thou that dwellest between the cherubims, shine forth."—Psalm lxxx. 1.

O LAMB OF GOD! we lift our eyes
To Thee amidst the throne;
Shine on us, bid Thy light arise,
And make Thy glory known.

We know Thy work for ever done,
Ourselves alive and free,
Graced with the Spirit of the Son,
Made nigh to God in Thee.

Yet would we prove Thine instant grace,
Thy present power would feel;
Lift on us now Thy glorious face,
Thyself, O Lord! reveal.

From Thy high place of purest light,
O Lamb amidst the throne!
Shine forth upon our waiting sight,
And make Thy glory known.

"BURIED."

"Buried with Him by baptism."—Romans vi. 4.

Is it Thy will that I should be
Buried, in symbol, Lord, with Thee;
Owning Thee by this solemn sign:
Telling the world that I am Thine.

Gladly I yield obedience now,
In all things to Thy will I'd bow;
I'll follow where my Saviour led,
And humbly in His footsteps tread.

This emblematic watery grave
Shows forth His love who came to save:
And as I enter it I see
The price my Saviour paid for me.

Forth from this burial, Lord, I come,
For Thou hast triumphed o'er the tomb:
Thy resurrection life I share,
My portion is no longer here.

Oh, may I count myself to be
Dead to the sins which wounded Thee,
Dead to the pleasures of the earth
Unworthy of my heavenly birth.

Lord Jesus, when I gaze on Thee,
And all Thy radiant glory see,
The joy will far exceed the shame
I bear on earth for Thy loved name.

The above original pieces appear in the Appendix to
"The Believer's Hymn Book."

Correspondence.

AN APPARENT CONTRADICTION.

A VALUED correspondent has pointed out what he regarded as a contradiction between the teaching in "Half-hours with a Concordance" (*Witness*, page 174) and the teaching in our own "Thoughts Concerning Fellowship" (page 5). The former contending that the Church of God was not necessarily composed of all believers in a locality; the latter stating, "Whether it was at Jerusalem, amidst the lifeless remains of the Mosaic economy, or at Corinth, amidst heathenism, two things were true of the Church: it included all believers and it excluded all others." As the same apparent contradiction may occur to others we give our reply, as follows:—

The two are perfectly reconcilable—as are many such apparent contradictions in Scripture—by considering what each writes had in view to establish. Our statement was to show that no conditions existed in apostolic times analogous to what we see now: saints gathered in separation one from another into associations or sects composed partly of the unregenerate, as well as in other important respects not in accordance with the Word of God. The fact that some who were actually children of God were outside the Church on account of discipline that *was of God*, as in 1 Cor. v., or *of man*, as in 3 John 9, 10, does not affect or invalidate our contention. On the other hand, the writer of "Half-hours" sought to establish the very important distinction that exists between "the Body of Christ" and "the Church of God"; and the fact that some were outside the Church (the reason why they were out not affecting the point at all) was adduced in evidence, and that conclusively, that the two things are not identical, however closely related. ED

PRE-ARRANGEMENT OF MINISTRY.

MY DEAR SIR,—In response to R. S.'s letter in your last issue. Gift is one thing; the exercise of ministrations of gift is another. The question or arrangement is involved in the latter. The ministrations of gift in the Church has two aspects: the act—the individual ministering; and the end—that others might be edified. Hence it is inseparable from Church order and discipline. For if an *uncontrolled freedom* be given to each man there is danger of the perverse or the ignorant (claiming to have gift) speaking; and if *individual freedom* to minister gift be unjustly hindered by *Church organisation* much gift will be shut out. In either case, full and healthy edification will be thwarted. The question, then, finds its source in the nature and extent of the control the assembly can and should exercise over its ministering members. The control of the Jewish synagogue may be readily gathered from New Testament and other sources. It had its elders and deacons; but the ministry of edification was open to all, except women. The elders were the presidents, and, as such, controlled the ministry by forbidding such to speak as were not worthy, and took a general oversight to the intent that the flock might be properly fed. The Christian assembly or synagogue also had its elders, overseers, and deacons, and their duties so approximated to those of the Jewish as to leave but little doubt that the latter officials suggested the former. And in like manner the ministry of edification was open to all its members, except the women. In 1 Cor. xiv. we get a valuable insight into the usages of the Apostolic Church; only, this assembly at Corinth was probably as yet devoid of elders or overseers, and hence the presidency devolved upon its members as a whole. Here, although the freedom to speak was open to all the males—"Ye all may prophesy, one by one"—and gift superabounded—each having a "psalm," a "doctrine," a "revelation," a "tongue"—yet, in order that there should be a proper edification, the assembly (the recipient of the epistle) was to so order that of the prophets *two or three were to speak*, and that *by turn*; but if a revelation was made upon the spot to another, provision is made for him to have the *priority of speech* in the assembly. Another rule is laid down respecting the speakers in tongues: *two or three only*, in like manner, were to speak, but if *no interpreter is present* they are *not* to minister their gifts. Here, then, we have individual responsibility before the Lord to use the gift He has given, subject, when exercised in the assembly, to a judicious control on the part of the assembly, in order that the best edification may result. Here, then, is order or arrangement. Now if, as R. S. intimates, "the Holy Spirit is present (*i.e.*, in the assembly) to divide to each severally as He will";* and "this being so, it is the happy privilege of children of God, when gathered together, to wait upon the Lord for ministry in the Spirit according to the need as known to Him who searcheth hearts": then arrangement or pre-arrangement is out of the question. It is a

* In 1 Cor. xii. 7-11, this dividing of the Spirit refers to His distribution of gifts in the Body of Christ: making thereby one an apostle, another a prophet, another a worker of miracles, another a tongue-speaker—all more or less permanent gifts; and not to any transient action in the gathering together.

matter of a Quaker-like waiting for some inward and felt movement of the Holy Spirit to intimate when to speak and what to say; and hence this must be a *principle* to act upon, and not a general *rule* of procedure with allowable *exceptions*. And if it be the *principle*, it should be acted upon entirely. If the Holy Spirit is trusted for full guidance in a prayer or a thanksgiving, why is He shut up to the choice of a limited number of praise-forms in a given hymn book? Why to praise-forms at all? Surely this is *pre-arrangement*. Our Quaker friends are more consistent. They ignore hymn books, and significantly point out that we nowhere read of congregational singing in the New Testament Church. Of course I quite agree with both hymn books and congregational singing. I only wish to point out where R. S.'s principle lands him.—
Faithfully yours in Christ, J. W.

[Many points of interest and practical importance are here raised, to which we hope to refer in our next.—ED.]

Questions and Answers.

BAPTISM FOR THE DEAD?

QUESTION 281.—What is the meaning of 1 Cor. xv., 29, 30, "Baptised for the dead"?

Ans. A.—1 Cor. xv. 12-19, 29, Revised Version, omitting verses in parenthesis, namely, 20-28, for the moment. "Now if Christ is preached that He hath been raised from the dead, how say some among you that there is no resurrection of the dead? But if there is no resurrection of the dead, neither hath Christ been raised." He is dead—and they (who say there is no resurrection of the dead), and not only they, but all who have been baptised into His—life? no, into His death (Rom. vi.), have been baptised *for the dead*, and not for the living Christ; that is, all who have been baptised without hope in a living Christ, have been baptised for a Christ they say is dead. Again, "For if (as some among you say) the dead are not raised, neither hath Christ been raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins. Then they also which are fallen asleep in Christ have perished"; all are dead. "Why are they then (who say the dead are not raised) baptised for them?" That is, to become one with them by baptism into that death which the departed ones were baptised into. Why be baptised for them, or on account of Christ or them, if the dead rise not? What avails such a baptism? Now the force of the words in the parenthesis is seen, "But now is Christ risen, or rather now hath Christ been raised from among the dead, and become first fruits of them that slept," &c.
T. E. R.

Ans. B.—As to this question, there seems to me no difficulty when the one theme of the chapter is considered—the resurrection. If Christ be not raised (verse 17), preaching is vain (verse 14), faith is vain (verses 14-17), hope in Christ beyond this life is vain (verse 19), and baptism is vain (verse 29). Why show forth resurrection in baptism if there be no resurrected Christ? Why be baptised into the name of a dead Christ? Why be

buried with Him by baptism into death, unless we are to rise again?

Ans. C.—A resurrection of the dead had been denied, leading the apostle to argue if there be none, then Christ has not been raised, the apostolic preaching is vain (empty), and the Corinthians' faith is also vain; false witness has been borne of God, believers are yet in their sins, and they also which are fallen asleep in Christ are perished (verses 12-19). The following nine verses, 20-28, should be bracketed and read as a parenthesis, when we find the thread picked up and the argument resumed at verse 29, where the questions are asked—"Else what shall they do which are baptised for the dead, if the dead rise not at all? Why are they then baptised for the dead?" This, paraphrased, would appear to be—If those who have fallen asleep (dying either naturally or by martyrdom, as Stephen) are perished, what shall they do who in place of such have accepted the badge of discipleship, taken the oath of allegiance, in order to fill up the gaps formed in the ranks of the church militant through the removal of those now dead? Why should they be baptised for (on behalf of, or with a view to) those dead ones if their hopes of reward in a fancied resurrection have perished with themselves? "And why," continues the apostle, "stand we in jeopardy every hour," if our hopes, which also are wrapt up with resurrection, are but a fond delusion? I fight as with beasts at Ephesus; not after the manner of men who do it to obtain a corruptible crown here:—I an incorruptible by-and-by. But if the dead rise not, what is my advantage? "Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die." Let us spare ourselves the cross to-day, for to-morrow there is no crown but death. No! "It is a faithful saying: If we suffer, we shall reign with Him" (2 Tim. ii. 11, 12).—D.R.

Ans. D.—The simplest explanation of this passage lies in taking it in connection with the tenor of the argument concerning the resurrection. If the resurrection be a myth, argues the apostle, then our faith is in vain, for it depends on the truth of the resurrection. If it be untrue, what is the use of our living as we do, differently from others? He assumes the hypothesis to prove his point; for verily we could not live as we do, "in the Spirit," save for the risen Christ. In the ordinance of baptism we are baptised as those who have died and have been buried together with Christ. What use is there, he argues, in our thus taking such a position as "dead," as "baptised for the dead," as baptised to signify our death with Christ, and our newness of life in Him, if there be no "resurrection of the dead"? We forego now all our worldly estate and hope, and are baptised as those who have died unto sin and the old creation standing, in view of the resurrection estate and glory. He then shows how he lives in daily peril of his life for this hope, a needless thing if there was no resurrection. He warns them then of false teachings on this, which would lead to corrupt living (verse 33).—A.O.M.

Ans. E.—1 Cor. xv. 29 is a continuance from verse 19; the intervening nine verses being a parenthesis, showing the far-reaching effects of Christ's resurrection. From verse 13 to 18, the Spirit, by the apostle Paul,² pointing out how completely vain, or empty, the whole

Christian faith is if Christ be not risen from the dead, and verse 19 shows how entirely miserable the present testimony and the present struggle are if all is over with this life; then verse 29 continues, "For then what shall they do who are baptised for the dead ones?" The mind must be quite cleared from any thought that this is baptism in water. It is manifestly the real baptism—that is, the baptism of blood unto death, like that alluded to by Jesus in Luke xii. 50, "I have a baptism to be baptised with; and how am I straitened till it be accomplished!" and again, that in Mark x. 39, "Ye shall indeed drink of the cup that I drink of; and with the baptism that I am baptised withal shall ye be baptised." Paul says, verse 30, "And why stand we in jeopardy every hour?" In jeopardy of what? In jeopardy of being baptised, or put to death, for dead ones. James, the brother of John, had been so baptised, so also had John the Baptist and others, because they would persistently warn dead sinners; and Paul himself was in danger every day of being thus baptised. Scripture speaks of those who have not the knowledge of God and of Jesus Christ whom He has sent, as being without life and dead; e.g., "Except ye eat the flesh and drink the blood of the Son of Man ye have no life in you" (John vi. 53), "He that hath not the Son hath not life" (1 John v. 12), and again, "And you, who were dead in trespasses and sins" (Eph. ii. 1). Also, the Lord Himself spoke of those thus spiritually dead, and of those literally dead, side by side in the same sentence; e.g., "Another of His disciples said unto Him, Lord, suffer me first to go and bury my father; but Jesus said unto him, Follow Me, and let the dead bury their dead." Thus we have clear scripture analogy for the above interpretation of this seemingly difficult passage; and so we conclude that being baptised for the dead ones means suffering martyrdom for dead sinners; i.e., because they would not cease to warn and entreat them to turn to God. Then he concludes the paragraph. If the dead rise not, so utterly vain and profitless is it all, that the Divine conclusion is, make the best of the present world—"Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die."—J.S.

[EDITOR'S NOTE.—It appears to us that the true meaning of the passage must be consistent with the apostle's use elsewhere of the word "baptise." In Paul's writings it is never used in connection with sufferings, but always has reference either to the ordinance of baptism or to some aspect of its significance. The meaning must also be consistent with the literal use of the word "dead," otherwise the argument fails. We see no occasion for linking verse 29 on to verse 30. It appears to us that verse 30 passes on to a further argument. And, finally, we cannot conceive of an argument in proof of resurrection so full and exhaustive, omitting entirely to refer to that ordinance which shows at the very outset of the believer's course that in God's reckoning he is already a dead, buried, and risen man, and in which by faith he endorses the sentence of death against himself and commits himself to God as the God of resurrection, who raised up Christ, and will also raise us up by the same power. "If there be no resurrection, what shall they do who have voluntarily taken their place together with all who have believed on the Lord Jesus as dead ones buried in the grave of a dead Christ?"

INSURANCE.

QUESTION 282.—Are believers warranted from Scripture to effect insurance either upon life or goods?

Ans. A.—Life assurance is similar to investing money in an ordinary bank. The same principle is seen in both, and the object in view is the same. In either case it is making provision for the future, which Scripture warrants to a certain extent. Not only so, but it shows the sin of neglecting to do so. Look at 2 Cor. xii. 14, also, 1 Timothy v. 8. These passages show that it is incumbent upon the believer to make provision for his dependents. The Lord may come at any moment; but not to make provision on that account is to fall into the same error as the Thessalonians (1 Thess. iv. 11, 12). As to fire insurance, I might say that "time and chance happeneth unto all," and "the rain falleth alike on the just and the unjust." Saint and sinner are equally liable to have a "fire," and ought equally to be insured.—ROBT. S.

Ans. B.—I do not see anything in Scripture to warrant the child of God in effecting insurances "either upon life or goods." On the contrary, if we are dwelling in the love that spared not His only-begotten Son, we may be well assured that "all things" will be provided for us, and we shall feel no need of availing ourselves of the world's resources. Happy for us to remember that "the very hairs of our head are all numbered"; and, on the other hand, it has been well said, "If we lay up for a rainy day, we must expect the rainy day." God's way for "laying up in store a good foundation against the time to come" is to "do good, to be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate." See 1 Tim. vi. 17-19. There may, however, be occasions when effecting insurance becomes simply a matter of faithfulness to a trust committed to us, such as the insurance of property in which one may have a life interest, and which one is bound to use every available lawful means to preserve for those who are to possess it after us. This, I think, would be an exceptional case.—G.A.S.

Ans. C.—"If any provide not for his own, specially those of his own house 'or his kindred,' he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel" (1 Timothy v. 8).—"The children ought not to lay up for the parents, but the parents for the children."

[EDITOR'S NOTE.—In answer C, the first verse referred to does not appear to some to touch the point of provision for dependent ones after death, but only during life. But we hardly see that a responsibility so emphatically laid upon every man who has a "house" or "household" can be limited to the days of his life, seeing that however ardently he may hope for the Lord's return, his death is an event that may at any time leave dependent ones destitute. There will always be those who are in need and destitution to care for, brought into such circumstances by unavoidable causes. The care of God has ever been and will yet be proved by such, and the love of God in His people drawn out. But we do not see that the number of such should be increased by limiting a parent's responsibility to his lifetime, and denouncing any extension of his responsibility with a

view to provision in the event of his death as "unbelief." It seems to us, moreover, that the second verse quoted in answer C is more than a passing reference to a worldly custom, it is an evident sanction of the custom. Had it been contrary to faith to do so, the apostle could never have referred to it in the terms he does. It is difficult to draw the line as to where human provision against eventualities passes from the prudence that is consistent with faith into unbelieving fear. Locks are provisions against thieves, and are in the same category with lightning-conductors or other means of preventing or extinguishing or escaping from fire. Yet few would say that it was faithless to be so provided. Also, in cases of infectious disease, who would contend that it was faithless to take such ordinary precautions as were available to prevent it spreading in a family or to others? Yet there are circumstances in which fear of infection, involving neglect of duty, would be both faithless and criminal. We believe, as to life insurance, there are differences of method, involving the question of the unequal yoke. Any principle that entitles to share the profits of the company renders the insured, in our judgment, practically a partner. But this is not involved in the simple contract, that upon payment of a certain annual premium a certain sum will be paid upon a given date, or upon a certain eventuality taking place. Finally, we would add, "Hast thou faith? have it to thyself before God. Happy is he that condemneth not himself in that which he alloweth" (Rom. xiv. 22).

THE BLASPHEMY AGAINST THE SPIRIT.

QUESTION 283.—What is the meaning of Mat. xiii. 31-32, "The blasphemy against the Spirit"?

Ans. A.—What is meant by the blasphemy against the Spirit is made plain by preceding verses. Those Pharisees had had brought before their eyes the most manifest working of the Spirit of God in the miracles performed by the Lord Jesus, and yet, such was their deep-seated hostility to Him, that not only did they reject this convincing testimony to His Messiahship, but the *Power* (which they were unable to gainsay) they attributed to a Satanic source, saying, "This *Fellow* doth not cast out demons, but by Beelzebub the prince of the demons" (verse 24). In this terrible utterance of the Pharisees, was obviously couched the blasphemy against the Spirit, and their doom was thereby sealed. They are afterwards (verse 34) thus addressed—"O generation (offspring or brood) of vipers, how can ye, being evil, speak good things? for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh." Their words were but the indicator of their hearts' condition.—D.R.

Ans. B.—It may seem superfluous to say that no believer could possibly be guilty of blasphemy against the Spirit. Believers may, and do "grieve the Holy Spirit" (Eph. iv. 30) by continued indulgence in foolish talking and jesting, &c.; assemblies may, and do "quench the Spirit" (1 Thess. v. 19) either by encouraging or submitting to fleshly rule; a believer, by "sinning against his own body, may "defile the temple of God" (1 Cor. iii. 17); but we are satisfied that it is utterly impossible for a child of God to be guilty of the sin of blasphemy against the Holy Spirit. Here is the answer in a nut-shell: Jesus was born by the Holy

Ghost coming upon the Virgin (Luke i. 35); the Holy Ghost descended upon Him (Luke iii. 22); He was full of the Holy Ghost (Luke iv. 1); He was led by the Spirit (Luke iv. 1); the Spirit of the Lord was upon Him (Luke iv. 18); He cast out demons by the Spirit of God (Matt. xii. 28); and, ultimately, "He, through the eternal Spirit, offered Himself without spot to God" (Heb. ix. 14). In short, He lived, He ministered, He died, through the anointing of the Holy Ghost, and the blasphemy consisted in attributing His Divine power to an unclean spirit. "Because they said, He hath an unclean spirit" (Mark iii. 30).—T. B.

Ans. C.—I venture to suggest that the sin referred to (Matt. xii. 31, 32), which "shall not be forgiven" is the denial of the Spirit's testimony to Christ. The Lord had said to the Jews "The same works that I do bear witness of me" (John v.); and in the chapter before us, "If I by the Spirit of God cast out devils"; but they said, "This man doth not cast out devils, but by Beelzebub. Then it was that the Lord pronounced the solemn prophetic warning, "Whosoever speaketh a word against the Son of Man, it shall be forgiven him; but whosoever speaketh against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven." Accordingly, after the death and resurrection of Christ, repentance and remission of sins was preached in His name, with the result that numbers even of those who had been accessory to His death were saved (Acts ii., iii.), whilst upon the rest who resisted the Holy Ghost (Acts vii. 51), at length came judicial blindness and hardness of heart (Acts xxviii. 25-27), for whom nought remained but "a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation" (Heb. vi. 4-6 and Heb. x. 28, 29). Similarly shall it be with the Gentiles who continue not in God's goodness: "Thou also shalt be cut off" (Rom. xi.). And intensely solemn is the rapid advance in evil which now is becoming apparent around us on those lands so long and highly favoured. Corruption of the doctrine, with a general lifeless profession of Christianity, has long been; but something still worse is now setting in, namely, a positive denial of the Spirit-breathed revelation in the Holy Scriptures; and this final apostasy is preparatory to the manifestation of the lawless one whom the Lord shall slay with the breath of His mouth, when in flaming fire He shall be revealed, rendering vengeance to them that know not God and that obey not the Gospel of our Lord Jesus (2 Thess. i., ii.) Mere unbelief in the Saviour, God bears long with, and to many His long-suffering is salvation; but when men blaspheme the Holy Spirit by deliberately rejecting His testimony, nothing remains for them but judgment without mercy.—R. S.

Ans. D.—This is explained by the parallel passage in Mark iii. 28-30. The blasphemy being in this case—"Because they said, He hath an unclean spirit." Blasphemy against God is speaking impiously or slightly of His works, His attributes, or His nature. The sin of attributing the agency by which the Lord Jesus performed His acts of mercy to an unclean spirit showed such a malignant state of heart that the Lord makes the solemn statement in question. Against Him, as "Son of Man," they might make wicked statements in their unbelief, and such might be forgiven; but when before their eyes the work of the Holy Spirit in thus

casting out evil spirits was manifest, to vilify His work was *unpardonable*, and will always be so, whether then or in any dispensation (or age).—A. O. M.

[EDITOR'S NOTE.—The words, "Neither in this age nor in that which is to come," seem to indicate the possibility of this sin being committed at another period as well as when Christ was upon earth. We submit the thought that when the "lawless one," by "signs, and powers, and lying wonders," seeks to prove his claim to be worshipped as God, those who attribute his lying miracles to the Spirit of God will be blasphemers of the Spirit in the sense of the passage before us, and will thus seal their own doom—see 2 Thess. ii. 8-12.]

We believe that our Question Page might be made a means of much greater usefulness than formerly. With a view to this we propose to print from time to time a selection from the questions sent to us, and we invite the help of our readers in replying to them.

We do not engage to publish all the replies sent, but we should like to publish a considerable number, and in order to this we urge the necessity of their being short, pointed, and scriptural. When different views of a subject are taken, we propose to print replies fairly representative of both sides. In such cases, with the replies before us, we may be able to add a note, helping to reconcile the two, if reconcilable, or if not, to show where either or both may be at fault. Hitherto we have not been able to notice one-tenth of the questions sent to us, but we hope in future to overtake a larger proportion.

We do not engage to publish questions that are not of somewhat general interest, or that we do not judge to be for general edification.

We invite replies to the following questions:—

What are the "earthly things" and what are the "heavenly things" referred to in John iii. 12.

Did the believers mentioned in Acts iv. 32-37 do right in selling all they had and having "all things common"? Phil. iii. 10. What is meant by being made conformable unto His death?

Can we correctly say from Scripture that the Devil is, in person, before the throne of God accusing the brethren?

We feel much encouraged by the hearty response that has been given to our invitation to our readers and correspondents to help in replying to questions. We desire to express our thanks to all who have sent answers.

These are so numerous that to publish them all would fill up the *Witness!* We must, therefore, make selection of those we think most edifying, or most aptly representative of diverse views, and we trust any correspondents whose replies do not appear will not be thereby discouraged from replying to future questions.

We particularly request that each writer will give his name and address in full, not for publication, but that we may know who it is that seeks to help, and, if desirable, that we may communicate privately.

When more than one question is replied to, let the answer to each question be upon a separate piece of paper.

Replies to appear in the May number require to be sent in not later than 15th April, and so on; the 15th of the month being always the latest to which we can defer making up for press.

We again urge the importance of replies being short; it is essential, in this particular line of things, to be concise.

We shall greatly value remembrance in prayer that special wisdom and grace may be given for this service. THE EDITOR.

TWELVE PARABLES OF LUKE.

BY A. P. MACDONALD.

SECOND PAPER.

I HAVE often wondered what the Pharisees expected next ; for they must have recognised themselves in the portrait that was being drawn. Perhaps they looked for a merciless denunciation. But no ! the Lord still speaks to them in grace. He shows them the father going out and entreating the elder son, for the father desires his presence also at the banquet. Only he *cannot* go in thereto on the ground of his own righteousness, and he *will not* go in on the ground of the father's grace. What more can his father do for him ? He can but tell him that grace does and will triumph in spite of his carping.

IV. The elder son, in the last parable of chapter xv., not satisfied with opposing the reception of his brother, takes an evil pleasure in exaggerating the sin of the latter. This is often the conduct of the religious but unregenerate man in speaking of the past life of a new convert. The narrative (v. 13) makes the simple statement that the prodigal "wasted his substance in riotous living." The elder son (v. 30) seeking by a more brutal expression to blacken his brother's misdeeds, says : "This thy son . . . which hath devoured thy living with harlots." In chapter xvi. the Lord takes up the two heads of the accusation—firstly, "he hath devoured thy living"; secondly, "with harlots"—and shows that the Pharisees were more guilty than those whom they accused.

Firstly : "he hath devoured thy living." The response comes swift and sure. "And He said also unto His disciples, There was a certain rich man which had a steward ; and the same was accused unto him that he had wasted his goods" (chap. xvi. 1). This parable of the unjust steward, always and inevitably misunderstood if the context is forgotten, is simply an indictment of the Pharisees, as stewards of God's revealed will towards Israel. They had felt the power slipping from their grasp, and they were then engaged cultivating the friendship of the rich and the influential by lowering the righteous requirements of the law to suit these people.

It was then that they made the Word of God of none effect through their tradition ; so that, for example, notwithstanding the commandment to honour father and mother, with the evident duty to support them in their old age, a man had only to make a gift to the temple (Mark vii. 11), and he was free of all obligation towards his parents. Such is the conduct of the unjust steward, who cuts down the bills owing to his master, in order that his master's debtors may receive him into their houses when he is dismissed from his employment. He is not a wise man, he is not a conscientious man, but he has a certain short-sighted prudence that draws a word of admiration from his master, a worldly man like himself. "This lord commended the unrighteous steward because he had done *prudently*," as Wicklif translates it ; or, according to Alford, "shrewdly." The latter adds : "The point brought out is not merely the shrewdness of the steward, but his lord, whose injury was wrought by this very shrewdness, praising it, for our Saviour adds, 'The children of this world'—to which category both belonged, he who conceived and he who praised the shrewdness—'are more shrewd . . . than the children of light.'"

Once it is seen that the primary object of this parable was to expose the unrighteousness of the Pharisees, and to intimate their approaching loss of stewardship, the exhortation of vv. 9-13, concerning the "Mammon of unrighteousness," will be more easily understood. The idea of unrighteousness is not now to be thought of as connected with the course of action our Lord recommends, but only of the money of whose use He now speaks. In the parable the actor acts unrighteously, and thereby is exposed the worldly-wisdom of the Jewish teachers. In the secondary application of the subject to His own disciples, it is to wealth, as to something indelibly stained with evil associations, that the epithet "unrighteous" is applied. To employ money as having to render account thereof to God—to lay it out in view of eternity—this alone is true wisdom, and will be acknowledged as such in the hour when a man "fails," and his only riches are those he has sent on before him.

"And the Pharisees also, who were covetous, heard all these things: and they derided Him" (v. 14). He therefore continues his indictment, proving that the Pharisees were not only "devourers" of the good things committed to their charge, but that their harsh word concerning the "harlots" comes back upon their own heads. He makes allusion (vv. 16-18) to a recent and special instance of their perversity, when Herod, who had put away his own wife, took unto him the wife of his brother Philip, who was then still living. John the Baptist had protested against this, and it cost him his life; but the Pharisees had condoned it to enjoy court favour. This was a flagrant case; we know besides that they had so facilitated the law of divorce that the immorality tolerated and justified by them was as odious to God as the grosser sins of the people. They might point out a repentant sinner as one who had "devoured his living with harlots," but they themselves had made merchandise of God's truth, and reduced social corruption to a science.

It may be that the mockeries of the Pharisees continued, for at length the Lord becomes very stern, and withdraws the veil that hides from their eyes the under world. The "rich man here" (vv. 19-31) is the murmurer of chap. xv. 2; the "elder son" of chap. xv. 25: the "unjust steward" of chap. xvi. 1; the mocker of chap. xvi. 14. With all his shrewdness he has not calculated on the moment when his ill-gotten gains must be left behind. The scene is between death and resurrection, "the rich man also died" in v. 22, corresponding to "when ye fail" in v. 9. No visible judgment in this life has foreshadowed the future of the two men spoken of; the wicked man remains rich, and the righteous man poor till the day of their death. Now all is changed. The rich man goes from his abundance to a place of torment, where he may beg in vain for one drop of water to cool his tongue. The beggar leaves his misery for a scene of festal joy and repose, where he, as an honoured guest, leans on the bosom of Abraham, "the father of the faithful." And already, although they are only in the intermediate state between death and resurrection (for the rich man has still five brethren alive on the earth), their destiny

is fixed, for weal or woe, for all eternity. Three words of "Father Abraham" sum up the history of the rich man for time and eternity: "Son, remember," his past; "thou art tormented," his present; "a great grief fixed," his future.

Think of it, blind leader of the blind! who art winning fame and popularity by lowering the sense of God's justice in the minds of a guilty people! Thou who dost adulterate the word of truth, preaching what suits thee and thy hearers, and explaining away the rest, listen! Thou who teachest the annihilation of the wicked, or the universal salvation of mankind, give heed! There is a man who dies and is buried, and who, after death, "lifteth up his eyes, being in torment." He does not pray for ultimate salvation. He does not even pray that he may be annihilated. He *knows* that these things are impossible, therefore he does not speak of them in his prayer. But he asks for *one instant's relief* in his suffering, and EVEN THIS IS DENIED HIM.

How came he into this place of torment? Simply that, being a student of the law of Moses, and a teacher among the children of Israel—a Pharisee in short—he had enriched himself by toning down the commandments of God and the judgment pronounced upon the law-breaker. Now he learns too late what he had not learnt, and what his five brethren with Moses and the prophets in their hands have not learnt, namely, that God never utters an idle threat, and that His warnings mean, not what a popular preacher may make them mean; but, in every jot and tittle, *what they say*.

"Then said He unto His disciples, It is impossible but that offences will come: but woe unto him through whom they come" (chap. xvii. 1). Little did the disciples think that their own successors should become "occasions of stumbling," whose far-reaching power for evil should cause the blackest deeds of the Pharisees seem insignificant by comparison. But the Lord Jesus saw it all. He saw the Pharisees shutting up the kingdom of heaven against men; but He saw also the multitudes led to everlasting destruction by those who would claim their "succession" from the very twelve who were then listening to Him. Therefore, He says to these twelve disciples, "TAKE HEED TO YOURSELVES!"

How shall they take heed? By purity: "If thy brother trespass against thee, rebuke him!" By charity: "If he repent, forgive him." But above all, by *humility*!

This is the lesson of the last parable (vv. 7-10)—humility. We have seen what discipleship is and involves (chap. xiv. 25-34); we have seen what self-seeking is and what it leads to (chap. xvi.); would we now keep clear of stumbling ourselves, and becoming in our professed service to God, a snare to others? Then let us have lowly thoughts of ourselves and our work. "So likewise ye, when ye shall have done all those things which are commanded you, say, We are unprofitable servants: we have done that which was our duty to do."

PROPHETIC PAPERS. No. 5.

BY F. C. BLAND.

IN chap. xi. we have again one of those remarkable breaks which are so common in prophetic history. Some fix it at the end of the 4th verse, others at the end of the 20th verse, and others farther on in the chapter. My own thought is, that it comes in at the end of the 4th verse, because it is after the history of Alexander's four generals that the break occurs in chap. viii., and we are at once launched into the events of the latter days. The three kings of Persia referred to in verse 2 were probably Cyrus, Cambyses, and Darius Hystaspes, the fourth king was probably Xerxes. The mighty king of verse 3 is, I take it, Alexander the Great, as we have, immediately after, the division of his kingdom into four parts, as it is stated, not for his posterity but for others beside them.

It has been sought to show that all the verses which follow have been fulfilled in the wars of the Ptolemys, but this I can in nowise believe; they may have been a foreshadowing and there may have been an incipient fulfilment in those petty contests, which were so insignificant that there would not be any apparent object in narrating them here in detail; but that they will have a future fulfilment, when the Jews are gathered back again into their own land, and the kings of the north and south will be so named because of their

geographical relation of north and south to the land of Judæa, I have no doubt whatever. Indeed, it has often struck me that the wars and rumours of wars to which our Lord refers in Matt. xxiv. as signs of the last days, when nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom, will be those which, occurring on either side of the Holy Land, will have a special interest for His people when they are gathered there again, and have become the special subjects of prophecy. As for the many wars that have taken place since the Lord spoke in Matt. xxiv. being signs of the end, which one of them could be said to be a sign of the end more than another? And how will those that are yet to be, differ from those that are past as indicating that the end is near, unless they have some special relation to that land on which the eyes of the Lord rest continually, and which has ever been and is to be the centre of His dealings with the earth? That the Jews are the people referred to in the chapter is plain from the expressions, "chosen people" and "glorious land," in verses 15 and 16; and my reason for thinking that the history of the antichrist begins in verse 21, is, that it is the history of one person down to verse 31, where the abomination of desolation referred to by our Lord in Matt. xxiv. is spoken of. We have also an allusion made in verse 23 to the league made with him, and to his acting deceitfully in connection with it, which appears to be what is referred to in chap. ix. 27, as occurring in the middle of the heptad. We have, moreover, in verses 32 and 33, both the action of the apostates and the faithful remnant, with their persecutions and martyrdom, up to the time of the end; as it is said, to try them and make them white, language very like that used in Rev. vi. about the martyred remnant who are given white robes, and to those in chap. vii., who came out of the great tribulation, and who have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. May not those who "fall" and those who "are tried" indicate these two classes of the remnant of Israel in the latter days?

I am aware that some think that the history of the wilful king of the last days does not begin in this chapter till verse 36, and it may or may not be so. I have just given my own reasons for why I think otherwise, and leave

it to the spiritual judgment of those who hear to decide for themselves. One thing is plain, and that is, that it is "the time of the end" (verse 40), and that this king, who does according to his will, plants the tabernacles of his "ephod house" (as the word "palace" should be translated) "in the glorious holy mountain"; but he comesto his end, and none shall help him.

Chap. xii., "Now at that time,"—What time? Surely, the time of the end,—we read of the intervention of Michael on behalf of the people of Israel. Whether this refers to the same action as we read of in Rev. xii. 27 or not, I do not presume to say, but that it is the same person who intervenes is evident. It is the time of the great tribulation referred to by our Lord in the gospels; for it says, in both places, that there never has been or ever will be any other like it; that at the end of it Daniel's people shall be delivered, every one found written in the book, and that the wise shall shine as the sun for ever and ever—an expression identical with that of our Lord in Matt. xiii. 43, and which probably refers to the same time and the same people.

In verse 4 Daniel is told to seal the book "until the time of the end; many shall run to and fro," it is said, "and knowledge shall be increased." I understand from those who know the Hebrew reading that this running to and fro does not refer to motion in space, but to running through the leaves of this book, and that the expression, "knowledge shall be increased," means that some of the words of the book shall leak out. Probably it is so, and that the light that God is giving His people now as to prophecy, while the book of His counsels is sealed, may answer to these words; and so, while the world is willingly ignorant of God and His ways, the wise understand them. Now, in verse 7, we have again stated, in the plainest language, that the continuance of this crisis, if I may so call it, is three years and a half, or "a time, times, and an half," that limit which, our Lord tells us, God will put to those days of unparalleled persecution and tribulation "for the elect's sake" (Matt. xxiv. 22).

The two periods of time, 1290 days and 1335 days, which are connected with the abomination of desolation, may have some reference to the time of mourning after the Jews look at Him whom they have pierced, or

to the cleansing of the sanctuary. I do not profess to have any definite light about these. But in verse 9 Daniel is told again that the words are closed up and sealed till the time of the end; and here in our lecture we will do so, turning in our next lecture to that aspect which the kingdom presents in the present time, while the King is rejected and at the right hand of God, waiting until (Psalm cx.) His enemies are made His footstool.

NOTE AS TO TABLE ON PAGE 3.

The table of chronology was intended to give, *in a rough way*, the explanation of the dates of the 70 weeks, so that those only hearing it in a lecture might be able to carry away a general idea of the subject without the necessity of entering into minute calculations.

I have thought, since the first lecture was published, that it would be well to add a note, giving the chronology as worked out by Dr. Anderson, with great accuracy, in the "Coming Prince," and proved, as it appears to me, to demonstration.

I do this because the subject is worked out by *days* there instead of by *years*, so that the matter needs no further explanation as to difference of calculation between solar and prophetic years. The dates are more critically accurate than those given in the lectures, which were intended, as I have said, rather as an approximate than a critical explanation.

F. C. B.

EXTRACT FROM "COMING PRINCE."

The time of Jerusalem's visitation had come, and she knew it not. Long ere then the nation had rejected Him, but this was the predestined day when their choice must be irrevocable; the day so distinctly signalled in Scripture as the fulfilment of Zechariah's prophecy, "Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion! shout, O daughter of Jerusalem! behold thy King cometh unto thee." Of all the days of the ministry of Christ upon earth, no other will satisfy so well the angel's words, "Unto Messiah the Prince," and the date of it can be ascertained.

In accordance with the Jewish custom, the Lord went up to Jerusalem upon 8th Nisan, "six days before the Passover." But as the 14th, on which the Paschal Supper was eaten, fell that year upon Thursday, the 8th was the preceding Friday. He must have spent the Sabbath, therefore, at Bethany; and on the evening of the 9th, after the Sabbath had ended, the supper took place in Martha's house. Upon the following day, the 10th Nisan, He entered Jerusalem, as recorded in the Gospels.

The Julian date of that 10th Nisan was Sunday the 6th April, A.D. 32. What, then, was the length of the period intervening between the issuing of the decree to rebuild Jerusalem and the public advent of "Messiah the Prince"—between the 14th March, B.C. 445, and the 6th April, A.D. 32? The interval contained *exactly, and to the very day, 173,880 days, or seven times sixty-nine prophetic years of 360 days*, the first sixty-nine weeks of Gabriel's prophecy.

The 10th Nisan in Passion week (Christ's entry into Jerusalem) was 6th April, A.D. 32. The intervening period was 476 years and 24 days (the day being reckoned inclusively, as required by the language of the prophecies and in accordance with the Jewish practice).

But, 476 × 365 = 173,740 days	-	-	-	173,740
Add 14th March to 6th April, both inclusive	-	-	-	24
„ For leap years	-	-	-	116
				173,880

And 69 weeks of prophetic years of 360 days (or $69 \times 7 \times 360$) = 173,880 days.

ROBERT ANDERSON.

BAPTISM—WHAT IS IT?

NOTES OF AN ADDRESS BY DR. MULOCK, DELIVERED
AT CHESTER.

Communicated by T. F. H. F.

Gen. iii. 7-15; Luke vii. 29, 30; Rom. vi. 3-5;
2 Cor. xiii. 14.

IN this last verse we have communion spoken of—communion in the Holy Ghost. What is communion? When I have common thoughts or common desires with you, or anyone else, I have communion. I could not have communion with a savage, because I have not his thoughts. I could not have communion with a beast, for it has no thoughts at all. If I was an unconverted man I could only have communion with those who had the same nature. Communion of the Holy Ghost is the possession of the same thoughts, or interchange of thought. God wants us to think as He thinks. "What man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? Even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God" (1 Cor. ii. 11). Hence, I must have the Spirit of God in order to know the thoughts of God. I have the Spirit of God, and it is my blessed privilege, as a possessor of that Spirit, to think the thoughts of God. Communion, then, is having the same thoughts, affections, objects, and desires.

Man, originally, was made in the image of God and after His likeness. There is a great difference between the image and likeness. Man is still the image of God—a representative of God in the world. The likeness of God is a moral thing. Man lost the likeness of God by the fall.

The great thing God desires is that we should have fellowship or communion with Him. An unsaved, unregenerate man can have no communion with God. He has not the nature of God, therefore communion is impossible. We have nothing akin to God by nature. Without the life of God and His Spirit, communion is impossible. Man in innocence had communion with God (Gen. iii. 8). God walked and talked with His creatures in the garden before the fall. But sin entered, and sentence of spiritual death was passed upon the man that sinned. Separation from God resulted, and communion ceased. Instead of

communion, man strives to hide behind the trees of the garden. God cries, "Where art thou?" You have an echo of hell in that cry. The fall severed man completely from God. The question is—Has that defilement been handed down from generation to generation? Is the child of fallen man a natural child? Yes. The Word of God says, "Shapen in iniquity and conceived in sin," "Children of wrath."

By what means can the natural man who is cut off from God, dead to God, afar off from God, and, worse than all, loving his distance, be brought into relationship and communion with Him? By death and resurrection. God lays the axe to the *root* of the tree. He cannot forgive your evil nature. It is always the same sinful thing, that can never do any good. If a gardener waters and tends a thistle, he cannot make it a tulip. It has a nature distinct from the tulip. God deals not only with the fruit, but with the root. That is what the Pharisee does not like. The Lord's plan of salvation is to lay the axe at the root; to bring the sinner—the converted, saved sinner—into His presence; to convict him, and lead him to put his hand on his mouth and cry, "Guilty, guilty!" This is the first step to eternal communion with God.

What is superstition? What is natural religion? What is the great majority of worldly religiousness? Trying to work back into God's presence without death and resurrection; to get fruit from the old evil heart that can never be changed; Christianising humanity; patching up men and women, instead of bringing death, and giving new life in resurrection.

Men cannot do without religion. In the most debased races of humanity they have their gods of wood, &c., and "they that make them are like unto them." You will never have the State without the Church. Even the "Man of Sin" must have a prophet. Man, in order to alleviate conscience, will invent a religion if he has not got it. He fails to see his utter ruin, and that no man can be justified in the sight of God. God's way is to arraign man, pass sentence upon, and execute him. The moment I accept Christ, God has executed me in Him, for it is a substitutional thing. Then He makes over

to me all that the Lord Jesus has done, having made over to Him all that I have done and am.

What is regeneration? The implantation of this Divine nature and that life which links me with Christ. I am united to Christ by the Holy Spirit. It is the same bond of union which united Christ, as man, and the Father. What an inestimable union was that!

What is baptism? Just burial—burial of that which is already dead. I do not bury anything that has life; that would be the greatest cruelty; but I bury those who have already died with Christ. Baptism is burial, and implies resurrection. God has already buried you; it has actually taken place; but there (in baptism) you confess the answer of a good conscience toward God, and that God was justified in accounting you lost, and dead, and buried. You justify Him in the plan of salvation; you tell Him that nothing avails but death and judgment. You understand then where you are; you understand that your sins have gone. But that is a small matter; the evil principle is still there. Is God going to forgive that? No. He brings it to the Cross. There you see *two* hanging; Christ and the child of God; Christ and me. No wrath would have fallen upon Christ had I not been there. "I have been crucified with Christ" (Gal. ii. 20) in the purposes of God. Not only is the fruit forgiven, but the root is judged. That would have been of little avail; but God having raised Christ to His throne, raised me with Him.

Not only my sins gone, but my standing is gone. There is no compulsion in the walk of the Spirit, except the compulsion of love. I have a new nature. The law does not apply to that. I have the law of the new creation. I am free from the old law which told me "Thou shalt not" do this and that. Baptism confesses all that. I go down into the grave with Christ. A man may say, "I hear so-and-so is dead"; but when he says, "I have seen him buried," that is corroboration. We are going to your funeral, to see you buried (to those who were to be baptised).

There is no more solemn act and responsibility than going under that water, for it is a going down with Christ into that grave. No *living* ones will, I trust, be put under the

water. Your heart and mine does not like it. All who know what baptism is by personal experience, know it is a humiliating thing. It brings nothing but shame upon you. God intends it to be so. It was a *shameful* death Christ suffered. That is what the Spirit means when He says, "*Even* the death of the Cross." It was an excruciating death; a painful, lingering, shameful death. God was showing us in that what sin is in His sight. Every time I allow that self—the root of sin—to act, I am giving a life and standing, and allowing to act that which God has crucified and buried. When I was in Australia, the lady and gentleman with whom I lived were very fond of dogs. One day I was riding through the bush, and came to a nest of wild dogs. I put two of the pups into my pockets and brought them home. They were reared, and grew; and, to all appearance, were quite tame. At last they were thought so tame that they might let them out for a run. They did so; and every one of their beautiful fowls were torn to pieces by those two dogs. They *seemed* to be tame, but their nature was untamable. You would have to give them a *new* nature before they would be really tame. Never suppose that the natural man can love a Christian. God says, "I have put *enmity* between them" (Gen. iii. 15). Never be surprised that you cannot get on with the world. The nature of the world is one thing, and the nature of the believer is another. God help us that we may be led by the Spirit, for we have the evil nature within us, and we must keep it shut up. Don't let it out. Starve it. If you were to shut up a raven and a dove together in a cage, and feed the raven, and not the dove, the raven would soon overcome the dove, for the dove would be getting weaker and weaker if you did not feed it. The raven eats carrion, which the dove would not touch. Their food is different. A Christian asks me, "Can I go to theatre, concert," &c.? I say, "If you want to give the old nature a feed, go; if you don't, don't go." Ask yourself, "Which of the two natures do I want to feed?" *Everything you do or say feeds either one or the other.* How solemn! We are truly most extraordinary beings.

(To be concluded in our next.)

THE FIRST EPISTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS.

CHAP. xiii.

NOTES OF AN ADDRESS BY J. R. C.

THE apostle introduces the subject of love in this chapter. Charity is just the old-fashioned word for love; but its meaning has become obscured, and it has degenerated into the mere idea of giving to the poor. We get to know the true meaning of the word from God's use of it. The Greek word translated "charity" occurs in no other book but the Bible. It is not found in any of the works of classical Greek writers. God has used this word, here rendered "charity," to express His own character—"God is love." It is remarkable that in all man's conceptions of God, whether it be the poor ideal embodied in the idols of the Hindoo, the Chinaman, or the African, they all agree in this, that the thought of God being a god of love is nowhere to be found. Thus we see how utterly Satan has deceived the hearts of men, and libelled and misrepresented the character of God. Love is one of His glorious attributes, and it is manifested to us in the gift of His Son. Natural affection springs from the instincts of mere natural life. The love of a mother to her offspring is a faint shadow of Divine love; but it is not Divine love. Human love seeks to enjoy its object rather than to bless it. Hence, parents spoil their children by seeking their own pleasure in them rather than their good. God's love never spoils its object. He abounds towards us not merely in love, but "in all wisdom and prudence" (Eph. i. 6). Hence, God often has to exercise severe means to effect His gracious purposes towards His children. He cannot sacrifice His righteousness to His love. We are liable to suppose that Divine love is a sentiment or feeling akin to that which we entertain towards other persons or things; but this is a mistake by which many true earnest souls have been brought into great bondage. Some one once said—"I love my wife, my children, my friends—I know it, for I feel it; but I cannot say that I feel the same love to God." The answer was—"Read God's description of *love* in 1 Cor. xiii., and see whether there is in you any-

thing which answers to *that*." As the doubting, troubled soul began to read verses 4, 5, 6, 7, the shadows passed away, for it became evident that Divine love is not a mere *sentiment*, but a principle in the soul akin to the love of God; and the doubting soul began to see that, by God's grace, there was a little of that fruit which is so beautifully portrayed in this chapter, albeit there was little of the *feeling* that is so prominent in human love, even when it is defective and evanescent.

Let us look at a few scriptures which refer to this Divine love. 1 John iv.—"Love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God" (verse 7). We see from this passage that there is no Divine love in the heart of any unregenerate person. It is a far higher thing than mere natural affection. We read in Rom. i. 31, that one of the signs of the unregenerate is being "without natural affection." God never intended grace to do away with natural affection. It comes from God, and is produced by the Spirit in the hearts of those who are born again. It is because we mistake the one for the other that we are often disappointed in one another. We have known brethren in Christ most affectionate to each other, but by and-by something happens by which they become the bitterest enemies. Divine love does not come and go with circumstances. If a man does not know God he cannot possibly have the life of God in him. Knowledge of God implies likeness to Him. Just as it is written—"We shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is." When a poor, guilty sinner trusts in Jesus he knows God, and there is implanted in his soul the Divine principle of love—he becomes "a partaker of the Divine nature."

Verse 9—"In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent His only-begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him." Divine love is here seen in activity. It does more than say that "God is love"; but that He manifested love. It is the very nature of love to manifest itself. "Because God sent His only-begotten Son." There is the measure of His love—love proved by a gift. Many of the world's gifts are no evidence of love on the part of the giver. Men have various motives for bestowing their gifts; they don't want to be behind their

neighbours, or they show favour in order to gain the commendation of their fellow-men. God gave His Son from the deep, unfathomable love of His heart. When He gives His love-gift, it is for ever—never to be withdrawn. We should not judge God's love by circumstances, but ever by the Cross of Christ.

Verse 10—"Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that God loved us, and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins." These are the characteristics of God's love. It was not manifested on account of anything in us, for everything in us by nature is obnoxious to God. It is the nature of Divine love to search out its object, to expend itself upon it. God's love could not be fully told out in connection with unfallen beings. Poor, guilty man, sunk in sin, was the object of the infinite love of God. That is not like mere human affection, which discovers, or fancies it discovers, something lovable in its object. "We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren." To love them as long as they love us is no evidence of our having passed out of death into life. Look at 2 Cor. xii. 15, where we have an evidence of real love to the brethren. The apostle says to the Corinthian saints—"I will *very gladly* spend and be spent for *you*; though the *more* abundantly I love, the *less* I be loved." There is a man who is dwelling in God, and therefore God is dwelling in Him. There is one, the source of whose love is in God Himself. There is love that is unquenchable, and that many waters cannot drown. Human love is not like that.

John xiii. 34—"A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you. . . . By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another." "If ye go to the same meeting, and hold the same doctrines?" No, that is not it; but it is, "if ye love another." That is a mark of life and discipleship. It is vain for any one to talk of being a disciple of Christ and not to have this Divine love. Jesus says—"Except a man deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me, he cannot be My disciple." Mark the two sides of this truth—*self-denial* and *Christ followed*. Divine love makes nothing of self.

Verse 16—"We have known and believed

the love that God hath to us. God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him." In connection with these words read Jude, verse 20—"Keep yourselves in the love of God." John xv. 9, 10, tells how we may keep ourselves in the love of God—"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 can only keep myself in the love of God by walking in the path of obedience. (2 John verse 6; 1 John v. 2, 3; John xiv. 15).

You see from these passages how love is bound up with obedience. The love which consents to the setting aside of the revealed will of God for the sake of peace is not Divine love according to these scriptures.

Let us consider further 1 Cor. xiii. The first three verses show that outward acts of service and self-denial have no value in the sight of God if they have not the element of love in them. It is as I am drinking in God's love to me—basking in the sunshine of this Divine love—dwelling in it, just as an empty vessel is let down into the sea it is in the water and the water is in it. Thus it is we dwell in God. His love fills our souls, and flows out to fellow-saints and to sinners. Thus God's character is reproduced in us.

Verse 1 shows the worthlessness of those gifts which amongst men are so highly esteemed, if they be not exercised in the power of this Divine love.

Verse 2 shows that the possession of knowledge and understanding, and even the faith that works miracles, all leaves the man, in God's estimate, a mere cipher, if he be not actuated by this principle of Divine love.

Verse 3 shows that human philanthropy may go the length of giving all to the poor, and religious zeal may go so far as to yield the body to the flames, and yet if *love* was not the motive it will secure no recompense; "it profiteth me nothing." Thus are we shown that love is superior to gifts—that it is indeed the "more excellent" thing. Not that Divine love will undervalue gifts or knowledge, or faith, or self-denial. Love will rather avail itself of all for blessing to others; but we do well to learn the lesson of these verses, viz., that God can only set His seal upon that which is stamped with His own character.

FUTURE, PRESENT, PAST.

WATCH-NIGHT THOUGHTS.

WHEN 1887 expired, 1888 drew its first breath. The instant of death to the one was the instant of life to the other. At the moment of transition from 1887 to 1888, the outcome of the three hundred and sixty-five days of the former became history ; but what the evolution of the three hundred and sixty-five days of the latter might bring forth remained unread, because impenetrably sealed up in the womb of the Future.

The Future is not, the Past is not. The one is ever coming, the other is ever going. Although in closest proximity, they never *have* touched and they never *can* touch each other, for the Present interposes an impassable barrier. That which would have been their apparent point of contact, had contact been possible, is to human consciousness the instant of the Present. But the duration of that Present is not more appreciable than the "twinkle of the eye," or than the "flash of the lightning." Although incessantly changing, yet the Present is ever interposed between the Future in its approach and the Past in its departure.

No other Present is there for man than the apparent point at which the Future ceases and the Past originates. Though with the Future and the Past there can be neither impact nor intersection, for contact is impossible, yet the point of time-duration between them, at their nearest approximation, is so infinitesimally minute that, to be appreciated, it has to be termed the point of contact. But, if we speak with mathematical precision, it must be confessed that such a point does not exist.

The sum of physical time-life, that is, the duration of mortality—the three score years and ten of the Psalmist—has been but an infinitude of processive Presents ; or, in other words, it has been the uninterrupted oscillation of Time's pendulum, with its unvarying measured swing, ever vibrating the Future across the Present into the Past. The Future ever approaching, with measured step, from its remotest prophetic limit, the consummation of the ages, when time shall have evolved and be no more ; the Past ever receding with corresponding step, *pari passu*, along the plane of

the moment of its own first inception, when, from the expanse of the illimitable, Time was called forth to measure off, moment by moment, the cycles, the ages, the years, which should aggregate the sum of the Future, the Present, and the Past of this planet, Earth, and of its generic race, man.

The Present, though but an instant, is co-existent with time. But, from every possible human standpoint, it is but a speck, the shortest appreciable fraction of duration ; and yet it has been, is, and will be, the vast, the all-embracing Present of the successive generations of mankind.

This dot of duration, the almost inappreciable "now," when drawn out to the length of the tick of one's chronometer, is known and spoken of as a second, a moment, an instant of time. But, it is the only *now* possessed by mortal man ; his only hold upon time. Ex. iii. 14, Ps. xc. 2, Is. lvii. 15, xl. 12-17.

But, "One there is above *all* others," The High, The Lofty One, inhabiting eternity ; The Jah, The Self-existent, who grasps and centres in Himself, as His own illimitable NOW, the Everlasting of the Past, and the Everlasting of the Future. He is God over all, blessed for evermore, The-Jehovah, The Elohim of Israel, of whom Moses and the prophets, and the Psalmist wrote, the burden of the Old Testament revelation. He is the Father, the Son, the Holy Spirit of the Gospels and of the Epistles, the Apocalypse of the New Testament. He is the Trinity in the Unity, the one true and only God of the Bible ; "the Father of lights, with whom is no variation, no shadow of turning." With Him there is neither Future nor Past. Time with Him is not, for time hath relation only to the creature, hath none to the Creator. The illimitable duration of the Future, as well as the illimitable duration of the Past, constitute His Present, His Now !

"To Him, the only God, our Saviour, through Jesus Christ our Lord, be the glory, and the majesty, the dominion and the authority, both now and into all the ages, for ever and ever, Amen" (Jude 25). W. R. V.

A SAVED, baptised, separated and gathered people were led away from the Lord by a Baalam compromise. Numbers xxiii. and xxv.

HAND IN HAND.

Isaiah xli. 13.

HOW much may be expressed by the clasp of the hand. Have we not all been, at some time or other, like frightened children in the dark, and the clasp of a strong hand has brought back courage and re-assurance? When a child is learning to walk, the clasp of a hand gives confidence as well as support. In time of difficulty and trouble it tells us we are not alone, or without one to sympathise. There is no human feeling so terrible as loneliness, and none so fraught with danger. The thought that there was no one to care, and scarcely to know, has hurried many to the suicide's grave. Solitary confinement has been more than once the all-sufficient cause of madness.

The human spirit was not meant to be alone. The Lord so constituted it that it could not be independent. He formed it for Himself, and, therefore, in such manner as should make Him necessary to it. He made it with needs that He might fill them; with the clinging we know as love that He might be its support. He would have it dependent upon Him as all creation is, but more sweetly because more consciously. Nor did He intend mankind to cling to Him merely as so many separate units. Before that happy intercourse between God and man was broken, He said, "It is not good that man should be alone" (sufficiently refuting monastic teaching), and then commenced that wonderful system of union, with its mysterious bonds, which forms society, which unites husband and wife, parent and child, binding humanity together, instead of leaving a world of separate individuals. He has made them not only dependent upon Him, but mutually dependent one upon the other. And this added joy became, as is so often the case, an added danger; and when the wife sinned, "Adam was not deceived," but love prompted him to share whatever might befall her.

When sin had separated between man and God, it was necessary to seek elsewhere that which God had intended to supply Himself, and then began the struggle for satisfaction which we see around us to-day. The human spirit at its best not being sufficient to meet

this extra demand, still less so when under the influence of Satan, the result is the sin and misery which make the history of the world little more than a history of crime. Cities were built, wealth collected, wives multiplied, music cultivated; yet the eye was not satisfied, nor the ear filled with hearing, and the heart remained unsatisfied. Man is always craving more, always inventing new forms of gratification, only to find fresh disappointment. It is true some pleasure is obtained; but the heart seeks more from them than can be legitimately expected, and, in disappointment, is driven forth again, seeking rest and finding none. This is why there is so little stability in any kind of union with the ungodly. This is why they cannot be content with their own, but must covet that which is others.' This is why they must live in envy and strife, hateful and hating one another. From the beginning of life, too often to its close, man seeks some substitute for God, some satisfaction for the loneliness which springs from being without Him.

But there comes to most a time when they are conscious that nothing has power to gratify. Only disappointment follows search for satisfaction, and the weary, hungry one loses heart to seek it, and sinks under the burden of loneliness and unutterable craving for something. "Some have found the world is vain." Loneliness for lack of human friendship is terrible enough, but it is possible to be surrounded by friends most dear, yet feel a void which they cannot fill. This is a time of great opportunity and great danger. Danger, because to the hungry soul every bitter thing is sweet; opportunity, because when the void is felt there is more inclination to listen to Him who longs to fill it. Then comes the longing for a hand-clasp in the solitude and darkness. Then, too, blessed be God, comes sometimes the first experience of that clasp, and the words are heard—"I will hold thy right hand, saying unto thee, Fear not." The joy of conversion is not only in the sense of safety, but also in the consciousness of the friendship and fellowship of the mighty God. To hear Him acknowledge Himself "I, the Lord *thy* God," is worth as much as the knowledge of deliverance from judgment. From that time there is the consciousness of personal intercourse

with the living God. From that time life need be no longer a lonely search for something which ever eludes the grasp. In every time of danger we may feel the re-assuring clasp, and hear, "Fear not, I will help thee." At all times we have a source of satisfaction from which we may drink to the full; a Friend in whom our capacity is the only limit to our enjoyment. The hand once yielded into His strong one, can lie there in fellowship and trust, drawing encouragement, strength, and support. In His hand is the soul of every living thing: need we fear? However rough, or dark, or long the way, that help is all-sufficient.

To have the hand held is the most sure and pleasant mode of guiding. The one so held is led, not driven; "Led by the Spirit of God." There is opportunity for helpful fellowship and intercourse both *in* the way and *about* the way. He would have us talk with Him concerning it. But all anxiety respecting it may be laid aside; for in placing our hands in His we have committed our way to Him, and He will not fail to undertake for us with His own unerring wisdom and love. Our anxiety and impatience sometimes make it necessary for Him to check us and hold us back, when we are presuming to lead and direct the way, instead of submitting to be led; but this, too, is in love. He knows the right pace as well as the best way. Let us see we are not hindering by seeking to turn to our own way. "Thy right hand hath holden me up."

M. M. A.

OUTLINES OF EZRA.

THIS book is divided into two distinct sections, separated from each other by a long interval of time. The first part—chapters i. to vi.—gives us an account of the first remnant returning to Jerusalem under the leadership of Zerubbabel, the rebuilding of the temple, and the suspension of it for a time through the opposition of the Samaritans; but recommenced and ultimately finished through the effectual prophesying of Haggai and Zechariah.

The second part gives us Ezra's journey to Jerusalem with a small and select company, and the reformation which he effected when there (chapters vii. to ix.).

Chapter i.—We have a remnant stirred up by the Spirit of the Lord to depart out of Babylon and go to Jerusalem, to establish the ancient order of worship in fulfilment of the prophecy of Jeremiah (Jer. xxix. 10).

Chapter ii.—The exodus of the remnant out of Babylon and their arrival at Jerusalem. Typical of believers separating themselves from corrupt, professing Christendom, and gathering together unto the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ in obedience to His word (Rev. xviii. 4, 5; 2 Tim. ii. 19-26).

Chapter iii.—Sacrifices, burnt-offerings, must be offered before the foundation of the temple is laid. Typical of Christ, who first offered Himself up as a burnt and a sin-offering e'er He lays the foundation of the church (Matt. xvi. 18; Eph. ii. 20-22). And it is alone on the ground of accomplished redemption, through the sacrifice of Christ who is the "chief corner-stone," that the believer can joy in God, or worship Him in the "beauty of holiness" (Heb. xiii. 12-16).

Chapter iv.—Adversaries cause the work to cease. Typical of the adversary, the devil, hindering the work of God (3 John 9, 10; 1 Thess. ii. 18; Acts xvii. 1-10).

Chapter v.—Zerubbabel, representative of rule; Jeshua, priesthood or worship; Haggai and Zechariah, the Word of God.

Chapter vi.—The building finished, and joy as the result. Typical of the church when completed. Then, and not till then, will her joy be full, her salvation completed (Zech. iv. 7; Eph. ii. 19-22; iv. 8-13). But, in the meantime, she commemorates her deliverance out of Egypt by celebrating the "passover" and keeping the feast of "unleavened bread," and separating from the religious world and the unbelieving Gentile (1 Cor. v. 6-8; 2 Cor. vi. 14-18).

Chapter vii.—Ezra and a remnant go up to Jerusalem. Typical of the willing, obedient heart returning to the original Divine order of worship (John iv. 21-24; Phil. iii. 1-3). There were four things characteristic of Ezra. (1) He was a "ready scribe." (2) He had a "prepared heart." (3) He was obedient to the law of the Lord Himself. (4) And he taught it in Israel. He first learned, then taught. Hence his example confirmed his teaching (Matt. xiii. 52; 2 Chron. xix. 3; 1 Tim. iv. 11-16; Col. iii. 16, 17).

Chapters viii. to x.—Ezra's confession and reformation. It was the "leaders" who had contracted the unholy alliance with the people of the land. Thus we have in this book not only a revival of the ancient order of things, but also holiness of life and walk maintained. Hence doctrine and practice, standing and state, position and condition, should characterise the assemblies of God and each believer. The prophets Haggai and Zechariah should be read with this book. S. B.

WAITING AND WATCHING.

WAITING ; yes, 'tis well to wait

For the step of Him we love :
Looking up through heaven's gate,
To the Father's throne above.
Running in the pilgrim's race,
Till we see Him face to face.

Watching through the night of pain,
Oft with sad and tearful eye,
Till the dreary night shall wane,
When the Bridegroom draweth nigh.
He is coming, watch and wait ;
Faith shall keep the open gate.

Waiting for the Bridgroom's call,
When the Church shall haste away ;
To her Lord, her life, her all ;
In that happy bridal day.
To the clouds we then shall soar ;
To be changed, and part no more.

Loving His appearing still,
Though in tears we sadly wait ;
He with joy our cup shall fill,
As we keep the open gate.
He our tears shall quickly dry,
In the twinkling of an eye.

Looking for our coming Lord,
Watching, waiting, may we be,
When according to His word,
All His glory we shall see.
Faith looks up through Heaven's gate ;
He is coming, watch and wait.

Faith Strengthened by Exercise.—The sailor, by using his eyes in looking for land, acquires great keenness of sight. Use the eye of faith in looking for your eternal heavens, and you give it greater clearness of vision. To strengthen faith, exercise faith.

SOUND IN THE FAITH.

NEVER think you are quite sound in the faith unless your principles allow and naturally lead you to make use of EVERY PART of the Word of God, whether it relate to privilege or duty. If the natural tendency of your ways be to make you shy, either of Scripture doctrines or Scripture exhortations, you may be sure that either your views are erroneous or that you do not thoroughly understand it. If you had got the right clue you would find every part of Divine revelation suited to answer a valuable end ; but if there are some texts which you *never willingly mention*, except to explain away their obvious meaning, there must be something wrong in your sentiments. T. P.

Correspondence.

PRE-ARRANGEMENT OF MINISTRY.

In the letter on this subject in last month's *Witness*, J. W. would have us conclude that the Church of God was after the pattern of the Jewish synagogue, over which, as he states, elders presided ; and that, as probably the assembly at Corinth was devoid of elders, the presidency for the control of ministry devolved upon its members as a whole.

May we not rather suppose that the omission of all reference to elders is with design? Because here all the members of the one body alike are taught to submit themselves directly to the Lord as Head, so that in an assembly thus scripturally gathered human presidency has no place.

The restrictions of I Cor. xiv. were not imposed by man, neither do we find there any warrant for the introduction of rules of our own ; and the same applies to all assemblies of God (see ch. xi. 16). The spiritual in every place are expected to acknowledge that these are the commandments of the Lord (I Cor. xiv. 37).

We read (ch. xii.)—"There are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit ; and there are diversities of administrations, but the same Lord." And, without doubt, those who truly wait upon the Lord shall know the reality of His power to control and to lead by the Spirit, so that order and edification shall be secured.

Whether in assembly or out of it, the spiritual will not be influenced by mere sudden impulse or feeling ; but they will seek to understand the mind of the Lord, and to exercise a sound judgment as to how He would have them act under all circumstances. R. S.

[We know of no passage of Scripture which affords any warrant for connecting the assembly order and worship of the New Testament with the synagogue order and worship. Attempts are made in high quarters to prove that the order of "the churches" was only a

development of synagogue worship; but there is nothing that we know of within the compass of Scripture to support the idea.

Direct responsibility of each individual member to the Head, and absolute liberty for the exercise of every gift which the Spirit has bestowed, apart from official appointment, and restrained only by rules of order which the Lord Himself imposes (1 Cor. xiv. 37), presents altogether a new order, original and Divine.

That the authority of pastors, overseers, elder-brethren, has to do with the regulation of such ministries must be fully admitted. But such control or regulation can go no further than to see that the regulations the Lord has given in His Word are not contravened. If the speaking be not to edification; if it be not intelligible; if it be fitted for the unregenerate, and therefore—the assembly being composed of believers only—inappropriate; if it be by women; if it be manifestly of the flesh and not of the Spirit; then those who rule are responsible to assert the Lord's will and so restrain the flesh, secure liberty for the spiritual, and prove that the liberty of an assembly of God is not license, and that the variety of its ministries is not disorder.—ED.]

INSURANCE.

DEAR SIR,—I have been much pained by the matter printed in the *Witness* of this month on the question of insurance, and I would respectfully ask you to seriously consider the wisdom of inserting the different opinions that exist on the Word of God and the believer's walk. The Scriptures are, in these days, made to prove anything. If we have not the Lord's mind with regard to any portion of His Word we would do well to follow the example of Daniel, as recorded in chapter ii., verses 17 to 23.

I have no doubt that the answer of A and C will be a stumbling-block to many young saints, and cause some to build again the things that they once destroyed. The Editor's note also gives an uncertain sound, from which none will be able to prepare himself for the battle. Myself, with others known to me, have been much exercised in heart about this matter of insurance; so much so that some have come out from it at no small sacrifice, and others are on the point of doing so. I will briefly notice answer A which says that "life assurance is similar to investing money in an ordinary bank." I see a great difference. In paying to a life assurance company you are looking for what you do not pay for, or in other words, it is a lottery on a large scale. If you live to old age you are the loser. If you have an early death your friends would be the gainers. But if we put money into a bank we only expect to receive our own, with usury. 2 Cor. xii. 14, and 1 Tim. v. 8 do certainly give us instruction with regard to providing for our own kindred, but do not answer the question whether entering a life assurance is the proper way of doing it. And although the apostle may sanction a worldly custom as a good thing for the world, 2 Cor. vi. 14 to first verse in chap. vii. very clearly teaches us that he would not have the saints joining the world's associations or adopting their maxims. But is a life assurance any safe-guard against coming trouble? A man may pay his shilling a week for perhaps 10 years, and then, if through accident or loss of employment he is no longer able to continue his payments, he would lose not only

his assurance but also all the money he had paid in. "It is better to trust in the Lord than to put confidence in man." "For in Him we live and move and have our being," and instead of attributing our circumstances to time and chance let us make the 23rd Psalm our own, and also give heed to the exhortation in Colossians iii. 1 to 3. This will not make us careless about our earthly relationships.

Men's hearts are failing them for fear for those things that are coming upon the earth, and for safety are banding themselves together. But what saith the Word of the Lord? Look at Isaiah viii. 9 to 13. Let saints beware lest they be carried along with "the course of this world." The just shall live by faith, without which it is impossible to please God. Luke xii. 15 to 33, are a complete answer for all saints who are in any doubt about our Abba Father's care for us, His redeemed ones. Not to provide locks to our doors, or to neglect ordinary precautions against infectious disease, would be tempting God, not trusting Him. In conclusion, I would say a word about the Scripture quoted, viz:—"Hast thou faith? have it to thyself before God." It would be as wrong to boast in our faith as it would be to boast in self-righteousness; but we do well to boast in the faithfulness and loving-kindness of the Lord, and thereby the feeble knees will be strengthened, and the weak will not be turned out of the way. R. G.

Questions and Answers.

QUESTION 284.—What are the "earthly things" and what are the "heavenly things" referred to in John iii. 12?

Ans. A.—The "earthly things" are the teachings in verses 3-8 concerning the new birth, which Nicodemus, as a teacher of Israel, ought to have known; such things as John was accustomed to teach; see verse 31. The "heavenly things" are the teachings of verses 14-18, *i.e.*, "the Gospel."—J. C.

Ans. B.—There are hundreds of questions about heaven and the unseen which the carnal mind is ever ready to make. Verse 2 shows that Nicodemus had some of these ready at hand, but was met by—"Except a man be born again, he cannot see the Kingdom of God." His cavilling only brought the truth more emphatically upon him: "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit; he cannot enter the kingdom of God," &c., a truth which reveals the corruption and utter ruin of man, as also the cleansing and life-giving power of the Spirit of God in the new birth, things believed and experienced here, hence "earthly things," and without which there is no capability of believing or receiving things beyond—"heavenly things." See 1 Cor. ii. 9, 10. "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him. But God hath revealed them unto us," &c.—H. P.

Ans. C.—I believe the "earthly things" to refer to that which had been the subject of our Lord's discourse with Nicodemus, *viz.*, the necessity of being "born again" in order to enter the kingdom of God. See Ezekiel xxxvi. 22-38. Nicodemus, as a master in

Israel, ought to have known from the scriptures of the prophets that "a new heart" and "a new spirit" would be given to them before the House of Israel would come into the possession and enjoyment of the earthly promises made of God to their fathers. But "the only-begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father," "the Son of Man, who is in heaven," had other and higher, even heavenly, things to tell. He had come down from heaven and knew the deep love of God; and to make known that infinite love, to tell it out on the Cross, was His object in coming into a ruined world. "The Son of Man must be lifted up"; but this Son of Man, lifted up for man, is the only-begotten Son given in the wondrous love of God to a lost world, "that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." This was the love that filled the heart of God and that was essentially heavenly and Divine; love that in order to encircle itself with its objects gave up the only-begotten Son, that the mighty barrier of sin may be removed, and the counsels of grace be accomplished in Divine righteousness; the result of which shall be manifest "in the dispensation of the fullness of times, when He will gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth" (Eph. i.).—G. A. S.

Ans. D.—The "earthly things" would seem to be (mainly at least) the *new birth* which the Lord Jesus had just been pressing on the conscience of Nicodemus for, while it is "from above," the scene of its accomplishment is the *earth*. It must be experienced in this world or the unregenerate must go down to eternity without a ray of hope, for "they that go down into the pit *cannot hope* for Thy truth" (Isa. xxxviii. 18). Preaching the Gospel should give earnest emphasis to this fact in these days of "pillows to all armholes" whereby the wicked are bolstered up with the promise of life (Ezek. xiii. 18-22), "*post-mortem* salvation." The same truth of which "the teacher of Israel should have been aware, was taught in the Old Testament (Ezek. xxxvi.) as that which Israel must experience so as to take possession of the Holy Land and inherit their blessing; and this fact would again stamp it as a thing connected with the earth. As to the "heavenly things," the Lord seems to give us a glimpse of them in the verses following, 12-14, which surely the natural man could not receive, and which only such as are spirit-taught can in any measure enter into. "The Son of Man came down from heaven," is speaking on earth, and was yet at the same time "in heaven" (with Divine life communicated through death), giving us at once the assertion of His true humanity and as true divinity. His connection as Son of Man with heaven suggests the thought of a fuller revelation of "heavenly things," which, since going up to the right hand of God, He has given—mediately—by the Spirit sent down. The Lord Jesus "began to do and teach" on earth (Acts i. 1), and it is He who teaches still in the later Scriptures. "If so be that ye have heard *Him*, and been taught by *Him*, as the truth is in Jesus." Through Paul especially He tells us of the "heavenly things" touching the Church's calling, portion, and hope.—D. R.

Ans. E.—Verse 11, referring to testimony, is put in the plural *we*, and although in verse 12 the Lord

appropriates all testimony to Himself (as He had a right to do), I believe He refers specially to the testimony of John the Baptist and that of Himself—first the earthly, and then the heavenly. John the Baptist's own testimony of the Lord, in verse 31, seems to bear that out; he takes the place of the man of the earth speaking of earthly things, and contrasts himself with the Lord from heaven speaking of heavenly things. In the case of both they were not received by the nation (Matt. xi. 18, 19).—J. C.

Ans. F.—The kingdom of God then preached to Israel was declared to be at hand. It was required of all in that nation, before they entered into that earthly kingdom, that they submitted to immersion in water (the baptism of repentance), and that they should believe on Christ Jesus (Acts xix. 4.) Nicodemus was one of those who had not been baptised by John the Baptist (Luke vii. 30), and the Lord told him he must be born "out of water and the Spirit" before he could enter into the kingdom—an evident allusion to the immersion of the father's in the cloud and in the sea (1 Cor. x. 1, 2), and their being brought up out of the water unto Jehovah in the wilderness—the "earthly things" which Nicodemus as a master in Israel ought to have understood. The "heavenly things" being the good news from God, addressed not merely to one nation, but to the world. His love in giving His only-begotten Son, and His power in translating from the power of darkness into the kingdom of the Son of His love *whosoever* should believe on Him. Entrance into this kingdom being not by water baptism, but by faith in Jesus the crucified One, even as the bitten Israelite *when he beheld* the serpent of brass lifted up upon a pole, *he lived* (Num. xxi. 9).—A. L.

QUESTION 285.—Did the believers mentioned in Acts iv. 32-37 do right in selling all they had, and having all things common?

Ans. A.—The "having all things common" is explained by verses 32 and 35. They did not regard their possessions as exclusively their own, but to be used for the relief of those who had need, so that their might not be among them any in want. This same duty—or rather privilege—is taught in 2 Cor. viii. 13-15. As in the wilderness the over-supply of manna in one house was to be used for supplying the lack of another house, so should it be now among the saints, "that there may be equality."—J. C.

Ans. B.—Two answers may be given to this question. One is that the period of Pentecost was the foreshadowing of "the restitution of all things spoken of by the holy prophets," when, as St. Peter said, "the times of refreshing would come from the presence of the Lord, and He would send Jesus Christ" (Acts iii. 19-21); all of which meant that the year of jubilee was near, and the millenium near, when the hand would freely forego all earthly gains and possessions. In principle it has been individually true ever since, in proportion as the Lord's coming is impressed on the heart of individuals; earthly gains and possessions in that case lose their hold, and the support of the poor and the weak, and the service of Christ, come to the front. And as to "doing right"; of

course what is spoken of with approval in Scripture is "doing right!" only that "circumstances alter cases," as is said (see 1 Tim. vi. 17, 18). However, that state of affairs, in a collective sense, soon vanished away; for there arose a *murmuring of the Grecians against the Hebrews* because their widows were neglected in the daily ministration (Acts vi.); that is, that failure soon set in, and another arrangement commenced. The other reason is that failure having thus begun, it was a prelude of the lapsed state of the church afterwards as a corporate witness on earth, which we see clearly foretold in the epistles of St. Paul to Timothy, to the Thessalonians: also in the epistles of St. Peter, St. John, and St. Jude. And so things thus fell out after the usual course from the beginning, for the more heavenly and sublime dispensations were in their origin, the more immediately they fell through, and vanished away on earth under "the wiles of the devil"; from Adam in paradise to Noah after the flood. Then, again, in "the tables of the Covenant, which was the work of God, and the writing the writing of God." Then in the legal government in the kings of Israel, the Priesthood likewise; and also the regal government committed to the Gentiles, &c., &c. But the reader, if he likes, can see more on this interesting subject in "The Structure of the Acts of the Apostles in the light of the kingdom to Israel," a little book lately published by E. Stock, Paternoster Row, London.—T. R.

Ans. C.—Unquestionably they did right. They were led by the Spirit. They honoured the Lord. Notice the 5th chapter and 1st verse; the case of Ananias and Sapphira in them is an absolute proof that the "multitude of one heart" was doing what was proper. What are we doing by not following the example set us by the early believers? Are we led by the Spirit? Are we all of one mind? Are we honouring the Lord? No. We are dishonouring the Lord, and walking in worldly-mindedness; in short, we are carnal in comparison to them, hence the great want of effect from Gospel preaching in the present day.—F. B.

Ans. D.—Acts ii. 43-45 indicates, with the passage in question, a special condition among the early Christians; a special condition of need in so many at one time having to suffer in confessing Christ, and being thrust out from home, business, professions, &c., as outcasts; and a special condition of grace, in that those who were able, sold all in order to meet the existing need. Doubtless there have been times since then when similar action has been taken, and there may be again; but it is very evident from other passages in the New Testament that this community of goods was only temporary. It served as an occasion to foster unselfish and Christlike conduct, and being spontaneous, was the more an evidence of the wonderful power that was upon them, from Him who, though He was rich, yet for their sakes became poor, to enrich them forever.—A. O. M.

Ans. E.—There cannot be the slightest doubt that they did *right*, though that is a very feeble word to express what was manifestly the precious and blessed result of their being filled with the Holy Ghost. The Lord Jesus Christ had accomplished the glorious work of redemption, and had taken His seat at the right

hand of the Majesty on high; from whence the Holy Ghost came down to bear witness of the ascended and glorified Christ, to tell of the mighty victory wrought by Him whom men had "taken, and by wicked hands had crucified and slain"; and as in the 2nd chapter, when "they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, they began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance," so "that every man heard them speak in his own language," so here, "when they had prayed . . . they were all filled with the Holy Ghost . . . and the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and one soul," &c. The confusion of Babel was triumphed over in the one case, and the selfishness of the natural heart in the other. Beautiful picture of the New Creation! Precious testimony to the accomplished work of redemption! Alas! the glory soon departed, as the next chapters show, and as everything entrusted to man has always failed. Man may try to bring about a similar state of things; but in so doing he only shows the unbelief and pride of his heart, which would persuade him to be capable of doing that without God, which God has shown man to be incapable of retaining so long as the flesh lusts against the Spirit. A glorious day is hastening when He who now sits at Jehovah's right hand, shall take to Himself His great power and reign in righteousness, and "this groaning creation shall be delivered from its bondage of corruption." Till then, be it ours not to attempt an imitation of the power which marked the first days of the church's history; but patiently to "wait for God's Son from heaven." "But to do good and to communicate forget not: for with such sacrifices God is well pleased" (Heb. xiii. 16).—G. A. S.

QUESTION 286.—What is meant by being made conformable unto His death?—Phil. iii. 10.

Ans. A.—1 Peter iv. 1., seems to be a passage of similar meaning. "Forasmuch then as Christ hath suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves likewise with the same mind: for he that hath suffered in the flesh hath ceased from sin." It was Paul's desire that himself, as well as those to whom he wrote, should have the mind of Christ (chap. ii. 5); this was also the desire of Peter for himself and the elect of the dispersion. What, then, was the mind of Christ? It was not to do His own will, but the will of Him that sent Him. It was the very opposite of pleasing Himself, or seeking the ease of, or gratification of the flesh, but He humbled Himself, and took upon Him the form of servant, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the Cross. And His example and precept is—"If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up *his cross daily*, and follow Me." To do so, was Paul's earnest resolve, and *daily* he took up his cross, *daily* he crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts, *daily* did he arm himself with the self-denying mind of Christ, and have fellowship with His sufferings. Fellowship with Christ's sufferings, because the sufferings were Christ like and for Christ's sake, and thus was Paul, in *daily* crucifying the flesh, *daily* "being made conformable unto Christ's death."—T. E. R.

P. S.—Chap. i. 25., shows He had not at this time His departure in view (2 Tim. iv. 6).

Ans. B.—All believers are dead with Christ. The apostle says (Gal. ii. 20. R.V.), "I have been crucified with Christ, and it is no longer I that live, but Christ that liveth in me." "Christ died unto sin once, but in that He liveth, He liveth unto God" (Rom. vi. 10). The believer, in being baptised, acknowledges his death with Christ, and should exhibit here, in this time state, his death to sin, the result being "to walk in newness of life." The text in question appears to be the consistent result of baptism into Christ's death; the practical side, as the R.V. reads, "becoming conformed unto His death," indicating a daily dying, a constant experience of warfare between the fleshly elements within and the new life imparted; so, continues the apostle, "that I might attain unto the resurrection *from* the dead" (not of the dead). The apostle says, not already attained or already perfect, intimating no perfection here, but realising that by dying he should live; manifesting death out of life, that as death is evident in the believer, so is resurrection life manifested. There is plain contrast here between being conformed to this age, living *in* death; and becoming conformed to His death, with the result of life *out* of death. "Knowing Him and the *power* of His resurrection." May the life of the Lord Jesus be thus manifested in our mortal bodies.—E. S. J.

Ans. C.—Paul prays, "That I may know Him, and the *power* of His resurrection, and the *fellowship* of His sufferings; being made conformable unto His death." Evidently he longs to be practically an illustration of the object God had in saving him. He therefore prays thus:—Knowing Him *intimately* leads to increased longing that He, as risen from the dead, would according to His mighty power (Eph. iv. 17-25), work in His people the consciousness of the deep meaning and blessed result of His sufferings, making them willing to follow on in the same way, and so attain similar results. Thus learning and obeying, they *become conformed unto the object He had in dying*. He endured the Cross, despising the shame, to attain an end, viz.: to glorify God and to save men. His people overcome practically by His imparted power and by fellowship in His sufferings, and are *thus* manifestly conformed to their Lord's death.—A. O. M.

Ans. D.—2 Cor. v. 7-11 explains and illustrates it.—J. C. ■

Editor's Note.—In the beautiful symbolic ordinance of baptism the believer confesses his identification with Christ in death, burial, and resurrection.—See Rom. vi. 3-5; Col. ii. 12. It represents his position according to *God's reckoning*, and he is called upon to reckon as God reckons, and by faith to accept that place of identification with Christ which grace has given him. 2 Cor. iv. 10-14, shows how fully the apostle Paul *accepted the position*. He desired nothing so ardently as to suffer and die in fellowship with the sufferings and death of Christ, that in so suffering and dying, the life also of Jesus, might be made manifest in him. Thus he exemplified the Lord's words in John xii. 25, "He that loveth his life shall lose it; he that hateth his life in this world shall keep it unto life eternal." So in verse 16 he speaks of the "inward renewing" answering to "the power of His resurrection"; and then, in verse

17 and 18, shows that he deliberately and confidently calculates that the present sufferings will be exceedingly outweighed by the future recompense. Thus pressing on in the path of rejection, reproach, self-denial, suffering, and daily dying in the very footsteps of Christ, he was "becoming conformed" to His death (see R.V.), and finally was "poured forth" (Phil. ii. 17, margin), or "offered" (2 Tim. iv. 6), dying a death that unto God was indeed "a sweet savour of Christ" (2 Cor. ii. 15).

We desire to express our thanks to all who have sent answers.

These are still numerous. We must, therefore, make selection of those we think most edifying, or most aptly representative of diverse view, and we trust any correspondents whose replies do not appear will not be thereby discouraged from replying to future questions.

We particularly request that each writer will give his name and address in full, not for publication, but that we may know who it is that seeks to help, and, if desirable, that we may communicate privately.

When more than one question is replied to, let the answer to each question be upon a separate piece of paper.

Replies to appear in the June number require to be sent in not later than 15th May, and so on; the 15th of the month being always the latest to which we can defer making up for press.

We again urge the importance of replies being *short*; it is essential, in this particular line of things, to be *concise*.

We shall greatly value remembrance in prayer that special wisdom and grace may be given for this service. THE EDITOR.

We invite replies to the following questions:—

- Can we correctly say from Scripture that the Devil is, person, before the throne of God accusing the brethren? How can division be caused "contrary to the doctrine," or what is the meaning of Rom. xvi. 16, 17? What is the real meaning of the passage, 1 John i. 7, "the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin"? Is there any word in the New Testament which teaches that at the Lords coming for His saints, only a portion of them will be taken up to be with Him? Should not prayer be made, before the assembly on "the First day of the Week" breaks up, for all sorts and conditions of men, see 1 Tim. ii. 1-6?

Three Instances of Jesus "Raising the Dead."

1. Daughter, - 12 years old, just dead.
2. Widow's son, older, on way to grave.
3. Mary's brother, manhood, four days dead.

Jesus comes upon each scene, and in

"A LITTLE WHILE"

The father has his daughter,
The widow has her son,
The sisters have their brother.

OH GLORIOUS HOPE!

1. So certain, - "I *will* come again."
2. So near, - "Yet a *very little* while."
3. Bringing blessedness untold—
"With the Lord."
"Together."
"Ever." J. G. M'V.

THE FIRST EPISTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS.

CHAP. xiii. 4-13.

NOTES OF AN ADDRESS BY J. R. C.

“LOVE suffereth long and is kind.” It is possible to suffer long and yet to be far from “kind.” “The long-suffering of God is salvation.” “He maketh His sun to rise upon the evil and the good, and sendeth rain upon the just and on the unjust.” Thus is God kind, while He suffers long. And love, if it be of God, will act after this manner, and nothing else is worthy of the vocation where-with we are called (see Eph. iv. 2); and, more wonderful still, in Col. i. 11 we are taught that the very highest and most precious fruit a saint can yield unto God, is “all patience and long-suffering with joyfulness.” Alas! how often are our attempts at long-suffering accompanied with impatience rather than “kindness,” and complainings rather than “joyfulness.” Only that grace which comes from God can act like God.

“Charity envieth not.” “Who is able to stand before envy?” (Prov. xxvii. 4). For envy the chief priests delivered Jesus unto Pilate (Matt. xxvii. 18). It was, doubtless, envy that brought Satan into the garden of Eden, that by his subtily he might mar the blessedness of the favoured pair. But love rejoices in the good of others and envies not. Envy will be driven out of our hearts if we are drinking at the fountain-head of all true love—the heart of God.

“Charity vaunteth not itself.” Divine love ignores self. The Lord Jesus never thought of Himself, of His honour, or of His ease. His one thought ever was how He might glorify God and bless others. If we are to manifest Divine love, self must even so be set aside. It is the way of love to be ever doing good to others, yet never claiming the credit of it. So it is added—“is not puffed up.” Pride from within would “vaunt itself.” Applause from without “puffs up.” But love goes on its way in meekness.

“Doth not behave itself unseemly.” Divine love is ever unassuming, modest, retiring.

“Seeketh not her own.” In writing to the Philippians Paul complained that “all seek

their own, and not the things of Jesus Christ” (Phil. ii. 20, 21). This is a subtle snare, and subversive of the love that is of God. It may be our own honour, or our own ease, or our own influence, or our own kindred, or our own meeting, or our own schemes, and so under pretext of serving the Lord there may be an apparent zeal and love, and yet so circumscribed by “that which is our own,” that it lacks the very essentials of the real grace.

“Is not easily provoked.” One who is easily provoked, or, in other words, “soon angry,” is disqualified for taking a place as an overseer in God’s assembly (Titus i. 7). If a man is easily provoked he only proves that the element of *self* is predominant, and the love that ever ignores self is, at least for the time being, extinct.

“Thinketh no evil.” To think evil of another is the next thing to speaking evil. “Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh.” If evil thoughts concerning another are in the heart they will soon be on the lip. It is written, “charity shall cover the multitude of sins” (1 Peter iv. 8). Ham was cursed in Canaan, his first-born for his sin in exposing his father’s folly. Shem and Japheth, in grace and love, walked backward and covered their father’s shame. Thus, whilst love covers the sin, it has no fellowship with it.

Under the law God said—“Thou shalt not hate thy brother in thine heart: thou shalt in any wise rebuke thy brother, and not suffer sin upon him” (Lev. xix. 16, 17). There are two ways of dealing with sin in another. You may take no notice of it to the one who commits it, but talk of it as a talebearer—this is to “hate thy brother.” The way of love is to speak of it to the one who has sinned, but to tell it to no one else.

Such love as this comes only from God, and is the manifestation in His children of His own character, therefore it is greater than all gifts.

“Rejoiceth not in iniquity (unrighteousness) but rejoiceth with the truth.” Thus love takes its stand ever on the side of “the truth,” as against all unrighteousness and error. God is light as well as love. And love that is of God can never consent to the setting aside of the truth at any price, or to countenance the darkness. Thus may the difference between

love that is genuine and love that is spurious be tested.

“Beareth (or covereth) all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things.” How lovely the character thus depicted! How opposite to that which is the ordinary way of the carnal mind! Ever seeking to cover evil rather than to expose it, or, like God Himself, if exposing it, only that it may be effectually and for ever covered. So also in “believing all things” and “hoping all things” charity will thus think, if at all possible, being in this the very opposite of that carnal judgment which imputes the worst motives, and puts the worst construction upon everything. “Enduring all things,” implies patience as well as endurance. Verse 8—“Charity never faileth: but whether there be prophecies, they shall fail.” This cannot possibly mean that anything which God hath spoken can possibly fail of its accomplishment. The connection leaves no doubt as to the meaning, which is, that the gift of prophecy would pass away, not being a permanent endowment of the Church, but like the other gifts bestowed for a specific and temporary purpose, which purpose being fulfilled they would no longer be required, and would consequently cease. Thus, prophecies and tongues or gifts (*Karismata*), would therefore be “done away,” and as a matter of fact have been “done away”; whilst knowledge, which is in part, is caused to vanish away by clearer, fuller knowledge, as the stars vanish before the rising sun.

As to the gift of prophecy, it must be borne in mind that the infant Church had not the completed Word of God as we have it. The gift of prophecy was God’s ordinance for the edifying of the Church till such time as the Scriptures should be completed; after which the work of edifying through the ministry of the Word devolves not upon the prophet, but upon the teacher. The prophet spake by direct inspiration of the Spirit of God. The teacher deals only with the written Word. Prophets uttered that which God spake through them, often not understanding what they uttered, but inquiring the meaning of it afterwards. The teacher, on the other hand, whilst he requires the enlightenment and power of the Spirit, effectually to minister the Word,

is nevertheless the intelligent exponent of the Scriptures; and whilst the prophet might utter things that God had kept secret from the foundation of the world, the teacher has no warrant to go a syllable beyond what he finds in the Scriptures of truth.

“The faith” in its entirety has been “once delivered to the saints.” God has given to us “all things that pertain to life and godliness.” This it is our privilege to guard and contend for, and woe be to him who, on the false assumption that he possesses the prophetic gift, dares to add to it.

As to the gift of tongues, God gave it at Pentecost. The God who in judgment had confounded men’s speech at Babel, now in grace bestowed this gift so that every man might hear in his own tongue the wonderful works of God. That gift has long since ceased, and though some have professed to speak in other tongues by Divine gift, the “tongue” in which they spake failed to find an interpreter. The Lord’s servants have now the laborious necessity of learning the language of the people whom they propose to evangelise. So much depends upon the intelligent rendering of the thoughts of God in other tongues, we feel that this ought always to be a special subject of prayer on behalf of foreign labourers.

PROPHETIC PAPERS. No. 6.

BY F. C. BLAND.

WE closed our last lecture with the command given to Daniel in chap. xii., to seal up the book until the time of the end. The book referred to I take to be the book of the counsels of God with regard to His dealings with Daniel’s people in the latter days, and it is sealed up until the time when they come on the scene again as the subjects of prophecy, or, in other words, during the present dispensation, when God is gathering out a heavenly people for His name.

Now, while this was always in the purpose of God, the occasion of its being brought in was on the Lord Jesus Christ being rejected by the Jews as their Messiah. He meant, therefore, to present Himself to them as such, and this is the purport of verse 8 in Rom. xv., which says, “Jesus Christ was a minister of

the circumcision for the truth of God, to confirm the promises made to the fathers"; the Gentiles glorifying God for His mercy being a subsequent thing. The last word God spoke to Israel in the Old Testament by the prophet was, "Behold, I send My messenger before My face, to prepare My way before Me." The first prophetic voice we hear in the New is that of John the Baptist saying, "Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." Elijah the prophet is promised in the last verse of the Old Testament; John, who comes in the spirit and power of Elijah, gives the first announcement of the kingdom, in the New.

It was a voice to Israel to tell them that the kingdom of heaven was at hand, or, in other words, that all was ready on God's part,—the King, grown to manhood, was amongst them,—and that the only preparation now must be on their part, viz., that they should have hearts prepared to receive a King whose reign was to be one of righteousness. When Christ was born in Bethlehem of Judea, *Herod is troubled, and all Jerusalem with him!* Why should the Jews be troubled at the birth of their promised King, seeing they had looked for His coming generation after generation? Simply because their hearts were like Herod's heart, and not fitted to receive a King who was to reign in righteousness.

Hence the necessity of the ministry of John the Baptist. God's King might have come into His kingdom with all the host of heaven in attendance on Him, and purged out of His kingdom the generation of vipers, whom John warns to flee from the wrath to come; but God will not take them unawares, and so sends John to tell them of what character the kingdom is to be; and bidding them to "bring forth fruits meet for repentance," they went down to John in Jordan, "confessing their sins." Now Israel had put themselves under the law at Sinai, and undertook to stand in their own righteousness, and to live by keeping the law; and in all the pride of their hearts reiterated the same three times, when Joshua warned them of what they undertook (Joshua xxiv.). When, therefore, they "*confessed sins*," it just meant that they had forfeited all claim to the kingdom, or any right to stand before God as *anything but sinners*.

I am indebted to a dear brother for a beautiful illustration of what John's baptism meant. It is as follows:—Suppose a man is travelling across a mountain, and wants to get to his home. He loses his way, and at last meets a man, to whom he says, "Can you guide me to my home?" The man says, "No, I cannot. All I can tell you is that *you are lost*; but sit down and wait there for a shepherd, who is coming after me, and he will tell you what you ought to do." John could tell Israel that they were ruined, and help them by this confession of sins at his baptism to put their seal publicly to that fact; but he bid them, at the same time, to wait for the One who should come after him, whose shoes he was not worthy to unloose.

This brings us to Matt. iii., where Jesus comes to John to be baptised of him. John forbade Him, and says he has need to be baptised, instead of being the baptiser. This the Lord admits; but John was sent by God, and His baptism was a Divine ordinance, and so the Lord Jesus will set the example of obedience to every command of God, simply saying, "It becometh us to fulfil all righteousness"; an incident which should shut the mouths of every one who speaks of "non-essentials" in the things of God. Baptism was not an essential to Jesus; but it was becoming, and a delight to Him to obey the will of God.

In the end of chap. iii. the Holy Ghost descends upon Him, and the voice of God declares that this is His beloved Son, in whom He is well pleased. Now God had once before a son in creation, in whom He could say He was well pleased. He finished the work of creation by creating man in His own image, and pronounced His work very good, and blessed him; but the first man sinned, and after the fall begat a son *in his own likeness*, that is, as a fallen man, and God never had looked on another man on earth well-pleasing in His sight until the second Adam appeared on the scene. It is important to note that when God had pronounced His work very good, and blessed His two first children in Eden, Satan comes out and tempts them to their fall and ruin. Now, again, after 4000 years, Satan hears God say that He is well pleased in a Man, and before the echoes of God's voice have, if we may so speak, died

away, Satan comes forth to tempt the second Adam as he did the first. The one is overcome by the tempter, the other overcomes him. As one has said, He binds the strong man; and all through the gospels He is spoiling his house, casting out demons, and repairing all the effects of sin and of the fall.

I need not dwell at any length on these temptations, which are in character the same as those with which Satan tempted the first Adam; but it is interesting to note that the three temptations are connected with—1st, His creatorship; 2nd, His authority over angels; and 3rd, His power over the world to come. Heb. i. 2, refers to the first; Heb. i. 14, to the second; and Heb. ii. 8, to the third. In the last of the three, Satan offers to bend the hearts of the kings of the earth to Him, as he will do by-and-by to the Antichrist, when he puts it into the hearts of the ten kings, spoken of in Rev. xvii., to give their kingdom and power to the beast,—that one who exalts himself above all that is called God or that is worshipped. We read in another gospel (Luke iv. 13) that the devil departed from Him for a season, and then returned again, it may be to tempt Him to refuse the cup which His Father had put into His hand to drink. May we not then put it thus—that he first tempts Him with the glories spoken of in the Old Testament, and then with the sufferings recorded in the New (1 Pet. i. 11).

I may be allowed to say a word on the practical instruction which we may gather from the Lord's temptation in the conflicts of our daily life with the tempter. The Lord's first temptation was with regard to the supply of His bodily need independently of God; and how often Satan would tempt us to earn our daily bread by some business or by some method independent of the approval and blessing of God. How he will use personal needs, or the wants of our families, to induce us to engage in some means for the supply even of our necessities about which we dared not take God into our counsel or ask His blessing. And, referring to the second temptation, how often would he tempt us to put ourselves in positions of temptation, telling us that either we are too well taught in the truth of God, or have too much experience,

to fall, or that we know God will keep us from falling. I think this refers specially to the reading of infidel or sceptical literature. God *may* keep us from being led astray by them, and no doubt if the Lord had cast Himself down from the pinnacle of the temple, the angels would have fulfilled their charge; but the obedient, dependent man will not try or test the truth of God's promise; and so He says, "Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God." I am not referring to those who have the gift of discerning error, and who read books not from curiosity but for the purpose of refuting them and delivering such as may be ensnared by them, but to those who read them because "they seek," as they say, to hear "both sides." Now, I ask, both sides of what? or both sides about whom? If I am asked to read both sides of Napoleon's history or that of any great historical character, by one interested in it, I may readily consent to do so; but if a man comes to me and asks me to read "both sides" about my wife, or children, or some dear friend, I should know how to answer him; and if the Lord has the place in our hearts which He is entitled to, I trust our hearts will rise up in indignant protest against any suggestion to read or listen to anything which detracts from the glory of His exaltation, or that more wonderful glory still (and of which I believe God is even more jealous), the glory of His humiliation.

The pinnacle of the temple was the highest place in Jerusalem, and the fall from it would have been proportionately great; and so the pinnacle of man's reason, or even our self-consciousness, when it takes the place of judging the Word of God, is a slippery place, and the fall from it would be great indeed, and bring such spiritual collapse and disintegration, that the broken bones cannot easily be reset, nor the vigour of life, it may be, ever fully restored. The third temptation noted has its application to worldly position and advancement; but as the friendship of the world is enmity to God, advancement in the world, *for worldly objects*, can only be received from the hand of "the god of this world." May the first public utterance of our Lord, "It becometh us to fulfil all righteousness," and His second, "It is written," be ever sufficient for us."

Now, after the Lord has taken His place (as described by another) as the Son well-pleasing in God's sight, "as the one anointed by the Holy Ghost, as the overcomer of Satan," and as the one (as we have before seen) descended from Abraham and David, the two great heads of Jewish promise, He begins His ministry by announcing that "the kingdom of heaven," or "the rule of the heavens" (as the most correct translation is), "is at hand"; and He proceeds at once to do the miracles which were prophesied as attendant on the setting up of the kingdom, as we read, chap. iv. 24, "they brought unto Him all that were taken with divers diseases and torments, and them which were possessed with demons, and lunatics, and had the palsy; and He healed them all."

Now the expression, "the kingdom of heaven," or "the rule of the heavens is at hand," means that heavenly principles and government were to be introduced into the earth. The heavenly King had come, and He would bring with Him nothing but heavenly principles.

If a king comes to the throne of a kingdom where there was no king before, he naturally, and as a matter of course, announces the principles of his rule. When a lord-lieutenant is sent to Ireland, he is sent to carry out certain principles of government; and it is soon announced what the Government he represents will take up—facilitate national education, or the land question, or any other matter that concerns the country which he has been sent to rule; in fact, his politics are expected to be publicly announced and understood. So when God's anointed King comes into the world proposing Himself to Israel as their King, he must likewise announce the politics of His kingdom, and they are heavenly ones. The old code which God gave to Israel is referred to—each precept of importance which was to guide the earthly people in their walk before God; and then, as was beautifully remarked, the word of authority of the Lawgiver Himself, "But I say unto you," is heard, giving heavenly precepts instead of earthly ones, saying that while murder brought danger of judgment under the earthly rule, hatred does so under the heavenly. A carnal act was *sin* in the earthly kingdom, a carnal thought is *sin* in the heavenly. Blessing was to take the place of cursing, and love

the place of hate; so that the Lord of the kingdom does not come to destroy but to fulfil. Now, we may be asked, are these principles applicable to the kingdom in its present aspect, and are they for our guidance now? I answer that they are the highest principles, and they are for the guidance of the people of the highest or heavenly calling. But while they announced the principles of the kingdom, the rejection of the King is contemplated; for, in verse 11 chap. v., His servants were to be reviled and persecuted. The rejection of the King and of His authority in this world necessarily modifies the *possibility* of carrying some of these principles out to the letter; for instance, when the Lord was present with His disciples, and when He sent them on a journey on His service (chap. x. 9, 10), He told them to take no money in their purses, nor scrip for their journey; and when they returned, He asked them if they lacked anything, and they said, "Nothing." But I need not ask any servant of God now whether he would go to the railway station and ask for a ticket, saying, "The Lord had sent him." Neither would it be right to allow a man who took your coat to take your cloak also, for that would be a greater wrong to him than to yourself, and a wrong to society, as well as an encouragement to robbery. Neither, if a man asked you to go with him a mile, does it mean that you should force yourself on him for a second mile, for that would be good for neither you nor him; but it means that in ministering to another's needs, we should be willing to go even beyond what was required of us, and it inculcates a concession to need, and not an encouragement to violence or fraud. If the King were reigning, and His rule acknowledged, we might leave these things in His hands, even to going the journey without purse or scrip; but His absence makes all the difference, for the world instead of acknowledging His authority is in rebellion against Him. It is manifest that the Lord anticipated such a state of things arising, for, in Luke xxii., when He is about to be delivered into the hands of men, He says, "Let him which hath a purse take it." The question then is, What bearing have these principles of the kingdom of heaven upon us? I would answer that we should have them all in our hearts, and carry

them out in every respect *where it is possible*, that we should look well that there be nothing in our hearts which would hinder our joyful acceptance of them to the very full, and let us take heed that we make not the rejection of the King an excuse for being indifferent to what He commands, looking to them as *the only principles* for our guidance, though we may not be able to carry them out in the letter.

These principles are eternal, and have the allegiance of every true heart during the King's absence; indeed the only place where Christ's kingdom is now acknowledged is in the hearts of His people.*

I remember once reading, when I was a child, a story in Scottish history which touched me deeply, and which I have never forgotten, which illustrates the acknowledgment of Christ's claims as Lord during His rejection.

When Robert Bruce was fleeing from the English, when they invaded Scotland, he came to a poor old Highland-woman's house, and asked for a night's lodging. "Who are you?" said she. "I am a stranger and a traveller," said the king. "All strangers and travellers are welcome here," said she, "for the sake of one." "And who is that one," said the king. "Our good King Robert the Bruce," said she, "who, though he is hunted by hounds and

horses, I acknowledge to be the rightful king of all Scotland." She could not embrace him except in her heart, but she *would if she could*; and in his rejection she acknowledges him as her rightful king. And so it is, or ought to be, with us; and we should watch with jealousy anything which would tempt us to refuse the heavenly principles, where it is possible to carry them out, during the absence of the King.

THAT WHICH WAS SPOKEN BY JEREMIAH.

MATT. xxvii. 9—"Then was fulfilled that which was spoken by Jeremy the prophet, saying, And they took the thirty pieces of silver, the price of Him that was valued, whom they of the children of Israel did value, and gave them for the potter's field, as the Lord appointed me."

On searching the book of the prophet Jeremiah, many readers are surprised to find no such prophecy written therein; and this surprise is only increased by the discovery of an almost parallel passage in the writings of another prophet, Zechariah (chap. xi. verses 12, 13).

This quotation by Matthew has often been pointed out by sceptics as an instance of manifest error in an apostolic document, and a proof that the Scriptures are, at best, inspired only in a vague and general way. "Matthew," it is alleged, "quoted from memory, and forgot the name of his author."

The simplest reply would be that it is impossible to prove that this prophecy was not first *spoken*, in these very words, by Jeremiah, and afterwards *written* by Zechariah. Contrast the words, "That which was spoken, . . . saying," etc., here, and the usual formula, "It is written," in chap. xxvi. 31 and elsewhere. Compare also the words of Zechariah himself, according to Newbery's rendering of chap. vii. 7: "Are not these the words which Jehovah cried by the hand of the former prophets, when Jerusalem was inhabited and in prosperity, and the cities thereof round about her, when men inhabited the south and the plain?"

* What I have said above is not meant to limit God as to what answers He may be pleased to give to faith, nor to teach that faith in God has a secondary place, whilst the King is rejected, as compared with what it had when the Lord was with His people, for we still "walk by faith, not by sight"; but that the King being rejected, His servants must accept the consequences of His rejection, for "the servant is not greater than his Lord."

And while God is not now interfering in miraculous power where His interests are concerned, He still is the Governor of the world, and *overrules* all, and makes even the most *apparently* untoward things fulfil His purpose; and it is a higher demand on our faith to trust Him when all seems against Him, than if we were provided for day by day as the disciples were. In Israel's day God dealt with His people *immediately*, giving them directions for every day's march and for every night's encampment; and when the Lord was on earth He dealt with His disciples in the same way. Now He governs the world *mediately*, carrying out His purposes as surely, and judging His people as carefully (though Himself unseen) as when He said to Israel—"Ye have dwelt long enough in this mount: turn you, and take your journey, and go to the mount of the Amorites" (Deut. ii. 6).

The true explanation lies, I believe, deeper; namely, in the summing-up of the utterances of two different prophets in one quotation, to which is prefixed the name of the earlier writer of the two. Two prophecies may be condensed into one, where the second prophet has only confirmed or developed the oracle rendered by the first; the real author both of the prophecies and their recapitulation being, of course, the Holy Spirit.

Thus Mark introduces the words of Mal. iii. 1 and Isa. xl. 3 with the preamble, "Even as it is written in Isaiah the prophet" (see Mark i. 2, 3, R.V.). This class of quotations shows us that the Book of God is one and indivisible, notwithstanding the "sundry times" and "divers manners" in which its different parts were originally communicated.

A glance at Zech. xi. 12, 13 should suffice to convince the reader that Matt. xxvii. 9, 10 cannot be a copy of the first-mentioned verses. In the 11th chapter of Zechariah we see Jehovah's shepherd announcing that he will no longer tend this people, and demanding his hire. (12) They weigh for his hire thirty pieces of silver—the price of a slave (see Exod. xxi. 32). Jehovah expresses His indignation at this miserable salary offered to His shepherd, by commanding it to be cast unto the potter. We should have understood the expression better, perhaps, had it been, "Cast it into the street," or, "into the mud." But the word of the Lord is, "Cast it unto the potter"; thus recalling a previous prophecy—that of Jeremiah, chap. xix.—where the potter is also spoken of. The shepherd of Zech. xi. casts the silver to the potter "in the house of the LORD," indicating that he regarded the house of the LORD to be even as a potter's field. The prophet in Jer. xix. goes forth to Tophet, in the valley of the son of Hinnom, which is by the entry of the Pottery Gate. There he breaks his earthen bottle, declaring that the Lord of Hosts was about to break the people and the city, as one breaketh a potter's vessel, that cannot be made whole again; that the dead should be buried in Tophet till there should be no place to bury; and that the houses of Jerusalem should be defiled as the place of Tophet. Jeremiah repeats the substance of this prophecy in the court of the Temple.

Now Zechariah, by the symbolic act of the shepherd, shows that the Temple itself was about to become a Tophet; indeed, it is so already in his eyes, because it is there he casts his hire. Returning to Matt. xxvii., we find (verse 5) that Judas, in the madness of his despair, thrusts himself into the inner temple, and casts down the blood money "into the sanctuary" (see R.V.) at the feet of the priests. In verse 7 we find that this money was employed in purchasing THE FIELD OF THE POTTER for a burying ground for strangers. Finally, Matthew indicates the relation existing between the prophecy of Jeremiah, that of Zechariah, and the act of Judas, by adding to his quotation the words of verse 10, which are not to be found in Zechariah: "And they gave them FOR THE FIELD OF THE POTTER (namely, that mentioned in the prophetic word), according as the Lord directed me."

There can be little doubt that Judas, as a stranger in Jerusalem, was the first to be buried in the potter's field. It would even seem, from Acts i. 16-20, that, in the providence of God, he committed suicide in Tophet itself. "This man, indeed, then got A FIELD out of the reward of unrighteousness." Just as Judas, by becoming guide to those who took Jesus, made himself ringleader in the national sin, so by being buried as an outcast in the potter's field, he became fore-runner of the national judgment. Ere long the city had become as Tophet; and the people, who denied the Holy and Righteous One, and killed the Prince of Life, were themselves broken and cast out far from their fathers' sepulchres, even as the potter's vessel was broken, and its fragments scattered, by Jeremiah.

Matt. xxvii. 9, 10 may therefore be considered as a condensed rendering of Zech. xi. 12, 13 and Jer. xix., especially verses 11, 12; but only Jeremiah, the earlier of the two prophets, is named. Had it been otherwise, and the name of the later prophet been given, no one would have taken the trouble of finding, through Zechariah, a reference to another and more ancient oracle setting forth the dire consequences to Israel of the rejection of Jehovah and His Anointed. The fathers turned aside to worship the host of heaven,

and God carried them away beyond Babylon. The sons became the betrayers and murderers of the Just One, and God scattered them among all the nations under heaven. In both cases the Temple was overthrown, the city laid waste, and the valley of the son of Hinnom covered with burial heaps.

Jeremiah xix. and Matt. xxvii. both show us the house of the Lord and the field of the potter in closest juxtaposition, and Zech. xi. is the connecting link between the two scriptures.

To the reverent student of God's Word an apparent error or contradiction is simply a cryptogram—something written in secret characters—the key of which, when found, will not only establish the entire accuracy of that Word, but also its Divine authorship. "God cannot lie." "All Scripture is God-breathed." "The Scripture cannot be broken." A. P. M.

BAPTISM—WHAT IS IT?

(Continued from page 70.)

I SEE two men in my mind's eye; one is *dead*. He has just been executed, and there he lies in the place of execution, perfectly insensible. The other is in the *condemned cell*. Every time the turnkey comes along he trembles and thinks his time is come and he is about to be led out to execution. How he trembles and fears! He is just like a condemned sinner awaiting execution. Every time he is ill, some one dies, his health fails, &c., he thinks, "Ah, here's the jailor!" The man with an awakened conscience sees at once that he is not fit to face God. What a difference between him and the dead man! The dead man has no fear. He says to the law, "You have done your worst; you can do no more." He has satisfied the law. That dead man represents the Christian. Not that he is dead actually, but he has died to the law that he might live unto God (Gal. ii. 19). When the law comes and demands of him, in thunder tones, "Pay me what thou owest," he says, "I have paid you every farthing." Supposing I gave a man up to the law for an offence; he was tried, condemned, and executed; and supposing I had power to raise him up and give him life; and that, having

done so, I said, "I am going to give you in charge for that offence," he could say, "I have now a life you cannot touch; this life is not the life in which I committed the deed." He has a resurrection life. Condemnation has no power over my Christ-life. You cannot condemn or execute the life of Christ, and that life is mine. "Buried with Him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with Him through the faith of the operation of God" (Col. ii. 12). "Condemned already," and "not condemned," for the child of God. Nothing can be condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus. These two sentences are passed upon every child of God.

What do they do who go down into the water? They justify God. They take the sentence of God, and say "Yes" to it. That sentence is "condemned already." They say, "Worthy of death; worthy of hell-fire." "As a proof that I accept the sentence of Thy holy law, I go down into that water in burial." The Pharisees *rejected* the counsel of God. The unbelieving world does that. God justifies me at conversion, and I justify God by accepting His sentence upon me. I rise up then in newness of life. There is responsibility as well as privilege.

I have died. What have I died to? What were you alive to once? You were alive to sin once. "What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?" (Rom. vi. 1, 2). I have *died to sin*.

I have died to the law. Those ten commandments were not for me to keep. The law was the strength of sin. Sin gave death its sting. Death has gone; its sting has gone; the law has gone. There is no peace in the thing which works wrath. It only applies to the old nature. The new nature delights to do God's will, delights to be holy, delights to love the children of God. If I am not so, I am living in the power of the old nature. I have been co-crucified with Christ. My sin was there, and all my hell was there, at that blessed Cross. I am dead to sin actually in God's sight.

I am also "dead to the world." The world crucified the Son of God. He crucified the world. I was crucified in the Cross to the

world. The world is a crucified world. What will be the great question at the bar of God? "What about My Son?" God will say, "I sent My only Son to them." But the world meets Him on the way, and passes Him by; His tears and groans nothing to them. They dread more the losing of five pounds, or failing in business, than losing their souls. Shall we not proclaim it before holy angels, testify it before our Father and God, magnify His grace before Him who laid the foundation of it all in the Cross? That is what you do in baptism. You justify God; you magnify Him; you glorify Him, and exalt His plan of salvation. If I knew that truth and did not obey it, I would doubt Christianity and its power if it did not draw me to obey. Tell me people are Christians, and I tell them they ought to be baptised. Remember the privilege and joy of it, and the anticipation of future reward. "Whosoever therefore shall confess Me before men, him will I also confess before My Father which is in heaven" (Matt. x. 32). You confess Him in that path of death; and now, raised out of the grave, seeking to live a holy life. What responsibility! Grace is one thing and responsibility is another. A man comes to my burial, and afterwards sees me warming myself at the world's fire like Peter. That man asks me, "Art thou not one of this man's disciples?" That is the first question the world asks you; not, perhaps, in words, but by watching your words and actions. If we have not the root of the matter in our hearts we cannot understand these things. Each one knows his own snares.

Let us remember the responsibility of the act. A great many take it as merely a matter of obedience. Obedience without knowledge is a blessed thing. What a blessed thing to know and say, "I am buried with Christ, and made conformable to His death in that water!" The brother who baptised me, as I rose up from the water feeling the shame, whispered, "As obedient children." As an obedient child I prove my love to Him. He does not want us to sing about how much we love Him. What He wants is the *proof* of it. That's the responsibility of it. There is a Cross connected with it. Speak to a worldly Christian of it, and he will say the most foolish things about it. In India the Society of Friends had a

great number of "converts," but these went in and out among their relations and countrymen without losing "caste." Other Christians went out who baptised; and, as a consequence, they had *few* converts, because the natives broke "caste" when they were baptised. Their friends would then have no more to do with them. That is what gives it its power. When the sacrifice was slain at the door of the tabernacle, and the offal, skin, &c., had to be carried right through the camp, to a place "without the camp" to be burned, it was a disgusting and shameful sight to Israel. God meant it to be shameful and loathsome, because death is the penalty of sin. When they led Jesus "outside the gate," fainting after the agony of the garden and the judgment scene, how faint and weary He was, dragged along with a rope round His neck; bleeding and torn, He endured that Cross and despised that shame for you. And is it not given to us to suffer? Is there no fellowship in His sufferings and shame? What is five minutes to the length of time He suffered? A lifetime would be but a small answer to the love of Jesus.

The death with Christ is death to *sin*, to *self*, to the *law*, to the *world*, and to the *flesh*. If they sneer and despise you, you are a partaker of Christ's sufferings. Mad and foolish in the eyes of men it may be, but well-pleasing to God, because it justifies Him, it honours Him. "The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost, be with you all. Amen" (2 Cor. xiii. 14). It is that communion into which we are brought out of death into resurrection in the pool of baptism; raised, with the water of death dripping from us, into newness of life. May it be so for His glory "till He come."

DEUTERONOMY.

THE title given to this book signifies "the law repeated"; and the words, "remember," "observe," and "do," are a key to this book, which is essentially a direction-book for the people of the Lord. Hence it is we have instruction given what was to be done with "*these words*":—(1) They were to "be in their heart"; (2) They were to

teach them diligently unto their children; (3) To talk of them at home and abroad; (4) To bind them for a sign upon their hands; (5) To write them upon the posts and gates of their house; (6) Neither were they to add unto or diminish ought from them; (7) A curse to rest upon those who disobeyed, and a blessing on those who obeyed them; (8) The king was to possess a copy, and read all the days of his life; (9) The people were to write the words of the law very plainly upon the stones they had set up when they had crossed the Jordan; (10) It was also to be read publicly at the great feast of tabernacles in the audience of all the people. And it was from this book alone the Lord quoted in His memorable conflict and signal victory over Satan (Luke iv.). Hence obedience to the Word is the characteristic of this book.

Chap. i. 9-17.—God never asked Moses to bear Israel alone. Here he lacked confidence in God. See the contrast in Christ. Verses 41-46, we have the people's presumption recalled to remembrance, illustrative of the Church, and the believer's sin becoming a standing memorial of their defeat and folly.

Chap. iv.—The Word to be held fast, and self to be taken heed to. Hence we have the Word the only guide to faith. The Lord only as the object of worship; and Christ the only refuge.

Chap. vii.—The seven nations to be destroyed lest the people should be partakers in their idolatry; and God's sovereignty and Israel's responsibility (verses 6-12).

Chap. xi.—In the previous chapter, ver. 19, they were to love the stranger. Here, in ver. 1, we have an exhortation to love the Lord and keep His commands—two Divine characteristics that should be seen in every believer.

Chap. xii.—Six times we have the word *place* mentioned where Israel should worship, illustrative of the Church's responsibility to occupy Divine ground for its worship and ministry.

Chap. xiii.—Ver. 1., illustrative of false teachers in the professing Church; ver. 6, in the house or home circle.

Chap. xvi.—We have three feasts:—(1) The passover; (2) The feast of weeks; (3) The feast of tabernacles. We have redemption, the only basis of our relationship to God; the gift of the Holy Ghost as the earnest of our

inheritance; and Israel's future blessing and joy in the land. Hence we have redemption, grace, and glory forshadowed in these feasts. Verses 18-22, illustrative of moral gifts that should be in those who take oversight or rule in the church of God; such are warned not to introduce false worship or idolatrous practices (Titus i. 9; 1 Tim. iii. 1-10).

Chap. xvii.—Presumption, self-will, and all worldly power, glory and riches deprecated and forbidden; and the same law which bound the people bound the king also.

Chap. xviii.—Christ the true Prophet in contrast to the false (Acts iii. 22).

Chap. xxi.—The killing of the heifer and the use of the blood may illustrate the application of Christ's blood to the guilty nation of Israel; and the doom of the wicked son, the future judgment of rebellious Israel, and the Christ rejected.

Chap. xxv.—Amalek, typical of the flesh, doomed to utter extinction.

Chap. xxvi. 1-11.—This will be true of Israel in the future, as it is true of us now. The Church is risen and seated in heavenly places in Christ; and while confessing what we were and where we were by nature, worship and thanksgiving should be the result, proceeding from a joyful, happy heart. God to have the first portion, then the Levite and the stranger.

Chaps. xxvii., xxviii. show God's government respecting blessing and cursing, on the ground of obedience and disobedience. The law brings a curse, the Gospel a blessing. The former condemns the sinner, the latter justifies. Hence the sinner is either under law or Christ—lost or saved.

Chap. xxxii., we have the song; chap. xxxiii., the blessing of Moses, and the tribes blessed in relation to the land. Moses and Joshua combined are a type of the Lord Jesus in death and resurrection. Nebo may signify prophetic revelation; Pisgah, exploration. Moses here illustrative of the believer's vision being filled with prophetic revelation of future promises and glory.

Israel's blessing is earthly; the Church's, heavenly (Eph. i. 3). S. B.

"*My will, not Thine, be done,*" turned Paradise into a desert. "*Thy Will, not mine, be done,*" turned the desert into a paradise, and made Gethsemane the gates of heaven.

FROM EGYPT TO CANAAN.

BY JOHN RITCHIE.

A M A L E K.

"Remember what Amalek did unto thee by the way, when ye were come out of Egypt; how he met thee by the way, and smote the hindmost of thee, even all that were *feeble behind thee*, when thou wast *faint and weary*."—Deut. xxv. 17.

"The flesh lusteth *against* the Spirit, and the Spirit *against* the flesh: for these are contrary the one to the other; that ye *may not* do the things that ye would."—Gal. v. 17., R. V.

FROM the *first* gathering of the manna, and the *first* refreshing draught of the stream that flowed from the smitten rock, Israel now pass on to other scenes—to meet the first enemy and to fight their first battle as the Lord's redeemed. They would willingly have passed on in peace to their Canaan home; they did not court the clash of war; they were not the aggressors in the fray. Amalek, a near kinsman of Israel's, according to the flesh, a grandson of Esau, now increased into a strong and warlike people—"the first of the nations" (Num. xxiv. 20)—came forth to impede the progress of Israel, and to fight against them in the desert. Notice, that this unprovoked attack came from Amalek, not from Israel. Its object was to extirpate the host of Israel, and to blot them out. It was cunningly done, for we read—"He laid wait for him in the way" (1 Sam. xv. 2). It was cowardly too, for "the feeble," the "faint and the weary" were set upon first; and the "hindmost" of the host became the prey. The lessons here our souls may learn are varied and weighty. They form part of "the things that were written aforetime for our learning," in order that we may be furnished and equipped for a wilderness warfare of which this is but the shadow.

We may look at this battle—first, in its relation to Israel; next, as the type of a war in which every believer has to share.

The enmity of Amalek against Israel was nothing new. It was only the continuation of the old struggle between the elder and the younger—the child of flesh and the child of promise, as seen in Ishmael as he persecuted Isaac; in Esau as he struggled with Jacob, from the hour of his birth and onward; and

now in Amalek against the new-born nation, redeemed and separated to be Jehovah's chosen people.

So long as Israel were in Egyptian bondage they had no fighting to do. Amalek abode in his place in peace, and his enmity slumbered; but no sooner have redemption and separation to God been accomplished, the manna tasted, and the water drunk, than he comes forth to oppose and fight. We learn then that Amalek is the foe of a redeemed and pilgrim people; that the warfare is unknown in days of bondage; and that deliverance from Pharaoh must precede war with Amalek.

The answer to this in the history and experience of the children of God is both striking and instructive. Amalek, which means "a people that licks up," is the type of the flesh. The war in Rephidim with Israel foreshadows that conflict known only to those who have been redeemed to God, delivered from the authority of darkness, and severed from the present evil world. The unconverted know nothing of it; they are under the dominion of the flesh, they serve its lusts, they do its will. It does not therefore fight its subjects, it rules over them. But from the moment of the second birth and the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, the conflict with the flesh begins. And as it was in the type so it is in the antitype—the flesh begins the struggle. The new-born soul, alive to God and pressing on along the heavenly path, would feed on the manna (Christ), and drink of the water from the rock (the Spirit) in peace; but the flesh will not allow it. "The flesh lusteth against the Spirit."

The first attack of this subtle foe is often a surprise to the young believer. He has just begun his wilderness journey with a song; the fetters of his bondage have been broken; he has eaten of the heavenly bread, and drunk of the refreshing stream. The sins and the sorrows of his former days are past, and he has lost taste for things that once charmed him in the world. Were it not for the thorns and briars that surround his feet, he would almost forget that "this world is a wilderness wide," so great is his joy, and so satisfied his soul as he walks along calmly with his God.

Of a sudden the foe is heard, and the

conflict in earnest begins. Some old habit has asserted its power; some evil suggestion like a meteor darts through the thoughts; some fleshly lust demands to be indulged. The effect on the young believer is appalling. He had never counted on this; he thought the days for such things were past. A new creature in Christ, indwelt by the Holy Spirit, and a Son of God, he imagined the flesh within him had either died or ceased to be. So quiet and inoffensive had it been since the hour of his conversion that he imagined (and some have said) that it had been eradicated root and branch. But, alas! it was not so. Seductive, treacherous, and subtle, it only lay in ambush watching its favoured chance to assail the "heaven-born life," the new man created in righteousness, and to war against the Spirit of God now dwelling within the child of God.

The two are distinct and essentially different, as were Amalek and Israel in the desert. The Spirit of God neither eradicates nor absorbs the flesh in a believer. It may not be expelled; it cannot be improved. It is evil, only evil, always evil; enmity against God. We are told by God to have "no confidence" in it (Phil. iii. 2); to make "no provision" for it (Rom. xiii. 14); nor to "yield our members" as weapons to its service (Rom. vi. 13). It will always oppose, but it need not oppress; it will ever conflict, but it need never conquer; for the Lord of Hosts, mighty in battle, is on our side, and He giveth us the victory. How, we shall see in our next.

WILLIAM LINCOLN,

OF BERESFORD CHAPEL, LONDON.

[It is with feigned sorrow that we chronicle the departure of our beloved brother, Mr. William Lincoln, who "fell asleep" on Wednesday, 25th April. "Without one struggle or one quiver of hand, head, foot, or any movement, he was 'with the Lord,' at rest for ever." "His face looked at perfect rest. No one but those who lived with him could tell what his life was. The Word was his meat and drink; he used to live and breathe in it." He said, "I am only a poor sinner, saved by grace. Put me into the ground quietly; make no fuss." His ministry was rich in truth and grace, such as can only flow from diligent study of the Scriptures in fellowship with God. Many saints will feel the blank caused by his removal, but chiefly those who

form the assembly in Beresford Chapel, amongst whom he so constantly and faithfully laboured; and most of all, his beloved wife, now, after 33 years of closest fellowship and mutual help, left to tread the rest of life's journey alone. For those thus truly bereaved, may our prayers ascend to the God of all grace. May the sense of loss be the occasion of casting each soul more fully upon the Lord, to prove the fullness of blessing that is treasured for "the members" in Christ the Head, the preciousness of the sympathy and succour of our great High Priest.—*Editor.*]

IN speaking of this departed servant of Christ, we must be careful to bear in mind his own injunction, that after he was gone he might not be talked about, for he was "only a saved sinner."

Mr. Lincoln was born in 1825, in the east of London, and converted to God at the age of 17; his soul having been convicted of sin through reading Doddridge's "Rise and Progress of Religion," though the book did not bring him into peace. Desiring to serve the Lord, he first thought of missionary work, and was a year studying under the Church Missionary Society, but was refused on account of his parents having died of consumption. He then entered at King's College, London, of which he became an associate; was ordained at Preston, in 1849, by the Bishop of Manchester; laboured in the establishment there and at Pudsey; and finally came up to London as curate at St. George's, Southwark. Whilst here he preached mostly at a district church in the London Road, drawing very large numbers; and in 1859 obtained the appointment as minister of Beresford Chapel, Walworth. Here his preaching was very attractive, and the place was soon filled to excess. But now his soul began to be exercised about his position in the Church of England, though he preached and published a sermon on Infant Baptism, seeking to refute Mr. Spurgeon's memorable discussion on Baptismal Regeneration. But he continued more and more to realise that his position was a false one, and the remaining copies of the sermon just mentioned were carefully burnt, and in 1862 he finally broke his connection with the establishment. He read out his reasons for so doing on a Sunday evening to a congregation which crowded the building to the utmost. The effect was, of course, at once manifested in the reduced attendance, though large numbers still continued with him, a few however dropping off by degrees. Immediately after his secession, he wrote the "Javelin of Phineas,"* in which he exposed, by the Word of God, the evil of the union between Church and State. The work at Beresford continued to progress, though the changes were gradual; one step at a time, we may say, just as light was given. Many attempts were made to get Mr. Lincoln to join one or other of the various sects; but his expressed determination always was, "never to join anything or any party," but to cleave to the Lord alone. His purpose and joy ever was to press the truth of gathering to the Lord's name *alone*, making Him the one centre, and going forth "to Him, without the camp." None preached more faithfully the doctrine of separation, and to Jesus only; and we may add that he practised what he preached. For the sake of allegiance

* Out of print for many years.

to his Lord, and obedience to His Word, he surrendered worldly prospects and emoluments of no ordinary character. He had his reward in seeing his children walking according to the Truth; and one by one the old practices were abandoned, and worship according to its scriptural simplicity was established at Beresford. Week by week the saints began to assemble together to break bread, in obedience to the command of the Lord, as gathered unto Him alone, and submitting to the Spirit to guide as He pleased. But while giving open ministry its due place, Mr. Lincoln never failed to press godly order and rule in the assembly, and opposed the spirit of democracy and communism having any place in the church of God. He was also very careful to maintain the value of ministry in teaching from the Word of God, by those whom God had sent as teachers; and the time of service was made half an hour earlier, in order that, whilst time was given for worship and ministry in connection with the breaking of bread first, there might be special opportunity after for the ministry of the Word. All who have had experience of this would confess its value; and the benefit to the assembly has been incalculable. And thus helped and kept by God in His grace, the work has gone on at Beresford for 28 years, though loud were the prophecies, at the outset, that it would not last a twelvemonth.

It was in this ministry of the Word that Mr. Lincoln was so powerful an instrument in the hand of God. He presented Scripture in its broader features with a clear grasp of principles, by which the saint was to be guided in filling in details. In this way his ministry was most useful, as it put the hearers in the way of gaining instruction for themselves from the Word. In prophecy also he was much used, especially in connection with the Lord's coming for His Church, and the apostasy of Christendom. He loved to press the truth of the Lord's imminent return, and lamented much what he thought was a growing coldness in respect of it. Earnestly he warned against the spreading darkness in the professing Church, and pressed the truth of separation from evil. Always accessible to any who came to him with difficulties and questions, he was used to the help of many in all parts of the world; and his answers were always remarkable, as was his teaching, for clearly presenting and pressing fundamental principles. As to the source from which he himself drew the knowledge he had, though with large opportunity of studying the writings of others, he always confessed himself as "the man of one book"; he drew what he gave to others from the fountain head—from the Word itself. His own writings were not very numerous, and we may mention the principal of them:—"Joseph and Jesus," and "Four Lectures on the Second Advent," published before he left the establishment; "The Javelin of Phinehas," published immediately afterward; and, subsequently, "Lectures on the Hebrews," "The Epistles of John," "The Book of the Revelation," and "Typical Foreshadowings in Genesis"; with a series of leaflets on some fundamental truths in the Word of God. The three first named are out of print, the others are still to be obtained.

Mr. Lincoln's heart was in the work at Beresford, to which he considered the Lord had specially called him, though many have objected and thought he should have

extended his service more for the benefit of other assemblies. However this may be, a serious obstacle to it was his condition of health, and few probably have any idea of his continued sufferings for about the last twenty years of his life. It is a marvel that he was able to continue to study and teach so constantly as he did; but his nervous system was gradually undermined. It was in May, 1884, that the first break-down occurred; but through God's mercy, after about four months of entire rest, with change, he was able to resume his ministry with his accustomed energy. Among his latest efforts were his powerful addresses on the first two chapters of the Gospel by John, notes of which have appeared in the *Witness*. It was after the last of these that he broke down a second time, and though, after a month, he resumed his work, it was clear that the old vigour of mind was lost, though he was able for some time to minister much of the precious things of God. He continued to grow weaker, but stuck to his work, one might almost say, as long as he could stand. The last time he spoke was on September 18, 1887, and, remarkably, it was upon the early verses of 2 Corinthians v. The last time he was present at the breaking of bread was on December 11. But though the outward man was perishing the inward man was renewed, and his joy and peace continued unclouded. His remark, as he left the meeting for the last time, was, "It is all well; the Lord reigneth"; and his experience seemed to be well expressed by the verse of the hymn which was often upon his lips:—

"I've battled on toward heaven,
 'Gainst storm, and wind, and tide:
 Now, like a weary traveller,
 That leaneth on his guide,
 Amid the shades of evening,
 While sinks life's lingering sand,
 I hail the glory dawning
 From Immanuel's land."

And so life's sand ran slowly out, and the body grew weaker and weaker; but his spirit was stayed upon God, and he could say, "I'm full of praise and joy." And thus the end came, and the last answer he could give upon earth, when asked if he were happy, was, "Yes, in the Lord," and in a few brief hours our beloved brother was with the Lord, "with Christ, which is far better." He quietly fell asleep, without any apparent pain, early on the morning of April 25. And he who so manfully struggled for the Truth of God, who had laboured so persistently in the vineyard of the Lord, is now at rest with Him he so loved, waiting to receive his due reward in the kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ. Of him we might say, "Whose faith follow, considering the end of his conversation." We can but admire the grace of God displayed in his unswerving and unfaltering faithfulness to the Truth of God. Whenever he saw a thing to be right he persisted in it, no matter what the consequences to himself or others. And yet he was not a man of extremes, for one of the great lessons of Scripture he ever sought to impress was the balancing the Truth of God, and never to push one side of truth to the disparaging of another.

The body of our brother was interred at Honor Oak Cemetery on April 30, a very large number of the saints, with many well-known brethren, being present both at the meetings at Beresford and afterwards at the grave.

J. S. H.

Questions and Answers.

We desire to express our thanks to all who have sent answers.

We particularly request that each writer will give his name and address in full, not for publication, but that we may know who it is that seeks to help, and, if desirable, that we may communicate privately.

When more than one question is replied to, let the answer to each question be upon a separate piece of paper.

Replies to appear in the July number require to be sent in not later than 15th June, and so on; the 15th of the month being always the latest to which we can defer making up for press.

We again urge the importance of replies being *short*; it is essential, in this particular line of things, to be *concise*.

We shall greatly value remembrance in prayer that special wisdom and grace may be given for this service. THE EDITOR.

We invite replies to the following questions:—

How can division be caused "contrary to the doctrine," or what is the meaning of Rom. xvi. 16, 17?

Does Heb. xi. 40 mean that God has provided some better thing for us, the saints of this dispensation, or that the Old Testament saints are waiting for us, both being perfected to gather and to share the same blessings?

"Behold an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile!" (John i. 47). How does this agree with "They that are whole have no need of the physician, but they that are sick: I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance" (Mark ii. 17)?

Could anyone explain why it is that in 2 Peter ii. 4 the angels that sinned are depicted as being bound with chains of darkness in hell, there to await their judgment, whilst in Rev. xii. 7 they are portrayed as being in heaven fighting with Christ and His saints?

Would Scripture warrant a brother who has failed in business (paying a composition), to continue in the ministry of the Gospel, and to believers? and, if he persists, what should be done?

"THE ACCUSER OF THE BRETHREN."

QUESTION 287.—Can we correctly say from Scripture that the devil is in person before the throne of God accusing the brethren?

Ans.—In Rev. xiii. 1, verses 7 to 17, we read—"There was war in heaven: Michael and his angels fought against the dragon; and the dragon fought and his angels, and prevailed not; neither was their place found any more in heaven." Verse 10—"And I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ: for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accused them before our God day and night." (11) "And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto death." We learn from the remaining portion of the chapter that there will be "Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and the sea!"—the devil being cast to the earth is very wroth, for he knoweth that *he hath but a short time*. Then in verse 14—"Two wings of a great eagle were given to the woman, that she might fly into the wilderness, into her place, where she is nourished for a *time, times, and half a time*, from the face of the serpent." Without in any way alluding to the interpretation of this prophecy, it is evident from it that Satan's presence is suffered in heaven, or that he has sufferance to appear before God, "accusing the

brethren." The time of the woman's nourishment in the wilderness refers to the last half week, or the great tribulation, three and a half years; so that it would appear to be at the commencement of this period that Satan is to be cast out of heaven, and never permitted to re-enter it. From this passage it seems clear that we may say correctly that the devil is in person before God accusing the brethren; other passages of Scripture point to the same conclusion. In Zechariah's vision (chap. iii.), he says—"And he showed me Joshua the high priest standing before the angel of the Lord, and Satan standing at the right hand to be his accuser" (adversary). Also in the book of Job, 1st and 2nd chapter, we read of "a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the Lord, and Satan (the adversary) came also in the midst of them." W. D. B.

[The "wicked spirits" with whom we wrestle are not in hell, as one sometimes hears from the lips of those who are ignorant of these things; but "in heavenly places" (see Eph. vi. 12).—E.B.]

WILL ALL THE SAINTS BE CAUGHT UP AT THE LORD'S COMING?

QUESTION 288.—Is there any word in the New Testament which teaches that, at the Lord's coming for His Saints, only a portion of them will be taken up to be with Him?

Ans. A.—There is a word which teaches that, at the Lord's coming for His saints, *all* of them will be taken up to be with Him. See 1 Thess. iv. 14-17:—"We the living who remain shall be caught away together with them," viz., "the dead in Christ"—"them which sleep in Jesus." The expressions "the dead in Christ," "we the living who remain," include *all* such dead, and *all* such living ones. No exceptions are mentioned or even hinted at. See also 1 Cor. xv. 51, 52—"We all shall be changed." "The dead shall be raised, and we shall be changed."

Ans. B.—The following scriptures seem conclusively to show that at the Lord's coming for His Church *all* composing it will be taken up to be with Him. "Christ the first-fruits; afterward they that are Christ's at His coming" (1 Cor. xv. 23). "We shall not all sleep, but we shall *all* be changed, in a moment," &c. (1 Cor. xv. 51). "We which are alive and remain unto the coming of Lord . . . shall be caught up" (1 Thess. iv. 15-17). Hebrews ix. 28, classifies and names all believers as "them that look for Him"; it does not point out a certain class of them as those alone expectant. Our union with Christ is through God's grace, eternal. "We are members of His body," &c.; He is the head. To rend His body in twain and apportion one class to be taken hence at His coming, and another to be left to share this world's sorrows does not appear *by His word*. A. O. M.

Ans. C.—I know of none. Certain passages have been, by the promulgation of this theory, so twisted as to appear to countenance it, but, rightly understood, they clearly do not; while many other scriptures conclusively teach the opposite. One of the leaders of this system of interpretation stated, for example, at a Bible-reading at which I was present, that he believed the man who

was found without the wedding-garment—with regard to whom, the King said, “Bind him hand and foot,” &c. (Matt. xxii. 13)—represented that portion of the Church which should be left behind at the Lord’s coming. When this was challenged, the position proved extremely weak, and the manner in which God’s Word was treated was not commendable. The aspect of the coming contemplated in Matthew’s gospel is that of the Son of Man to the earth, the King to set up His kingdom, and never as the Lord Jesus or Son of God, *for the Church*. 1 Cor. xv. 23 seems to put it beyond dispute that it is *Christ’s possession of His own* which ensures their blessing in whichever “company” they may have their part, the “coming” here evidently covering a wider area than simply to receive the Church to Himself. “But each one in his proper rank: a first-fruit—Christ; after that, they who are of the Christ, during His presence” (Rotherham). First, I take it, “the Church which is His body,” will, *in its entirety*, be raised or changed (otherwise there would be a dismembered body), and “caught up to meet Him in the air,” according to 1 Thess. iv., which again presents completeness, and no dividing. Afterwards, when Daniel’s 70th “week” is fulfilled, the godly few, together with the martyred remnant of tribulation times, will be raised to enter on what is reserved for that “company.” Phil. iii. 11 is one of the passages much misunderstood and misapplied—“If by any means I may advance into the out-resurrection—that from among (the) dead.” (I give Rotherham’s again, as being the most literal translation). Here, obviously, the apostle is not speaking of a future resurrection at all; but is expressing his ardent desire to press forward to a realisation and exhibition *in his life here*—of “the power of Christ’s resurrection” (verse 10). He would not speak doubtfully here were it that resurrection which he can, at the end of the chapter, anticipate with such joyful confidence. “We look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall change the body of our humiliation,” &c. To have part in the resurrection of the Church is not an attainment; but the portion of each one *belonging* to Christ. 1 Thess. v. 9, 10, is a striking confirmation of this—“For God *hath not appointed* us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ, who died for us, that, whether we *WATCH* or sleep, we should live together with Him.” The “wrath” I understand to refer to that coming, on the earth in connection with “the day of the Lord” (verse 2). The word “wake” (verse 10) is the same as is rendered “watch” in verse 6—“Let us *WATCH*, and be sober.” And while this should be heartily obeyed, yet, so purely is “the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory” (2 Tim. ii. 10) a matter of grace from first to last, that our “living together with Him” is not contingent upon our watching. Heb. ix. 28 is a favourite passage of those who would divide the Church at the Lord’s coming—“Unto them that *LOOK* for Him shall He appear,” &c.; and thus it is read, great emphasis (mistakenly, I am persuaded) being laid on the “*look*.” The position of those professing believers of the Hebrews is forgotten. There were those amongst them who were wavering and in danger of going back to Judaism. This epistle is therefore full of both instruction and warning. In this chapter ix. we get

our “day of atonement.” The great High Priest has entered “into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us.” Now the question with the Hebrews was—Would they cleave to the substance which is Christ, or return to the shadows which they had left behind? Would they continue looking for HIM to come out, or “draw back” to look for another? Every Christian is looking for HIM, and to all such “He will appear the second time, without sin unto salvation.”—D. R.

PRAYER IN THE ASSEMBLY.

QUESTION 289.—Should not prayer be made, before the assembly on the first day of the week breaks up, for all sorts and conditions of men?—See 2 Tim. ii. 1-6.

Ans. A.—To say that this prayer, or indeed any prayer, *should* be made at the Lord’s Supper, is to make a “regulation,” a thing not sanctioned by the Word. The proper and most suitable occasion is the prayer meeting.

Ans. B.—To answer this question affirmatively, would be going beyond anything the apostle inculcates in writing to Timothy; and to lay it down as something that “*should*” be done, would surely be contrary to the Scripture principles by which we (as professedly gathered unto the name of the Lord, seeking to be guided by the Spirit in subjection to the Word) desire to have our meetings regulated. The exhortation may be obeyed privately in the family or in the prayer meeting. And if the Lord should lead any brother “before the assembly on ‘the first day of the week’ breaks up,” to pray “for all men, for kings, and all that are in authority,” well; but to enact a law on the subject, when Scripture has not given this as part of the object of our coming together, would be unwarrantable. The special object for which “the disciples were gathered together” at Troas, namely, to “break bread,” is too often overlooked, and finds its place at the fag-end of a meeting which has been filled up with ministry, powerless in itself, and which fails to lead up to the table, or to foster a spirit of worship in the assembly. And again, too frequently when the breaking of bread gets its place, having apparently “begun in the Spirit,” the meeting sadly degenerates toward the close, instead of its tone rising higher and higher to the end.—D. R.

Editor’s Note.—The grievous neglect of this Divine instruction is so general that we welcome this question as one for which there is urgent need. Perhaps if saints better understood their calling as separated from the course of this world, and its politics, and world reformation machinery, they would the more earnestly avail themselves of that one means which God has put within the reach of the heavenly family, of influencing the course of events. A day or two of persecution such as has been the lot of the people of God in other times would probably impress upon our callous hearts the value of united prayer as a means of influencing the “powers that be.” We do not judge that it is in keeping with the object for which the Church comes together into one place on the first day of the week, viz., to eat the Lord’s Supper, to *intertwine* with the worship that befits such an occasion prayers for the world and its rulers. But we know of no occasion

better suited for it than *before the assembly separates*. That such prayer may, and ought to be, offered at the "prayer meeting" can hardly be questioned by any; but to confine it to that occasion only is without any Scripture warrant that we know of. Besides, sad as it is to say it, the "prayer meeting" is too often attended by only a very small proportion of those in fellowship—numbering in many places not a half or a fourth of those who gather on the Lord's day. We fear many do not regard it as an *engaged evening*, but allow the most trivial concerns and even worldly entertainments to take them away. Oh, what blessing is lost to assemblies by such conduct! May the saints awake to a sense of the value of their costly privilege of access to a throne of grace.

THE CLEANSING POWER.

QUESTION 290.—What is the meaning of "the blood of Jesus Christ, His Son, cleanseth us from all sin"?

Ans. A.—Let "cleanseth" be understood as in the present indefinite tense, as referring not to the *time* of cleansing, but to the efficacy of the blood in cleansing; or to the simple fact that the blood does cleanse. This verse should not be read apart from the five following verses. It is only a part of a statement; and when taken by itself is, like all partial statements, liable to be misunderstood.

Ans. B.—We are helped to the meaning of this passage by reference to its counterpart among the Old Testament types, which, I judge, is found in Lev. xvi. On the annual day of atonement the high priest, having washed his flesh, put on his holy linen garments, and entered into the holiest; first with the blood of the bullock for himself and his house, and then with that of the goat on which the Lord's lot had fallen, on behalf of the people. These were followed by the scape-goat service, and the sacrifice of "a ram for a burnt-offering," denoting the acceptance of priests and people on the ground of the blood sprinkled on and before the mercy-seat. Then at verse 30, it is written—"For on that day shall the priest make an atonement for you to cleanse you, that ye may be clean from all your sins before the Lord." They were, therefore, judicially "cleansed" by blood which, although put upon the horns of the brazen and golden altars, and on the mercy-seat, they were never brought into personal contact with—in contrast with the sprinkling of the unclean with the ashes of the burnt heifer and the running water of Num. xix. Standing in the presence of God—symbolised by the Shekinah glory—the high priest would be deeply sensible of his own imperfection, and of the sinfulness of those he represented; but, at the same time, he would see in the sprinkled blood a perfect answer to all the light made manifest. Now, "Christ being come an High Priest . . . by His own blood, entered in once into the Holy Place, having obtained eternal redemption"; and thus believers are presented before God, and kept there, in changeless acceptance, on the ground of the death of a substituted sacrifice. Thus into the presence of God, who "is Light," are we brought, *clean before Him*, by virtue of "the blood of Jesus Christ His

Son," which "cleanseth us from all sin"—that is, ever speaks to Him for us, all we are, and all we have done. Actual sinning and failures are provided for in the advocacy of Jesus Christ the righteous, and His propitiation, in chapter ii.—D. R.

Ans. C.—Walking in the light as God is in the light, there are three things which that light makes manifest,—the holiness of God, the value of the blood of Christ, and the exceeding sinfulness of sin. Our iniquities are then seen as they appear in the presence of God, and our secret sins in the light of His countenance. "And if our heart condemn us, God is greater than our heart, and knoweth all things"; for in the sight of God the thought of foolishness is sin. Nothing but the blood of Emmanuel can purge the conscience and keep the heart in peace while thus walking with God. The ashes of the red heifer which contained the blood were sprinkled on the defiled Israelite by means of living water; and it is the Spirit alone, through whom Jesus offered Himself without spot to God, that can apply the blood in its sanctifying power; and thus applied, it has a three-fold efficacy—it purges the conscience in the presence of God, it purifies the affections of the heart leading to the hatred of sin and the love of holiness, and it cleanses the character and conduct; and thus the heart sprinkled from an evil conscience, and the body washed in pure water, the believer may worship in the holiest or walk with God in fellowship with His saints.—T. N.

Ans. D.—Three things must be clearly seen; (a) that God is light; (b) that the epistle is to the family of believers on earth; and (c) the difference between sin and sins. The believer has been made nigh by the blood (Eph. ii. 13), has entrance into the holiest by the blood (Heb. x. 19), yet walking in the light in fellowship with the Father and the Son, is conscious of sin within. Here the verse applies, "The blood . . . cleanseth." The believer is maintained in this position before God, and not even "a thought of foolishness" which is sin is imputed to him.

Ans. E.—"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). Fellowship with God is the subject. To maintain it, it is absolutely necessary for us to walk in the light, the true light which now shineth. "How can two walk together except they be agreed?" To be agreed with God as to His mind concerning Christ, concerning sin, concerning self, and concerning His righteousness, and to acquiesce in His will concerning our conduct, is fellowship with Him. But such knowledge leads continually to fresh discoveries of our own sinfulness and innate corruption. Therefore hath He made perfect and continuous provision both for our cleansing and our peace in that "the blood of Jesus Christ, His Son, cleanseth us from all sin." The light that reveals God's ways, and shows us our own *vileness*, shines also on the Lamb slain as our Surety, and thus comforts us, in God's very presence. Otherwise we would be in despair at the discoveries through the light. There is no thought here of eradication of sin, but only of the powerful efficacy of the blood of atonement to cover it.—A. O. M.

EXPOSITORY LECTURES on the TEMPLES of SOLOMON and EZEKIEL.

BY THOMAS NEWBERRY,
Editor of "The Englishman's Bible."
(From Notes by W. K.)

The Five Temples of Scripture.

THERE are five temples mentioned in *Scripture*. It is important in dealing with scriptural subjects to realise that we are dealing with the very words of God. There are various ways by which God has revealed Himself to man. First, He has revealed Himself in the works of creation. "The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament showeth His handywork. Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night showeth knowledge. But there is no speech nor language; their voice is not heard" (Ps. xix. 1-3). In creation and providence God, as it were, speaks to us in dumb show; just as you would speak to one deaf and dumb by the fingers. "The invisible things of Him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things which are made, even His eternal power and Godhead; so that men are without excuse" (Rom. i. 20). He has also spoken to us in this Word. In the Scriptures of revealed truth God speaks by His Holy Spirit, who inspired them.

There is another manifestation of God which He has made in the Scriptures by those structures of which He Himself is the Designer and Architect; as in the tabernacle in the wilderness, and the temple of Solomon in the land. Just as God gave to Moses in the mount the pattern and instructions for the tabernacle in the wilderness, so God gave by His Spirit and by His hand upon David, instructions concerning the temple; so that every particular connected with the temple of Solomon originated with God. He is the Designer. The temple, if I may so express it, was the embodiment of the Divine thought. "In that temple every whit speaks of His glory" (Ps. xxix. 9); and every minute detail has instruction for us. It is this that makes the consideration both of the tabernacle and the temple of such value and importance. When we approach these subjects we tread on holy ground, and we need to take our shoes from off our feet.

With regard to the model before us, I desire

that it be understood that every particular and detail is taken from the inspired Hebrew Scriptures alone; and it has been my earnest endeavour that the interpretation of these symbols and the spiritual truths they teach might be gathered from the sacred volume alone, one scripture throwing its light upon another. For I believe, if we have the solid type in the Old Testament, we have the letter-press printed off, if I may so express it, in other portions of the Old, and also especially in the New Testament.

As already stated, the temples mentioned in Scripture are five in number.

THE FIRST TEMPLE

was erected by Solomon on Mount Moriah in the place pointed out by God to David, and according to the instructions given to him, which were carried out by Solomon according to the wisdom and grace bestowed upon him. The model before us is a combination of the temple of Solomon as described in the first book of Kings and the second book of Chronicles, with those other details supplied in the last nine chapters of the book of Ezekiel. The temple of Solomon was destroyed by the Chaldeans because Israel had defiled it; therefore God gave the temple, with all the sacred vessels and His people, into the hands of their enemies.

After seventy years of Israel's captivity were expired, God stirred up the spirit of Cyrus, and under his patronage

A SECOND TEMPLE

was erected on the site of the former, in the days of Ezra and Nehemiah, who were encouraged and supported by the prophets Haggai and Zechariah (read Ezra v. 1; also vi. 14). The second temple was inferior in glory and beauty to that of Solomon; so that the old men who had seen the first in its glory wept when the foundations of the second temple were laid.

This temple continued until the days of Herod the Great, who obtained permission from the Jews to take it down, and he erected another,

A THIRD TEMPLE,

on the same site, more in harmony with his own thought and style. This temple we are told (John ii. 20) occupied forty-six years in building. From Josephus' account it appears

to have been of larger dimensions and of greater height than that of Solomon's. This is the temple which was in existence when our Lord was upon earth. He was in the habit of frequenting its outer court, and there teaching the people.

This temple was destroyed by the Romans (A.D. 70) in fulfilment of the prophecy by Daniel (ix. 26)—that the people of the prince that should come should destroy the city and the sanctuary, after the cutting off of Messiah. Of this **THIRD TEMPLE**, as foretold by the Lord, not one stone was left upon another. The disciples called His attention to the stones of this temple, saying—"See what manner of stones and what buildings are here" (Mark xiii. 1). Whilst this temple was totally destroyed, the foundation platform erected by Solomon remains intact below the surface at the present day. "The foundation of God standeth sure." (2 Tim. ii. 19).

On the site where this temple of Herod originally stood, the Mosque of Omar, or "Dome of the Rock" now stands.

We now come to

THE FOURTH TEMPLE

mentioned in the Word of God. Israel has been carried into captivity, scattered among the nations until the "times of the Gentiles" shall be fulfilled; but after the close of the present dispensation, and previous to the manifestation of the Son of Man to receive His Kingdom, and to establish His millennial reign, during the interval marked out in prophecy as the seventieth week of Daniel (seventy weeks of years), in order that Scripture may be fulfilled, "for Scripture cannot be broken" (John x. 35),—heaven and earth may pass away, but one jot or one tittle of inspired revealed truth cannot fail,—there must be another temple recognised by God as His, and sacrifices again instituted in connection with it. This **FOURTH TEMPLE** is spoken of by Daniel the prophet, referred to by our Lord in Matt. xxiv. and Mark xiii., mentioned again in 2 Thess. ii. 14, also in Rev. xi. 1.

There is no temple of God on earth now, but in order that the Word of God may be fulfilled, there must be, as we have stated, a temple of God in which Antichrist can set up the abomination of desolation, and wherein he will sit as God; then he will take away the daily

sacrifice which he had allowed when he made a covenant of one week of years with Israel, which covenant he will break. Of

THE FIFTH TEMPLE

we have a full, complete description in the last nine chapters of the prophecy of Ezekiel. The former temples were built on Mount Moriah; but in Isaiah ii. 2, we read—"And it shall come to pass in the last days that the mountain of Jehovah's house shall be established on the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it." This temple will be erected in the midst of the priest's portion of the holy oblation, 25,000 reeds square (Ezek. xlv. 1-5). It will be the centre of worship to the whole world, according to Isaiah lvi. 7—"My house shall be called a house of prayer for all nations"; and, lxvi. 23—"And it shall come to pass, that from one new moon to another, and from one Sabbath to another, shall all flesh come and worship before Me, saith Jehovah."

THE FIRST EPISTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS.

CHAP. xiii. 9-13.

NOTES OF AN ADDRESS BY J. R. C.

THE gifts of "prophecy," "tongues," and "knowledge" are here regarded as pertaining to an imperfect or, rather, *immature*, condition of things. Like the scaffolding of a building, or the education of a child, they serve a necessary purpose until a point is reached at which they are no longer required.

But in this passage the temporary character of these gifts is not connected with the immediate causes of their passing away, but rather with the ultimate perfection or maturity of the Church in resurrection.

This is the period during which we have only "that which is in part"; during which our vision of the divine and spiritual is as in a mirror obscurely, and our knowledge or apprehension of them partial or imperfect.

It is the time, so to speak, of the Church's infancy, and the administration of it is of the nature of education or discipline with a view to future maturity. The time is coming when, in place of the obscure mirror, there will be

the face-to-face vision; in place of the partial immature infantile powers of speech, understanding and reasoning (alluded to in verse 11), there will be the power to fully know, even as now we are fully known by God.

“But now we see in a mirror obscurely”—this is characteristic of all the present methods by which the knowledge of God is communicated to us. In the Scriptures we see Christ the image of God from first to last, but always “as in a mirror,” in contrast to the time when we shall “see Him as He is.” We see Him in the types and shadows of the books of Moses. There His sacrificial work and spotless character are seen reflected in a thousand different aspects. When the anointed eye looks into the mirror of the Word, precious indeed are the views we get of Christ and of God. And though our vision is at best “obscure,” and our knowledge “in part,” yet how far short do we come of that which might be ours of the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord! To how many of God’s children have these types and shadows been long sealed up, and to how many are they yet an enigma without a key to unlock its treasures?

Then, in the Psalms, we are, as it were, permitted by God to enter into the presence-chamber of the Father and the Son, and, as in John xvii., to listen to the breathing out of the very heart of Christ into the ear of His Father and His God.

In the Prophetic Scriptures we have His sufferings and His coming glory and kingdom, all predicted in minuteness of detail that strikes the reverent inquirer with astonishment, whilst yet “the mystery” of the present age is kept a secret, “hid in God.”

Then, in the Gospels, we have those four most precious records of His words and ways; His sufferings and death; His resurrection and ascension, all as witnessed and historically recorded by men, chosen and inspired of God to do so infallibly.

Much there is in all this which, by the Holy Spirit’s teaching, may be known of Him; and yet, will not all the knowledge acquired thus be as the “obscure vision in a mirror,” compared to the knowledge we shall have of Him, when, seeing Him as He is, beholding Him “face to face,” we are changed into His image, and caught up to meet Him in the air?

“Now I know in part: but then shall I know, even as also I am known.” “This is life eternal that they might know Thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom Thou hast sent.” Thus we see that to know God is the very essence and end of the eternal life that God has given us. To reveal Himself is the great object of creation and redemption and glory. To know Him as revealed, is the highest blessing of the creature. In creation, God has made Himself known: by the works which He has made, are clearly seen “His eternal power and Godhead” (Rom. i. 20); man is thus left “without excuse.” The scientific infidel and the idolatrous heathen are alike “without excuse,” though the former has by far the greater guilt, and will receive the severer judgment.

But in Christ and in redemption God has revealed Himself, so as creation with all its wonders could never have told Him out.

“I write unto you little children, because ye have known the Father.” This first experience of the little babe in Christ, this knowledge of the Father’s love in Christ the Son, is something higher than all the knowledge to be gained from creation. In creation we learn something of the *attributes* of God, but in Christ we learn the love and grace that are in the *heart* of God.

And God has laid hold of fallen man, of the vilest and guiltiest, that through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus, He might manifest “throughout the ages to come, the exceeding riches of His grace.” If “the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy” as creation sprang into being at the Word of God, what deeper joy and praise must ascend from all the angelic myriads, as they behold the working out of the glorious redemption plan, and as throughout eternity they see the infinite love of God to those that were His enemies, in the person of Christ as the One who suffered for us on the Cross, and in whom we are blessed and glorified?

None ever knew God as Jesus knew Him. He was “in the bosom of the Father.” He knew the joy of dwelling in that love. And He came forth in order that He might bring us into that same knowledge of God, and fill us with His own joy.

Hereafter “we shall know even as also we

are known." That does not mean that we shall ever have as full a knowledge of God as He has of us. But that our knowledge of Him will in its measure be a perfect and true and unclouded knowledge, even as His knowledge of us now is.

Here, we know Him, and blessed is that knowledge; what is there to compare to it? partial, clouded, faintly realised as it is.

But our present knowledge of Him is dependent upon our obedience to His will. "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 to him" (John xiv. 21). "Then shall we know, if we follow on to know the Lord" (Hosea vi. 3). Paul's desire was, "that I may know Him." He counted all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus his Lord. He had known the Lord for years, but still he longed for a deeper, fuller knowledge of Him. Still he says, "I know only in part"—and he pants for that goal when he shall know even as also he is known. And there is real *power* in this personal knowledge of the Son of God; as we read, "grace and peace be multiplied unto you through the knowledge of God, and of Jesus our Lord." Worldly knowledge will not increase our "grace and peace." Even the knowledge of divine truth will not add either to our grace or our peace, if learned apart from Christ. What avails all the teaching we hear, if it leads us not into a deeper personal acquaintance with the Lord Jesus, and with God our Father? Perhaps some, if they were to confess the truth, would admit that they knew the Lord better in the days of their early Christian experience than they do now, notwithstanding all the truth they have learned. There was a nearness and an intimacy then, that there is not now. But it is in the path of obedience and of faith, difficult though it be, yet blessed, that acquaintance with God is gained.

"Now abideth faith, hope, love, these three; but the greatest of these is love." Faith is like the root, hope the stem, and love the fruit. Love is the fruit for which the root and the stem exist. Love is of God, for "God is love." Precious and acceptable

was the worship of that woman, who washed the feet of Jesus with tears of contrition, and wiped them with her hair, and anointed them with ointment. Sinner though she was, she knew Him as her Saviour and her Lord, and she "*loved much.*" If we don't love Jesus much, it is because we don't know Him well. And if we do not know Him well, it is because we fail to keep His Word, we fail to do His will.

But He knows us. He knew us thoroughly before He undertook our cause. He measured the depths of our iniquity, and weighed the burden of our guilt, before He undertook to save us. Having set His heart upon us, nothing can stay the current of that mighty love till we know Him and love Him as He knows and loves us, and till He sees reflected His own likeness in us, and has brought us to be for ever with Himself.

THE LIBERTY OF THE SPIRIT.

WE fear there is a general misapprehension as to the true meaning of that oft-quoted scripture, "Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty."

The current interpretation seems to be something to this effect, that, in the absence of human regulations in the assembly, there is liberty for anyone or everyone (only excepting women) to minister the Word of God, and thus the spirit of democracy has been fostered in many assemblies.

Again and again we have heard the phrase quoted; sometimes used as a stimulus to incite brethren to speak, at other times used as a licence for someone to get up and occupy precious time to little or no profit.

Solomon said that "A man's gift maketh room for him"; and when a brother has to preface his remarks by this scripture, we fear that HIS GIFT cannot make room, therefore, he must fall back upon something else.

We propose to try and show what the liberty of 2 Cor. iii. 17 is, and upon what it is based; believing that the interpretation generally accepted is unscriptural.

In the opening verses of this chapter the apostle shows his credentials as a minister of the new covenant by the fact that they—the Corinthian saints—were born again; and

from verse 6 to the end we have the contrast between the old and new covenants; the old characterised as "the letter which killeth," the new "as the spirit which giveth life."

It is evident that Paul had before his mind the circumstances connected with the giving of the law when he was inspired by God to write this chapter, and he uses them to show fully the liberty into which we are brought by the Spirit of the living God.

In turning to Exodus xix. 1-6, we find Israel in the wilderness, not only saved by the blood of the paschal lamb, and separated for ever from Egypt and its bondage by the Red Sea, but also brought unto God to be a peculiar treasure unto Him.

From verses 7-15 we have the preparation on the part of Israel to receive the law from the lips of Jehovah Himself, and in verse 16 and onwards, Jehovah descends to Sinai as Law-giver, to make known His will to the people that He had redeemed.

"The law was ordained to life" (Rom. vii. 10), but what a different effect it had upon Israel. At "the thunders and lightnings, and the voice of the trumpet exceeding loud," which were the prelude to the voice of Jehovah, "all the people in the camp TREMBLED."

Moses led them out to the base of Sinai to meet with God, and for a while they heard His voice; but in chap. xx. 18-21 we read that the whole scene had such an effect on them that "they removed, and stood *afar off*," even although Moses told them that God had only come to prove them.

In verse 21 we see Moses drawing near to God, but leaving the people *afar off*.

In chap. xxiv. Moses returns and lays all the words of God before Israel, and with one voice they exclaim, "All the words which Jehovah hath said will we do"; the blood is shed, both the people and the book are sprinkled—they to obey, and God to bless.

Moses returns again into the presence of God, and remains for forty days. Receiving the testimony, he descends to find it already broken, as the people were dancing around the calf made by Aaron; and the first command being, "Thou shalt have no other gods before me," the law, although ordained to life, became the "ministration of death";

and in chap. xxxii. 28 we read that, on account of their sin, *about* three thousand souls were slain.

Thus we gather from the circumstances which attended the giving of the law, that it only brought *fear, separation from God,* and, ultimately, *death,* even to a people who were saved by blood.

"Wherefore, then, the law? It was added because of transgression, UNTIL the seed should come" (Gal. iii. 19); and verse 16 tells us that the seed was Christ. "The law was our schoolmaster to bring us to Christ" (verse 24). Therefore, we find that the first covenant was only TEMPORARY, and its object was to conduct to Christ. "The law *made nothing perfect,* but it was the bringing in of a better hope, by which we DRAW NIGH UNTO GOD" (Heb. vii. 19, margin).

Israel could not draw near unto God under the first covenant, because "their minds were blinded," and when the Lord Jesus came they did not recognise in Him "the hope" brought in by the law, consequently, the veil passed upon their heart, and remains until this day in the reading of the Old Testament. But the promise is, "when *it* shall turn to the Lord, the veil shall be taken away."

"For by one offering He HATH PERFECTED for ever them that are being sanctified." When He ascended up on high, He became the Mediator of the new covenant—the Priest after the order of Melchisedec. On Pentecost the Holy Spirit came down to witness to His resurrection and glorification, and to testify to men that through faith in His name repentance and remission of sins would be granted.

This was the introduction of the new covenant, but how different were the results from those which issued from the giving of the law! Sinners were convinced of their true state before God, but they received eternal life in virtue of that precious blood, and *about* three thousand souls were saved that day. The same number RECEIVED LIFE at the descent of the Spirit as WERE SLAIN at the descent of the law.

When Moses, as the mediator of the first covenant, ascended up to God, he left the people *AFAR OFF*; but when Jesus ascended up to the right hand of God, He not only raised us *IN* Himself, but He left the way

completely open for every redeemed sinner to follow.

When He died on the Cross the veil of the temple was rent from the top to the bottom: when He ascended up to heaven the everlasting doors were flung wide open to receive the King of Glory, and we never read of their being closed.

On the contrary, we read in Heb. x. 17-22 that those whose sins are forgiven have liberty to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a NEW and LIVING way "which He consecrated FOR US, through the veil."

He has entered as our FORERUNNER, and has given us a hope which draws the soul inside the veil, even His coming again (Heb. vi. 19, 20); thus, every saint can soar away to where He is, and experience the truth of that scripture—"We see Jesus . . . crowned with glory and honour."

What a blessed contrast is the position of the Church to that of Israel! They could not bear the voice of God nor remain in the presence of His glory; but the Church has the privilege even now of beholding the glory of Jehovah, and abiding at rest in His presence. "Their minds were blinded"; ours have been enlightened by the Holy Spirit.

That brings us to verse 17—"Now the Lord the Spirit is: AND where the Spirit of the Lord is, is liberty."

WHERE is the Spirit? Scripture answers the question—"What! know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit which is in you?" (1 Cor. vi. 19). This is individually. "Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?" (1 Cor. iii. 16). This is collectively.

Thus we find that every sinner saved through His blood has this liberty, because of the indwelling Spirit; also, every assembly gathered to the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, because the Spirit finds an habitation there.

How did we receive the Spirit? By faith in Christ! "In whom ye also trusted . . . in whom also having believed, ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise" (Eph. i. 13).

The liberty then of verse 17 is a *birth-right portion*, purchased by the blood of Jesus, and based on the sealing of the Spirit.

Is it, then, a liberty to minister the Word in

the assembly? We answer, emphatically, NO! IF IT WERE, THEN every brother not gifted to minister, and all sisters, would be excluded from this liberty.

What, then, is the liberty of the Spirit? Verse 18 shows us—"But we all—both male and female—with unveiled face, reflecting as a mirror the glory of Jehovah, are transformed into the same image from glory to glory, even as from the Lord the Spirit." This is the true liberty of the Spirit, and just in fulfilment of the Lord's own promise in John xvi. 14—"He shall glorify Me: for He shall receive of Mine, and shall show it unto you."

When the priest had washed at the laver, he could enter the tabernacle and enjoy the privileges of God's House; but the veil hung between and hid the glory from his eyes. But in the "true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched," there is nothing between. The soul can enter with holy liberty and behold the glory of a risen Christ. No veil hangs between the soul and Jesus, every barrier is removed, and the soul that "once was a stranger to grace and to God," can now rejoice in the consciousness of the presence of the Lord.

We now can discern the antitype of that golden lampstand and the table of showbread, and in that golden altar of incense we behold "our Great High Priest" keeping us perfect and spotless in His Father's presence. We see Jesus, and in Him the heart of God is told out.

What is God's purpose in bestowing this liberty upon us? To be "changed into the same image from glory to glory." To be like Him down here, as we shall be like Him throughout eternity.

As successive revelations of Christ are brought to the soul by the Holy Spirit, so God expects that they will have a transforming effect on us; and as year after year rolls on in the Christian life, we ought to become more and more like the blessed Master, more patient and lowly.

In Heb. xii. 18-24, the two covenants are contrasted by the apostle. The thunders of Sinai are for ever hushed, and the terror accompanying them is for ever gone. We are not come to a scene where "fear and trembling" has the mastery, but to heaven itself, where the Lamb is all the glory.

How different this is from the current interpretation of the passage, an interpretation which only can feed the flesh in us, and convert the assembly into a kind of religious democracy.

How easy it is for us to lay hold of an imaginary blessing, and hold it tenaciously, when by so doing we let go the real blessing, the writer knows by experience.

If this paper leads any to think over that passage, or helps any to a better understanding of it, it will not have been written in vain.

W. L., Edin.

PROPHETIC PAPERS. No. 7.

By F. C. BLAND.

OUR last lecture was occupied with what is called, in this gospel of Matthew, "the kingdom of heaven." The subject of the first four chapters is the introduction of the Son of David, as King, according to the promises made to the fathers. The 5th, 6th, and 7th chapters give us the principles which were to prevail in the kingdom which He came to establish: a heavenly rule or government is proposed to be brought into an earthly sphere. And here let me quote an extract from a book which I have read with great enjoyment, as an exposition of these chapters: "The sermon on the mount, and all the teaching in these chapters, is the word of the Minister of the circumcision, clearing and confirming the Divine teaching given to the fathers. Blessings, laws, and promises are alike grounded on the Old Testament language, which the Speaker at the same time adopts and interprets. He keeps in a line with the past, while He takes a clear step in advance. He gives not so much a new code as a new addition to the old one. The word of authority, 'I say unto you,' is directed not to destroy but to fulfil. It is the voice of the original Lawgiver clearing His own intentions and disallowing the perversions of men."* The old code was addressed to the Jews as an earthly people; but now the King comes from heaven, and He brings His heavenly principles with Him. Heavenly rule is proposed to be brought in to an earthly sphere; and hence

the heavenly character of them as contrasted with those that went before.

A very good and simple illustration of this is seen in the two French provinces of Alsace and Lorraine, which were taken from France by Germany during the late Franco-German war.

There is no change in the geographical position of these provinces; the people are the same, they speak the same language, and are occupied with the same pursuits as before; but a German rule and German laws have been introduced there, and they are part of the German Empire. So is it with the kingdom of heaven. This earth is the same, and men's hearts are just the same as before Christ came; but the difference in the parallel lies in this, that in the one the laws of the German Empire are enforced by power, in the other the rule of the true King is held in abeyance for the present, and awaits enforcement until that time comes when the prayer which the Lord taught His disciples will be fulfilled, when His kingdom shall have come and His will shall be done on earth even as it is in heaven. Obedience to heavenly principles and heavenly precepts will then be enforced by power, and of Christ's government and kingdom there shall be no end. So much for the eternal principles of the kingdom of heaven.

Now I suppose we would all agree that if a ruler came to govern a country, the next thing people would desire, after he had enunciated his politics, would be to know something of his personal character—whether he was affable, easy of access in case of need, and one who was likely to sympathise with the people over whom he was sent to rule; and just here in the same way God deals with mankind. As chaps. v., vi., and vii. give us the principles of His kingdom, so chap. viii. and ix. give us the heart and sympathies of the King. Every kind of human need, from a common fever to possession by demons, and even death itself, are presented to us in these two chapters: but there is only one aspect of Jesus, and that is that He had a heart to feel for all, and power to meet every need. A leper comes to Him believing in His power to heal him, but not quite sure about His will; but the KING puts

* "The Progress of Doctrine."—*The Bampton Lectures*, 1864. By T. D. Bernard.

forth His hand and touches him, showing that His will is as ready for His people's use as His power. Next comes a *servant*, but the King has come to be man's servant, and He simply says, "I will come and heal him." Many were brought to Him possessed with devils and He healed them all. He stills the raging of the sea; and the winds and waves obey Him.

In chap. ix. we get Psalm ciii. fulfilled in the One "who forgiveth all thine iniquities and healeth all thy diseases." Any godly Jew, when he heard the Lord forgive a man his sins, and prove that He had power *while on earth* to do so, should have understood that the One spoken of in Psalm ciii. was amongst them.

We referred in a former lecture, when speaking of the interruption of God's dealings with the Jews, to the remarkable case of Jairus' daughter, who has to wait for her restoration to life until the poor woman, who represents the family of faith in the present time, is healed; and so need not refer to it at length again; but we did not note that this is followed by the opening of the eyes of two blind men, which I think typifies the veil being taken away from Israel's heart, the two men representing either the two tribes or perhaps the two and the ten; after which the demon is cast out and the dumb speaks. So will it be by-and-by when Israel, who has been dumb as a witness for God all this time, will have their mouths opened, and will be God's witnesses unto the ends of the earth.

In chap. x. He sends His disciples out to preach, but limits their testimony to the lost sheep of the house of Israel (verse 5), and actually forbids their going into the way of the Gentiles; so that if His mission ended here there would have been no message to us *as Gentiles*. The Messiah is not yet definitely rejected, and the nation of Israel might yet, if they accepted Him, have become the channel of blessing to the world. But in verse 23 the Lord speaks prophetically of His rejection, and tells them that their testimony will be interrupted; as came to pass in Acts iv. 1-3, and that they should not even have gone over the cities of Israel until the Son of Man has come.

In chap. xi. 2, we find His forerunner in prison; and from his prison John sends a

messenger to Him, saying, "Art thou He that should come, or do we look for another?" Now if we turn to Isaiah lxi., we will find that amongst other things which the Messiah should do, was that "He should open the prison to them that were bound." We can therefore understand John's faith wavering, when hearing in his prison the works of Jesus, his prison doors remained closed, and he was still a captive. The Lord's answer to him is most remarkable. He does not say, "I am He that should come"; but He tells His two disciples to go and show John again the things which they saw and heard. The blind receive their sight, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, and the poor have the Gospel preached to them; and adds, "Blessed is he that shall not be offended in Me." It has been well remarked that this was a higher appeal to John's faith than if the Lord had opened his prison doors and set him free. But to do so would have been the act of a *king*, and Jesus is not yet acknowledged by the Jews as King; and therefore He does not deliver John, but leaves it to his faith to accept Him for the works that He did; though John himself is the only one who has not benefited by them. The other miracles which He wrought did not depend on His being accepted by the Jews as King, but on the tenderness and pity of His own heart; and so poor, needy man may claim all the deliverance that He has to give. And we can have no doubt that John rested in the message sent to him, for the Lord testifies immediately after to John's greatness *personally*, while He adds that, in *dispensational standing and privileges*, the very least in the kingdom was greater than he.

In verse 14 of chap. xii. the leaders of the people held a counsel how they might destroy Himself, and then He tells them plainly their condition, and what was to befall them; and quoting Isaiah xlii. 1, tells them how he was about to turn to the Gentiles, and "that in Him should the *Gentiles* trust." And it is important to note, that while in chap. x. 5 the testimony of the disciples was limited to Israel, here, on account of the rejection of John's testimony as His forerunner, and the purpose of the Jews to destroy Himself,

the door is about to be opened to the Gentiles, the Jews being cut off; or, in the words of Romans xi. 12, "the diminishing of them was to be for the enriching of the world." In verse 15, it says, "He withdrew Himself from them"; a typical action surely. "And He charged them that they should not make Him known," that the saying of Esaias the prophet might be fulfilled. "Behold My Servant, whom I have chosen; My Beloved, in whom My soul delighteth: I will put My Spirit upon Him, and He shall show judgment to the GENTILES."

He is not *now* going to strive, as a victor over His enemies, nor to lift up His voice as a conqueror. The poor of the flock who waited on Him, and who were oppressed and scorned by the scribes and Pharisees, were not to be cut off nor broken; and the spark of faith, however feeble, should not be quenched, though the nation should be rejected; and it is added, "in His name shall THE GENTILES trust." How manifest is the change here from chap. x. 5!

They cannot deny His miracles, and so they ascribe them to Satan; and in all the audacity of unbelief, they ask for a sign that He is the Messiah (verse 38). Everything in heaven and on earth had testified to His being the Son of God. He is born King of the Jews by genealogical descent. The star in heaven came and stood over the spot where He was born; the voice of God declared that He was His well-beloved Son; the Holy Ghost in bodily shape descended on Him, and marked Him as the Sent One of God; the winds and the waves obeyed Him; the fish in the sea filled the nets at His command; disease and sickness fled at His bidding; the very grave gave up its dead at His word; and even demons testified to Him that they knew Him to be the Son of God; everything in heaven, on earth, in the sea, and even in hell, testified to Him. But man will not have Him. And such is the human heart still; such is the heart of every unbeliever who believes not the record that God has given of His Son. Men may say, if Christ were to come back again and do such miracles before our eyes now, we would believe Him; but He Himself declares that "if they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be per-

sued though one rose from the dead." Here the scribes and Pharisees ask a sign from Him, and He gives them the sign of the prophet Jonas, that is to say, that the next sign they must have will be His death and resurrection, a Messiah lost to them as the nation to whom He was promised and sent, was the only sign they were now to have, and they must have Him from the resurrection side of the Cross.

We can, after this, understand why those who rejected Christ in the days of His flesh will be accounted more guilty than the men of Nineveh, and how the Queen of the South who came to hear the wisdom of Solomon will rise up in judgment against those who rejected the wisdom of God as presented in His Christ. And if this is to be so, of how much sorer punishment shall they be thought worthy, who with the story of the Cross since preached to them, and the light of this age in full blaze upon them, despise the love of God declared therein, and do, despite to the Spirit of Grace.

The parable which follows about the "unclean spirit having gone out of the man" is explained for us by the Lord Himself in the words—"So shall it be also unto this wicked generation," or race, viz., the nation of Israel.

The unclean spirit was the spirit of idolatry, which had been the besetting sin of the Jews, but which had disappeared from them at that time. They were hypocrites and self-righteous Pharisees, but they were not idolators.

Now they are wandering all over the earth seeking rest, but finding none. By-and-by they will return again to the Holy Land, which will be then prepared and ready for them, and will take to themselves "the idol shepherd"—the Antichrist. The apostate portion of them worshipping the beast and his image (Rev. 13). And this, their last apostacy, will be worse than the first. "So," says our Lord, "shall it be unto this wicked generation."

While He yet spake, His mother and His brethren stand without desiring to speak with Him. In answer to which He disclaims all Jewish and even natural relationships, and takes up a world-wide one under that typical word *whosoever*, identifying every individual as in relation to Himself who does the will of His Father which is in heaven.

Here ends the history of the Lord's formal presentation to the Jews as their Messiah, come to confirm the promises made to the fathers, and their deliberate rejection of Him. The kingdom must take another form now on account of the rejection of the King, an aspect of it which is expressed in Rev. i., by the words "the kingdom and patience, or endurance, of Jesus Christ." The kingdom is His by right and title now as truly as it will be when He "takes His great power and reigns." But this must form the subject of our next lecture.

[The Lectures commenced in January *Witness*, and will (*D.F.*) be continued monthly till December. The complete Numbers will be posted free, monthly, for 1/6. Back Numbers in stock.]

ON BREAKING THE BREAD.

An examination of the Scriptures on the subject of "Breaking Bread" (the force of the original being given), as to the Lord's own place and as to our place at the table.

What the Lord Jesus Himself did.

MATT. xxvi. 26, 27—And as they were eating, *Jesus* took bread (or a loaf), and blessed it, and brake it, and gave it to the *disciples* (plural), and said, *Take, eat*: this is My body. And *He* took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, Drink ye all of it. Mark xiv. 22, 23—And as they did eat, *Jesus* took bread (or a loaf), and blessed, and brake it, and gave to *them* (plural), and said, *Take, eat*: this is My body. And *He* took the cup, and when *He* had given thanks, *He* gave to them: and they all drank of it. Luke xxii. 19, 20—And *He* took bread (or a loaf), and gave thanks, and brake it, and gave unto them, saying, This is My body which is given for you: *this do* in remembrance of Me. Likewise also the cup after supper. 1 Cor. xi. 23-26—The *Lord Jesus*, the night in which He was betrayed, took bread (or a loaf): and when *He* had given thanks, *He* brake it, and said, "Take, eat": this is My body, which is broken for you (the words, "Take, eat," and "broken," are omitted here according to the best authorities; but at the same time the words "Take, eat," are used in Matt. xxvi. 26, and Mark xiv. 22; so it is quite true that the Lord Jesus did say to His disciples, "Take, eat"): this do in remembrance of Me. After

the same manner *He* took the cup, when He had supped (or after supper), saying, This cup is the new testament in My blood: *this do ye*, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of Me. For as often as ye *eat* this bread (or loaf), and drink this cup, ye do show the Lord's death till He come." Thus we see from these scriptures what the Lord Jesus Himself did. *He* took a loaf, He gave thanks, *He* brake, *He* gave to them, and said, "*Take, eat*"; and all that the disciples had to do in the presence of the Lord was to take from Him that which He had broken, and eat it. And note, in all this fourfold testimony of the institution of the Lord's Supper, we do not read that the Lord ever appointed that any one individual should perform the act the Lord had performed, neither representatively nor otherwise, after He had gone. No; because the precious promise given in Matt. xviii. 20, "Where two or three are gathered together in My name, there am I in the midst of them," holds good to-day; and in spirit He presides, and is Lord over His own table to-day, just as much as He did that night in the Passover-room. And as those disciples received out of the hand of the Lord Jesus, so we receive, as out of His own hand, the bread and the cup.

How we have to act now the Lord is not with us in person.

1 Cor. x. 16, 17—"The cup of blessing which *We* bless" (not *one* blessing or giving thanks for all, but *We*; each one individually, silently it may be). "The bread (or loaf) which *We* break" (not one breaking for all, neither representatively nor otherwise; there is no word in Scripture about one representing all in either the giving of thanks or breaking the bread at the Lord's table; but *we*, each one breaking a piece off). Then, as verse 17 says, *We* all partake of that one bread (loaf); that is, *We* partake that which we have broken off the one loaf. In Acts xx. 7, we find, "On the first day of the week the *disciples* (plural) came together to break bread" (loaf). Note, the *disciples*, each one, male and female, came together with the one object, to break bread, and Paul amongst them, so they would be going to do it according to 1 Cor. x. 16, 17. In Acts ii. 42, we read, And they continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine, fellowship, and in breaking bread (loaf). "*They*," the three thousand,

continued breaking bread; not one doing it for all but each one of that three thousand just saved, *they* broke the bread. Thus we see plainly from these scriptures that it is ours to break individually, and eat that which we have broken off, and ours to drink of that cup.

The examination of the following words in the original will further show that on no account should the bread be broken officially. We read that the Lord Jesus *took* bread (or a loaf). Some tell us that the word "took" simply means that He set one loaf apart from the rest; but the word "took" implies more than that here. There are twenty-two different Greek words which occur in the New Testament all translated alike, "took" and "take"; but the Spirit of God so carefully selecting these different words to apply to different subjects ought surely to convey some truth to us. The word "*took*," which occurs in Matt. viii. 17, xiv. 19, xxii. 15, xxvi. 26, 27, Mark viii. 6-14, Luke ix. 16, xxii. 19, xxiv. 30-43, and other places, is the translation of the Greek word "*lambano*," literally meaning "to take hold of with the hand." If the Lord had meant that He merely set one loaf apart for the purpose, surely the Spirit would have used the word that occurs in Matt. ii. 13, xii. 45, xvi. 22, xvii. 1, xxvii. 27, Luke ix. 10, Acts xv. 39, xvi. 33, xxiii. 18, and other places, and is the translation of the word "*paralambano*," which means "to take from beside another"—"take to one's self." Space forbids referring to the whole of the twenty-two different words, but the above two examples show plainly that the Lord Jesus took a loaf into His hands ere He gave thanks. The next is, He *brake*. There are ten different Greek words translated "*brake*" and "*broken*." The verb "*klao*," meaning "to break off," is used in the following passages—Matt. xiv. 19, xv. 36, xxvi. 26, Mark xiv. 22, Luke xxii. 19, xxiv. 30, Acts ii. 42-46, xx. 7-11, xxvii. 35, 1 Cor. x. 16, xi. 24, used only in connection with the Lord's Supper and the taking of daily food; see Acts xxvii. 35, where Paul takes a loaf, he broke off, and began to eat. Notice the word "*it*" is in italics in every case in connection with this word. It should properly read "broke off" in all the occurrences. The noun "*klasma*" is also rendered "fragment" in Matt. xiv. 20, Mark vi. 43, viii. 19, 20, Luke ix. 17, John vi. 12, 13. "Broken meat,"

in Matt. xv. 37, Mark viii. 8. "*Klasma*" means "that which is broken off." So we see by the word "*klao*" being chosen by the Lord, signifies that He broke, not the loaf in two, but a piece off for them each one. The contrast to this word is the word "*schizo*," meaning "to divide." "Separate" occurs John xxi. 11; the word is translated "divide" in Acts xiv. 4, xxiii. 7. Now, if the Lord had intended the loaf to be broken in two, or divided before it left the table, He would have used the word "*schizo*," and not the word "*klao*."

The word "gave" is also worthy of notice. The Greek word "*didomi*," is one of sixteen different words that the Lord uses in the New Testament, all translated "give" and "gave." "*Didomi*," which means to "give freely," personally, is the word used in connection with the Lord's Supper—Matt. xxvi. 26, 27, 28, Mark xiv. 22, Luke xxii. 19, 1 Cor. xi. 23. In Rev. xvii. 13, we find another word "gave"—the translation of the word "*diadidomi*," meaning "give through," or "from hand to hand." The same word is rendered "distribute" in Luke xviii. 22, John vi. 11; "make distribution," in Acts iv. 35. Thus, we see, from the correct meaning of these words and the Spirit's use of them in the Scriptures, that the Lord Jesus took a loaf into His hands, and gave thanks, and broke off a piece for each of the eleven disciples, and gave the piece personally Himself to each one. We do not read of the loaf leaving His hands; in fact it is a plain proof that the loaf was not passed from one to the other, or else the word "*diadidomi*" would have been used, and not "*didomi*." The Lord was present in person, and each one received out of His hand.

The words "This do" are dwelt upon as teaching that we must perform every act the Lord performed; but an examination of the words "This do" will prove otherwise. The word "do" is a translation of the Greek word "*poieo*," literally meaning "to make," "form," "keep"; in fact the word "*poieo*" is translated 104 times "make" in the New Testament. The following are a few of the passages where the word is so rendered:—Matt. xvii. 4, xxiii. 15, Luke xv. 19, John ii. 16, xiv. 23, Rom. xv. 26, Eph. ii. 15, Heb. viii. 5, 1 John i. 10, Rev. xxi. 5, xxii. 15. The same word is also

translated "keep" in Matt. xxvi. 18, John vii. 19, Acts xviii. 21, Heb. xi. 28; "observe" in Acts xvi. 21. Thus we see from the meaning of the word, and from the foregoing use of it in the scriptures, "This do" refers to the *keeping of the feast*, and not to the act the Lord did. In 1 Cor. xi. 25 the same words, "This do," are used. "After the same manner also He took the cup, when He had supped (or it should be the same as Luke xxii. 20, after supper), saying, This cup is the new testament in My blood: *this do ye* as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of Me." So, I ask the question, what do the words "This do" refer to here? They cannot refer to any act that the Lord Jesus did, because *He* did not drink of the cup in the new covenant; therefore, the words "This do" in this verse must mean drink of the cup, and they must also mean, in verse 24, *eat the bread*. Surely this is plain to any unbiassed mind, that the words "This do," mean "keep the feast," "eat and drink." Three inspired witnesses give testimony to this truth—Matt. xxvi. 26, Mark xiv. 22, 1 Cor. xi. 26—"Take, eat," in contrast with Luke xxii. 19, "This do." Thus we have the Lord saying, in Luke xxii. 19, "This do," and we desire to know whether *He* means do what *He* did, or what *the disciples* did; and we turn to Matt. xxvi. 26, and Mark xiv. 22, 1 Cor. xi. 24, 25, 26, and we are there told that He means, *not* do what He did, but what the disciples did, "*Take, eat.*" But, say some, we must break. Decidedly, we must, and 1 Cor. x. 16, 17 gives us instructions. "The cup of blessing which *We* bless" (not one, but *We*, each one; it is erroneous to suppose that the *blessing* here refers to the giving of thanks for the bread or wine), "the bread which *We* break. No instructions in the Word of God about *one* breaking it for all. No. Now that the Lord Jesus is not with us in person, *We, each one*, must break that loaf; and we all partake out of that one loaf that which we have broken off.

In Luke xxii. 23 we get another word, "do," which is the translation of the Greek word "prasso," meaning to do some particular act. The word is used in connection with the disciples asking among themselves which of them should "*do*" this deed—that is, betray the Lord. Now, again, if the Lord had intended any one individual to do what He

did, He would surely have used this word "prasso." No; but He uses the word "poieo," which means "to make," "keep," or "observe." These are differences that God Himself has made, and surely they ought to be a voice to us. God has spoken plainly; the word is plain. Then let us see to it that we are not taking the Lord's place at His table, unconsciously or otherwise.

I ask all believers exercised as to the scriptural mode of carrying out the ordinance of the Lord's Supper, just to take their Bibles and carefully refer to, and compare the scriptures referred to.

Of course, in large gatherings it is necessary to divide the loaf into two, or sometimes more portions, to pass different ways; but in such a case it should not be looked upon as official or ministerial. But in small gatherings where there is not such a necessity, we find the thing practised. Now, the question is, is it right or wrong? The Word of God answers it is wrong. So I trust that those who are thus exercised (as I know there are many in different parts), will find this paper to help them in comparing scripture with scripture, and rightly dividing the Word of Truth.

H. W.

Correspondence.

MAN IN INNOCENCE.

To the Editor of *The Witness*.

MY DEAR BROTHER,—In the May number of your journal, under the head of "Baptism—What is it?" being "notes of an address by Dr. Mulock, delivered at Chester," the Dr. is represented as saying, "Man in innocence had communion with God"; also, that "God walked and talked with His creatures in the garden before the fall"; and Genesis iii. 8 is given in proof. I turn to the scripture, and read as follows—"And they heard the voice of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day: and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God amongst the trees of the garden." How the word which tells unmistakably that they were *afraid* of God *after* the fall is proof that they had *communion* with God *before*, it is difficult to see; and surely the simplest and surest way to judge of the nature of their position and relationship to God before they fell would be to refer to what the Holy Ghost has written as to that period. I will not here quote at length Genesis i. 26 to ii. 25; but will ask your readers kindly to open their Bibles and read for themselves, and say whether in all that is recorded from the moment that God said, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness," until "the rib, which

the Lord God had taken from man, builded he a woman, and brought her unto the man," there is any proof or any just inference that "man had communion with God," or that "God walked and talked with His creatures."

We find, first, counsel—"Let *us* make man," &c. ; then, "God created man in His image," "Male and female created He them"; then, "God blessed them," and said, "Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it"; then, "Dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth," is given to them. Their food and that of the lower creatures is next pointed out. We have then a description of their residence—"And the Lord God planted a garden eastward in Eden, and there He put the man whom He had formed." And then, what is of the greatest consequence as determining the character of man's relationship to God, not only did the Lord God make to grow out of the ground "every tree that was pleasant to the sight and good for food," but specially was there "the tree of life also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of knowledge of good and evil." Not only was man's physical need provided for, but there was that which signified a sovereign source of life on the one hand and the creature's responsibility to the Creator on the other. The Lord God then gives Adam instructions as to dressing and keeping the garden; placing every tree of the garden at his service, except that of one reserved as a test of obedience, with the penalty of death attached to disobedience. His intelligence is then brought into exercise; the Lord God bringing to him "every beast of the field, and every fowl of the air," "to see what he would call them." And, finally, the Lord God said, "It is not meet that the man should be alone; I will make him an help meet for him." "And the Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, and he slept; and He took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh instead thereof. And the rib, which the Lord God had taken from man, builded He a woman, and brought her unto the man."

Here, then, is man, created in the image of God,—God's representative, as Dr. Mulock says,—and after God's likeness, so far as that consisted with a state of innocence, placed in dominion over the works of His hands; every provision made for their happiness as God's creatures, and for their continuance in blessing, in that they had access to the tree of life, but responsible to Him who had created them. Such was the position of the first man, Adam, before the fall—happy and exalted as a creature, but under responsibility; his happiness and continuance depending on his own obedience.

Is there, however, anything in this position which justifies the statement that "man had communion with God"? Dr. Mulock says that "the unsaved, unregenerate man can have no communion with God. *He has not the nature of God; and, therefore, communion is impossible.*" Just so. There must be the partaking of the Divine nature in order to have communion with God; and this the Holy Ghost, by the apostle Peter, shows to be the privilege of those "who have obtained like precious faith with us." Man in innocence was certainly not "a partaker of the Divine nature." I do not suppose even Dr. Mulock would say

so. Neither Luke iii. 38 nor Acts xvii. 28, 29 would, I think, convey such a thought to the Scripture student. His nature was essentially and only human nature, whether in innocence or in sin. The fall has changed the condition of our human nature—*i. e.*, in *us* it is sinful, and only evil; whereas, in Adam, before the fall, it was innocent, without the knowledge of good and evil. But, blessed be God, "where sin abounded, grace has much more abounded." I have lost innocence, but I am made the "righteousness of God" in Christ. I have lost "the way of the tree of life" in an earthly paradise, but have access to "the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God."

God "breathed into man's nostrils the breath of life, and man became a living soul." Thus immortality belongs to the first man, whether innocent or fallen; but eternal life is in Christ only. And "the eternal life which was with the Father has been manifested unto us; and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son, Jesus Christ."

The theory which Dr. Mulock teaches destroys the superabounding character of that grace, which, when "sin has reigned unto death, reigns through righteousness unto eternal life, by Jesus Christ, our Lord." It robs the glorious redemption work of Christ of its surpassing excellence and value; and attributing to the first man that which only belongs to the new creature in Christ, practically brings down the standing of the latter to the level of the former.

"The first man was created in innocence, the *new man* in righteousness and holiness of truth." Obedience as a creature does not necessarily imply communion. It does not appear that even angelic beings can be said to have communion with God. They "excel in strength"; "hearken to the voice of His word, and do His pleasure"; and "are sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation." Moreover, they are observers of God's order in the Church, and desire to look into the wondrous mysteries of redemption. But having "the mind of Christ" is the special privilege of the saints of God. Born of God by the power of the Holy Ghost, and having redemption through the blood of Christ, and sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, God has made known to us the mystery of His will, and has revealed to us that which the natural eye hath not seen nor ear heard, and which entered not into the heart of man to conceive. And He would have us delight in all the precious communications He has been pleased to make to us concerning the Son of His love. Even here on earth we enter into it in measure; but by-and-by the tabernacle of God shall be with men, and He shall dwell with them. But all this is the result of the mighty victory gained by "the seed of the woman," who has bruised the serpent's head.

May you and I, dear brother, and all the beloved saints of God, so keep the words of Christ, that we may know in fuller, deeper measure, even here, the joy of the Father and the Son coming to us and making their abode with us.—Yours affectionately in Christ,

G. A. S.

* [We gladly insert the above letter, believing it to convey the truth upon the point in question. Were the honoured servant of God now living, whose address was

reported, no doubt he would fully accept what our correspondent G. A. S. has written. That there was un hindered intercourse between God and man in innocence we think cannot be questioned, though we believe it to be a mistake to apply the word "communion" to such intercourse as may have passed between the Creator as such and His creatures.

We would, however, point out that we believe it to be equally a mistake to apply the word "immortality" to the condition of "the first man, whether innocent or fallen." The word "immortality," as used in the Scriptures, applies only to those who are in Christ, and who, at His coming, shall "put on immortality." We believe that this mistaken use of the word is (unintentionally) giving a handle to those who hold the doctrine of annihilation, which they are not slow to use against the truth.

Nevertheless, the teaching of Scripture is plain, that though man may kill this mortal body, he "is not able to kill the soul" (Matt. x. 28). That life which God breathed into man is not terminated by such death as man can inflict.—ED.]

PRECIOUS.

"Unto you therefore which believe He is precious"
(1 Peter ii. 7).

JESUS is precious when youth and health
Make life a gladsome thing,
Joy thrills through ev'ry vein and makes
The heart and lips to sing,
Earth's pleasures all are fleeting,
And swiftly pass away ;
But the joy of knowing Jesus
Grows brighter all the way.

Jesus is precious when trials come
And clouds obscure our sky,
Amid the storm we hear His voice,
And know that He is high.
When earthly props all fail us,
And friends we loved are gone,
'Tis then we know how good it is
To trust in Him alone.

Jesus is precious the journey through,
And should we reach the shore
Of death's dark swelling flood, His hand
Shall guide us safely o'er ;
To dwell with Him for ever,
Free from all taint of sin,
Where not a cloud can ever come
Betwixt our souls and Him.

M. P.

Questions and Answers.

We particularly request that each writer will give his name and address in full, not for publication, but that we may know who it is that seeks to help, and, if desirable, that we may communicate privately.

Replies to appear in the next number require to be sent in not later than 15th of present month, and so on ; the 15th of the month being always the latest to which we can defer making up for press

Replies are invited to the following questions :—

Does Heb. xi. 40 mean that God has provided some better thing for us, the saints of this dispensation, or that the Old Testament saints are waiting for us, both being perfected together and to share the same blessings?

Could anyone explain why it is that in 2 Peter ii. 4 the angels that sinned are depicted as being bound with chains of darkness in hell, there to await their judgment, whilst in Rev. xii. 7 they are portrayed as being in heaven fighting with Christ and His saints?

Is it the first or the second beast mentioned in Rev. xiii. which is to be worshipped as God, by the entire Roman world in the latter half of the 70th week mentioned in Dan. ix.?

Has God ordained some to be saved and some to be lost, when He has so clearly said in His word, "Whosoever believeth on Me hath everlasting life"?

Is it according to Scripture and conformable to British law for believers to be married in the place of meeting by an evangelist or any Christian?

DIVISION CONTRARY TO THE DOCTRINE.

QUESTION 291.—How can division be caused "contrary to the doctrine," or what is the meaning of Rom. xvi. 16, 17?

Ans. A.—Divisions contrary to the doctrine may be caused either by imposing an unscriptural term of fellowship, or by the allowance of evil unjudged, which would cause godly ones to go out in obedience to the command—"Depart from unrighteousness"; and, anything, whereby children of God are hindered in the path of obedience, may be called an "offence" or an "occasion of stumbling." In this scripture, as frequently elsewhere, the Spirit directs special attention to *leaders* who, by erroneous teaching or malpractice, would mislead saints; and the Lord ever solicitous for the welfare of His people would guard the precious sheep and lambs of His flock from such an influence. Verse 17 sets before us our responsibility to judge the act, whilst verse 18 gives the Lord's estimate of those who wilfully mislead. According to the former it is for us to mark those who do the like, and to avoid them; but the Lord who alone can discern the motive, must determine the measure of individual culpability. It is often said of one or another, "He is such a good man, so gifted, so much used," &c., and all that may be true, and at the same time the Lord have a controversy with him in the matter above referred to. It is well for us to remember that our duty is simply to obey. The Lord reserves to Himself the right to judge His own servants, and doubtless He will not overlook in them anything commendable. Again, on behalf of leading men connected with sectarian bodies, it has been urged that, inasmuch as those divisions have so long existed, they cannot be charged with having caused them; but have not servants of the Lord so circumstanced grave reason to consider whether in their effort to maintain that position they are not causing occasions to stumble, by drawing children of God away from the only scriptural ground, that which is common to all believers? Great is the responsibility

of those who take lead amongst Christians, they shall receive stricter judgment (James iii. 1).—R. S.

Ans. B.—The simple meaning of this passage is—“Keep your eyes upon them that are causing the divisions and offences, which lead to results utterly contrary to the teaching ye have received, and avoid following their tendencies—*i.e.*, give them no countenance in what they do. For they that are such serve not the Lord Jesus Christ, but have some base motive to serve either mental pride or carnal lust; and they, by good words and fair speeches, deceive the hearts of the simple.” Compare Phil. iii. 17, where the same thought is on the apostle’s mind, and *note his grief of soul* about such.—A. O. M.

Ans. C.—Verses 1 to 16 of the 16th chapter of Romans contain sundry salutations; the 17th and 18th verses contain the exhortation to “mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned, and avoid them.” In other of his epistles Paul cautions the saints against being deceived and enticed—*vide* Col. ii. 4-18; 1 Timothy vi. 3-5—showing that even at that early period of the Church there were those who had fallen away from the true faith and doctrine which they had been taught by the apostles, and were bringing in diverse heresies which were causing divisions and strife among the saints, and which Paul condemns in his epistles; warning them to avoid these false teachers, and not even to eat with them. Peter in his first epistle, chap. ii., gives a description of these false teachers and their punishment; and this chapter, I think, explains Romans xvi. 17, 18.—W. D. B.

Ans. D.—The “doctrine” to which Paul refers is that grand exposition of Gospel truth which leads our hearts on, step by step, till, after having revealed to us the identification of Christ with us in our sins, and the shame, and suffering, and death that they involved, and then our glorious identification with Christ in resurrection life in the 8th as well as preceding chapters of this epistle to the Romans, it ends with “no separation from the love of God, which is in Jesus Christ our Lord” (Rom. viii. 39). Then, passing over a digression in the parenthetic 9th, 10th, and 11th chapters, we find the apostle applying practically this “doctrine” in the 12th chapter, dwelling on that *oneness* into which Christ, by His work, has brought us, and showing that *all ministry* should, in virtue of this, be, under the Head, for edification of the *whole body*. Hence the “good words and fair speeches” of those who seduce and draw away the disciples, and, causing divisions, would divide the body of Christ, are to be hated as the Lord hates them; and the authors of these heresies to be, in faithfulness to the Lord, MARKED and avoided.—M. T. B.

Editor’s Note.—We insert these four replies selected from many, believing that there are points worthy of consideration in each. “The doctrine which ye have learned” we take to be the same as “the apostles’ doctrine” (Acts ii. 42). “The traditions, as I delivered them to you” (1 Cor. xi. 2). “The words of our Lord Jesus Christ and the doctrine which is according to godliness” (1 Tim. vi. 3, &c.) “The commandment of us the apostles of the Lord and Saviour” (2 Peter iii. 2). “The faith once delivered to the saints” (Jude 3). We

take it to be the entire revealed will of the Lord as communicated for the Church, which is His body (the saints of this dispensation), in the writings of the apostles and the recorded words of the Lord Jesus Himself. To “cause division” or to stumble weak ones, by introducing doctrines or practices not in accordance with the doctrine divinely taught them, is the sin here denounced. In Acts xx. 30, it is even more definitely spoken of. That the evils thus predicted have arisen to the breaking up of all corporate testimony upon earth is evident to all. In view of such a declension we are commended to “God and the word of His grace, which is able to build you up.” There is no resource in the evil day but the one, “God and the word of His grace.” “Thou hast kept My word, and hast not denied My name” is the commendation given by the Lord to the faithful in Philadelphia (Rev. iii. 8). To persons in the midst of sects and systems of men, which are the very embodiment of doctrine contrary to apostolic teachings, such a command as this can have no meaning. But amongst assemblies composed of those who have returned (professedly at least) to “God and the word of His grace,” who are honestly seeking unto apostolic doctrine and practice, there is the gravest necessity to give heed to the command before us. It is possible to cause division by the unwise pressure of certain truths—using truth as a *wedge* to divide, rather than seeking by the truth in love to build up. This is a serious evil, but must not be confounded with the causing of division among those who are scripturally gathered by the introduction of that which is *contrary to Scripture*. The question arises as to whether the “marking” and “avoiding” amounts to “putting away,” or only warrants internal discipline? We believe that this point is not here settled. If there be first the “marking” and “avoiding,” then it will in due time be manifested whether the persons so marked are only acting in ignorance and wilfulness, of which, ere long, they may see the evil, or whether they are fundamentally wrong in doctrine, and therefore to be put away; or heretical, as Titus iii. 10, and therefore to be rejected. In all such matters there is great need for the patience that waits upon God, and will not take a step until God’s time has come, as well as for the zeal that will not consent to the setting aside of the Word and will of the Lord.

FAILING IN BUSINESS.

QUESTION 292.—Would Scripture warrant a brother, who has failed in business (paying a composition), to continue in the ministry of the Gospel, and to believers? and, if he persists, what should be done?

Ans. A.—I take Lev. xxi. 16-24 to be the answer to the above question.—J. W.

Ans. B.—The causes which lead to bankruptcy are so varied that no one rule can be laid down that will suit every case. One might *inherit* an unsound business, and so “fail.” Or one might through ill health, or difficulties he could not avoid, have to succumb. In dealing with a case of bankruptcy in a church of God, three points should be kept in view. 1st. What led the brother into business? Was he really waiting on the Lord about the matter; or was he blinded by a “covetous” desire to rise to a position for which he had neither finances nor other qualifications? If

“sectarianism” is slaying its thousands, “worldliness” is slaying its tens of thousands; and the testimony of saints in a right position is fast sinking down to a cheap profession, which *costs nothing*. 2nd. How did the bankrupt behave while in business? Was he diligent in business, according to Proverbs x. 4; and was he diligent to know the state of his business, according to Proverbs xxvii. 23? I have been told that in France, if a bankrupt cannot produce properly kept books he is treated as a criminal; and that in China if carelessness in this can be proved against him he is beheaded. The want of conscience in these matters among professedly separated Christians is appalling. 3rd. How did the bankrupt act when he found out that his business was not paying? Did he act with transparent honesty, and real moral integrity; or did he conceal the truth from his creditors to their loss; and did he show a willingness to satisfy his fellow-saints as to the morality of his failure; or was there an unwillingness to submit the matter to properly qualified persons? No church who wishes to secure the full blessing of God should ever allow a bankruptcy to lapse without a proper investigation. And any brother who fails in business, if he is at all right with God, will be glad to help in this matter, so that the truth may suffer as little as possible. As to such a one ministering, I would say, if the church is satisfied as to his integrity in business, they would have no cause to shut his mouth; but even then a godly man would keep a low place; but if a brother's ministry is not acceptable, on account of his failure, then he ought to be silent. In the church, all things are to be done unto edifying (1 Cor. xiv. 26), and ministry which is not acceptable cannot be to edification. One leading in the church, or ministering towards the world, “must have a good report” (see 1 Tim. i. 7, Acts xvi. 1-3, Acts xxii. 12). As to such a one persisting to force his ministry on his brethren, he should be warned according to 1 Thess. v. 14, if that fail his company should be avoided; *i.e.*, not in any way encouraged in his unscriptural course, and be admonished according to 2 Thess. iii. 14, 15. If this also fail, his case should lead the oversight to their faces before God, according to 1 Peter v. 5-7. The solution of this difficulty, as well as many others, lies in leading brethren cultivating a much deeper spirituality. “Except the LORD build the house, they labour in vain that build it; except the LORD keep the city, the watchman waketh but in vain.”—G. A.

Ans. C.—It depends altogether upon the character of the failure. If it has been an honest one, brought on by sheer depression of trade, no blame whatever can attach to the brother. If a satisfactory settlement has been arrived at between him and his creditors, and if the composition fixed is paid up by him, Scripture nowhere puts an interdict upon his ministry, either in Gospel work or to believers. There can be no difficulty among Christians when it is an honest failure. If the circumstances in any way affected the moral character of the brother, Scripture certainly would forbid him exercising his gift otherwise; if not, the brother is as free as before to continue his ministry. Brethren should be very careful of how they act in such a case.—R. F. B.

Editor's Note.—The number of replies that have been sent to this question indicates the need there is for its being dealt with. We do not say that failure in business

necessarily implies dishonesty of purpose. But being convinced that it is not the will of God that His children should be unable to pay their lawful debts, we hold that to be in such circumstances must of necessity warrant self-judgment before God, and the taking of a lowly place before men. To embark in business is a serious matter. Too often it is the resource of one who is too proud or too self-willed to go on quietly as a servant. He “starts on his own account” without capital, or with only borrowed money, or with capital that bears no reasonable proportion to the liabilities incurred. If he succeeds, the profit is his. If not, the loss falls upon others. This cannot be regarded as, in any sense, a righteous course of action. Yet most failures are traceable to this error at the outset. Not unfrequently the root is the restless haste to be rich, leading to the acceptance of risk and undue liabilities. That there are failures under circumstances that call far more for sympathy than censure must be fully acknowledged. And yet, even in such cases, there has almost certainly been some cause which, traced to its source, indicates a lack of the wisdom which is profitable to direct; or failure, in rightly seeking and obtaining Divine guidance. It may be said, who is there that does not fail this sense? and we admit that similar errors enter into some department of every life. But there is this speciality about failure in business—it directly affects others. And a man's brethren, with whom he is associated in fellowship, are far more likely than the man himself to know how his testimony in the world and his ministry in the church are affected by his bankruptcy. All things in the assembly should be done for edification, and if rightly or wrongly, the failure is regarded by the saints as a blot on the person's character and as damaging to his ministry, his true place must be to wait on God till, in His own time and way, confidence is restored. On the other hand, where a failure is so largely due to adverse circumstances that the feeling is chiefly one of sympathy,—the whole assembly being satisfied as to the bankrupt's integrity and present condition of soul before God,—there would not, in such a case, we judge, be any need for an imposed limitation as to ministry beyond that which, by “a right spirit,” would be self-imposed. The idea that settlement with creditors, by payment of a composition, relieves a man of all moral obligation to pay what he owes, is simply monstrous and repugnant to every honest mind. Instances, not a few, are on record where even worldly men, from a sense of honour, who prospered after failure, paid up in after years all they owed, with interest. We know of at least one respected Christian who did the same, and we have reason to know also what weight was thus given to his testimony in the world. Should it be the mind of others in the fellowship that the circumstances in which a man is placed are a barrier to the acceptableness of his ministry, it is impossible for us to suppose one in a right state before God forcing it upon those who do not wish it. Should he persist in doing so, we know of no resource but that the whole assembly be humbled before God, and ask that He would come in and make manifest His judgment in the matter. We specially commend to our readers

Answer B.

The Question concerning “Guilt in Nathanael” is left over for want of space.

THE "MAN OF GOD."

I.

WHEN one decides to live for God, to be "a man of God," the question presents itself how this is to be done. Is one to expect some mysterious feeling to pass over him, leaving him with tastes and desires and feelings Godward? Many expect this, and wait for it, sinking to despair or recklessness as the waiting appears to be in vain. This is the point at which Christians often take the false step which is the ruin of their after life. They suffer themselves to be buoyed up with hopes for which there is no warrant in the Word of God. These hopes are disappointed, and leave them with faith shaken and aspirations so checked that they content themselves thenceforth with the low level common around them.

Instead of this, Scripture teaches that the new-born soul needs to be nourished with the food provided for it "the milk of the Word"; and, strengthened thereby, definitely to follow certain lines of conduct. It is true that the Christ-like life is the fruit of the Spirit's working, and not the result of effort; but great watchfulness is necessary, and a decided stand in the strength of the Lord against the many hindrances to His working.

For example, the man of God is told (1 Tim. vi. 11) to follow righteousness. This, of course, refers to the Christian's practical every-day life among his fellows; and the teaching is, that he is not to wait till he drifts into a condition where righteous dealing is natural and no inclination is felt to the contrary, but manfully to follow after it, putting out of his way, or passing by, whatever may seek to draw him aside. Those who hold that justification by faith is license for a careless life have read the Scriptures with blinded eyes. Everywhere uprightness of life is taught to be essential in a follower of Christ. Indeed, how can one be following when walking in unrighteousness which was ever far from Him who "loved righteousness and hated iniquity"? "By their fruits ye shall know them," is the test to which the Lord would have His people subjected. To this test He submitted Himself when claiming to be the Son of God—"If I do not the

works of My Father, believe Me not." No teaching could be more plain and clear. As long as there was no resemblance to the Father there was no evidence of the relationship; therefore they must do as He does—"That ye may be the children of your Father who is in heaven" (Matt. v. 45). "Let every one that nameth the name of the Lord depart from unrighteousness." It is most plainly a matter of individual choice and responsibility, or commands would be mocking superfluities.

A righteous life is such that one will not need to be ashamed of it when it is exposed. It will be lived in the knowledge that the Lord's eye is ever upon it. Any deviation from right is deeply grieving to Him. His will is the only standard of right. Conscience is no safe guide, except when under the instruction of truth. A glance at heathen practices is sufficient confirmation of this. If we would be kept right, we must be continually trying our ways before Him. In His presence the Spirit would soon make known the existence of any way of grief. Right before Him implies wisdom with regard to others—providing for "things honourable in the sight of all men."

Righteousness is living rightly as a man among men, but from the man of God something more is expected. Not only righteousness, but godliness must be followed. "Live godly in Christ Jesus." Only in Him is it possible, for there must be vital union with God. It includes devotion to Him and showing Him forth. Prayer goes up as continual incense before Him. His Word is read with the reverend subjection it demands. Communion with God is maintained, and its effect seen in the character of the walk. It is known to be a walk with God, for it is not only right, just, and honest, but there is a grace about it—may we not say a fragrance—which tells of nearness to Him, and which tends to bring others nearer? But all do not care enough for God to welcome among them any reflection of Him, so "all that will live godly must suffer persecution" Because it brings reproach in some form or other it will not come naturally.

"To suffer is not pleasing to the flesh."

Many ways of escape will present themselves which will need to be rejected that godliness may be followed.

Nor can it be right to consider oneself free from responsibility till the Lord grant some further blessing, seeing that He hath already granted "all things" that are necessary for "life and godliness" (2 Pet. i. 3). What is necessary, is not that He shall grant anything fresh, but that, on our part, we add to the faith which made us His—virtue, strength, courage—to go on and lay hold of that for which we were laid hold of by Him. "Strong to apprehend." He would not have His children always babes, but men, with muscle and backbone enough thus to make their choice, and follow it in spite of opposition. Exercise develops the strength of muscle. Perhaps the "man of God" will be all the more strong, noble, manly, for having had to *follow* righteousness and godliness, instead of sitting down to wait for it.

"Work out your own salvation."
"It is God who worketh in you."

It has been said that all error is one-sided truth. The harm done by taking exclusively either side of this truth is incalculable. The one has produced a hard, cold, joyless life; the other, a careless, indolent, useless one. To carry out the commands of Him we call Lord is our responsibility, from which there is no discharge; yet, throughout, must all power be looked for from Him who worketh within. The withered hand had no power to stretch itself out, yet if it had not been outstretched it would have remained withered.

"Quit you like men; be strong."

II.

Several of the Old Testament prophets are described as men of God—that is, men set apart for His use and devoted to His service. They were His absolutely, to be at His bidding every moment, ready always actively to serve or only to stand and wait. Study of the lives of the prophets also tells us that they had not only duties, but privileges, arising out of the fact that they were men of God. They were His, therefore He provided for them. When Moses was accused, the Lord defended him; the meek man had nothing to say on his own behalf. When Elijah was likely to die of hunger in the wilderness, to which man's rage had driven him, his Master found means to sustain him, and he had but to trust and

receive. When Elisha was attacked by horses and chariots and a great host, the Lord smote them with blindness rather than they should touch him.

The first New Testament passage where the expression is made use of, 1 Tim. 6-11, begins with warnings against what would turn the man of God aside from his allegiance. Prominent among hindrances are "disputes of words" and "love of money." The former becomes too often only a striving for mastery. The man of God will be ready always to give an answer to one asking a reason for his hope, and meekly to instruct those who oppose themselves; but disputing is vain, for the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God. If anything like argument is to be profitable, the mind must be very subject to the Lord and constant communion with Him maintained. The man of God may not speak his own words, or the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but the words which the Holy Spirit teacheth, with the wisdom which the adversary is not able to gainsay or resist.

Can the man of God have his hope set on the uncertainty of riches? Does not the very expression seem to make manifest the impossibility? The man of God must look to Him for satisfaction. When the man of the world looks to money for relief in difficulty—the rich man's wealth is a strong city, and as a high wall in his own conceit—the man of God looks to the Lord who is infinite in resources. "The name of the Lord is a strong tower; the righteous runneth into it and is safe." His help comes from the living God, whether in the shape of money or otherwise. His trust is not in what is changeable, but in what is abiding and sure and changeless. Fortunes change hands every day; "but Thou art the same."

How true it is that they who reach after riches pierce themselves through with many sorrows. After the fret and wear of obtaining the wealth, there is anxious fear lest unwise handling should scatter it again. The temptations it brings in its train are added sources of sorrow. There are temptations to worldliness, for which Satan has a thousand plausible excuses for those who desire them. Temptation to tone down godliness to suit the society to which wealth has been the introduction.

Temptation to lightly esteem Him, of whom it seems possible now to be independent. All these, yielded to, will surely bring sorrow to the man of God.

Not that wealth is always a curse. God gives power to some to get wealth, and has His purpose in their possessing it; but there are few whom He can safely trust with much. It is too easy to forget they are only stewards, and think themselves possessors. Taking what the Lord puts into the hand and using it for Him is a right thing, as is working to earn the food and raiment with which the Christian should be content. The warning is against reaching after wealth; to have the eye upon it as the aim of life and object of ambition is to dig a pit for the feet. A Christian may settle with himself the sum, or income, or position he desires, and decide that having obtained it he will devote himself to God, and make up for lost time; but when all the energies have been devoted to money-making, by the time the goal is reached a habit has been formed which cannot be broken, a bias given to the mind which cannot be corrected, and in the end he mourns over a wasted life. Health of body is difficult to regain when once lost, but it is easy when compared with health of soul. Our God will not be trifled with. Many a one would give up his hard-earned thousands to regain the joy in God he once knew, but the bargain is not to be made.

Oh, man of God, flee these things; flee them as the allurements of the enemy, and remember "the kisses of an enemy are deceitful." It may be in grace the Lord Himself will pierce you with sorrow and disappoint your hopes to keep you from the slippery path. A man of God has no right to be thus wasting his Master's time in gratifying pride and ambition. If risen with Christ, there are things above to fix the heart upon; there are treasures to be laid up in the heavens, where no moth can destroy or thief steal, and which will last through eternal ages. There is joy to be given now to the Lord, who has formed the man of God, not only for His service, but for His pleasure. To make him thus pleasant the things here enumerated must be followed. To fit him for service, he is completely furnished by the Word of God (2 Tim. 3-17). No addition to it is necessary. Whatever the

good work to which his Master may send him, that Word in the heart will be found ample provision and preparation, because the Word is living and powerful to do the work. Not the whole of human learning and cultivation brought together in one could have anything like the power of the Word of the Living God learned at His feet. It is noteworthy that the power of the Spirit is not spoken of as in itself sufficient. The Holy Spirit works in and through the Word, and the worker needs acquaintance with the Word as well as endowment with the Spirit. The Master returned to Nazareth in the power of the Spirit, but it was the written Word He preached.

"Let the Word of Christ dwell in you richly."
 "Ready to every good word and work."

Would that everyone started in the new life with full determination to be a man of God in practical everyday life, so that the fact might be seen in the whole-souled devotedness to God's service, overruling desire to please Him, constrained by the love which seeketh not her own. Not a child with wandering mind and changing pleasures, but a *man* with a calm, well-considered purpose to be to God all that it is possible to be, and to find in God all that it is possible to find; to be all for God, and to have God for all. M. M. A.

PROPHETIC PAPERS, No. 8.

BY F. C. BLAND.

"**B**EHOLD, a king shall reign in righteousness" (Isa. xxxii. 1). "Behold, a sower went forth to sow his seed" (Matt. xiii. 3). These two texts refer to the same person: and both refer to the Christ of God. But in one He is represented as a king reigning in his kingdom, in the other as a husbandman sowing seed in a field. That which is called a kingdom in Isa. xxxii. is this world in which we live; that which is called a field in Matt. xiii. is that same world. The one scripture speaks of it as it will be when Christ reigns supreme in it; the other speaks of it while that same Christ is rejected. The one speaks of the kingdom as it was prophesied of; the other of the kingdom in a mystery.

There are four very definite contrasts between these two aspects of the kingdom; for

it is the same kingdom, though looked at in two very different aspects.

In the first, the kingdom spoken of in prophecy, the King is reigning and sitting on the throne of David. In the other, the King is rejected, and seated at the right hand of God (Psalm cx.). In the one, Satan will be bound (Rev. xx.); in the other, he is loose, and busy sowing tares amongst the wheat (Matt. xiii.). In the first, the spirit of judgment will purge out of the kingdom all things that offend, and them that do iniquity. In the other, tares and wheat are allowed to grow together till the harvest. The one begins with judgment (the judgment of Antichrist and the apostates), and goes on to the blessing of the world. The other began with the blessing of the Gospel—peace proclaimed to men—and ends with judgment. Hence, the use of the word “mysteries,” as applied to the kingdom in its present form. A kingdom without a king is a mystery; a kingdom in which an enemy to the rightful king is allowed to range at large, and to whom the very name of “the god of this world” is accorded, is also a mystery; but the greatest mystery of all is, that although Christ’s title to His kingdom has been made good, and His claim to it acknowledged before God, yet He apparently lets things take their own course for the present, under the guidance of “the prince of this world,” whom man has chosen instead of the Prince of Peace. It may be asked, Why it is still called the Kingdom of Heaven here, or as it is called in the other gospels, “the Kingdom of God”? How can God connect His name with that wherein evil is predominant, and where His authority is disowned? Perhaps an illustration which I will give here may make this plain. Suppose a gentleman who has a vast extent of unreclaimed, but reclaimable, land in Ireland, purposes to make a model farm on it. He encloses a large tract of it for that purpose, surrounds it with a wall, gets horses and farming implements, and imports good seed to sow, and finally gives the management of it into the hands of his only son. When all is ready, he puts a stone up over the gateway with the words, “The model farm,” engraved on it. Fenianism breaks out in the country, and the Land League get the

upper hand for the time. His son is murdered, his horses stolen, and the wall is broken down. A friend comes to stay with the owner of the estate, and, in conversation, says to him—“I hear that you have a model farm on your estate.” “Yes,” said his host, “you can see it if you will.” They go out and see it, but the stranger sees nothing but ruins everywhere. He turns to his friend, in amazement, and says, “Why do you not take down that stone over the gate with the words, “The model farm” on it? There are no signs of improvement here, and these words are only a mockery. The owner, who is a man of purpose, answers, “I gave it that name in connection with my purposes regarding it, and in view of my only son having the management and control of it; and I will never take that stone with its inscription down until rebellion is put down in this country, and righteous government restored.”

So has it been with the Kingdom of Heaven. God sent His Son into this world, proposing to men to receive Him as the King; but we know what happened, and how they refused to have Him to reign over them. The kingdom is not only His by original title to it, but He has made His title to it afresh, by His death and resurrection, and God will never change the name He gave it at Christ’s coming until the kingdoms of this world become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ, and He shall reign for ever and ever.

We can see from this why this world, even in this time of confusion and anarchy, is called the Kingdom of Heaven; or, as it is in the other gospels, “The Kingdom of God”; and, also, what a privilege it is to every true heart to be a faithful subject of the hidden King (2 Kings xi.). Surely no loyal heart in Ireland swerved one jot from its allegiance to the Queen of England while rebellion had in Ireland, for a time, the upper hand!

We must make no mistake, and suppose that God claims no allegiance in this kingdom from any but those who are willing to acknowledge His Christ; or, that He will take no account from those who take the place of being His servants in this sphere to which Christ has made His title as King, and in which He claims allegiance.

God claims subjection from *all*, and will judge as servants in the sphere of the kingdom, every one according to the talents committed to him, and this accounts for what otherwise would be incomprehensible, viz., that we read of some servants being cast into outer darkness, while some are rewarded when the Son of Man comes in His kingdom. Servants, when spoken of in this connection, are not looked at as in the Church, which is the sphere of life, but as in the kingdom, which is the sphere of the government of God, and of responsibility to Him.

There are many to whom God has given talents, who may refuse to acknowledge their obligation to Him in connection with them; but that will not exonerate them from judgment for having despised or misused them during the time of the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ. It is not a question of life in Christ, or position of membership of His body, but as to men's place in this world over which Jesus Christ claims authority as Lord.

There are many who take this place publicly and ostentatiously, and there are others who profess to care nothing for opportunities or talents which God has given them; but the one will not escape the judgment, as servants in the kingdom, any more than the other. Hypocritical profession, and deliberate rejection to the claims of Christ as Lord, will meet their judgment alike at His appearing and His kingdom.

Seeing this aspect of the kingdom as distinguished, on the one hand, from the Church, which is Christ's body, and on the other hand as distinguished from that same kingdom, when it will be administered in power by-and-by, clears up many of the parables in the gospels, as well as many expressions in the epistles which would otherwise be incomprehensible.

But to return to Matt. xiii., to which a short reference will suffice, as it is so well known, and has been so frequently expounded.

To begin with, you will note that the Lord having taken His place outside all Jewish associations and relationships (Matt. xii. 50, see chap. xiii. 1), He went "out of the house, and sat by the sea-side." A typical action, as it has been remarked; indicating that He

takes His place outside the Jewish pale, and takes one in connection with that which is outside it; a position which, as we said before, must be connected with that significant word, "whosoever," of chap. xii.

The sowing of the seed by the sower needs little comment here, nor the four different soils on which it falls, which have their solemn warnings—not for unsaved sinners only, but for saints also; for we may all have these four kinds of soil in our hearts when the Word of God is read by us, or His truth ministered to us day by day.

But we must not pass over the question by the disciples in verse 10, and the Lord's answer in the following verses, which takes us back to the sixth chap. of Isaiah, where the prophet is told to blind the eyes and harden the hearts of this people; that, having refused all the testimonies as to Jesus being the Messiah, they are now to be given over to judicial blindness, as they are unto this day.

The parable of the tares comes next, about which we need only remark that it gives (as indeed the whole of the chapter gives) the results of the preaching of the Gospel in this world, both good and bad, during the time of Christ's rejection. The true children of the kingdom, in whose hearts the seed has been sown by God, and Satan's counterfeits are so alike, that even the servants of the King could not distinguish them from each other—a solemn thought, which intimates that Christians would put on so much of the world's ways, and the world so much of the form of Christianity, that they would become indistinguishable, and must be let grow in the field (which, be it remembered, is not the Church, but the world) until the harvest.

The next parable is the mustard seed. That pure little seed of Christianity which once was so separate from all that surrounded it, that it is said of it in Acts iv., "of the rest durst no man join himself unto them," but which grew into a great tree called Christianity, under the name of which every sect and system, good and bad, Socinianism, Mormonism, Popery, and every other so-called Christian sect, in fact, everything except Mohammedans, Jews, and heathens, range themselves, or, as in the words of the parable, "lodge in the branches thereof."

The leaven I take to mean infidelity, or scepticism, which leavens the whole lump, and prepares it for the reception of the Antichrist by-and-by.

"The mystery of iniquity doth already work"; and when all is leavened, "the man of sin" will be revealed, and the mystery of it will have ended in his manifestation.

Here the Lord goes into the house again, another significant action; because He is going to speak to His disciples about something that is precious to God in the midst of all this corruption. 1st, The treasure hid in the field; this I believe to be the redeemed of every dispensation, for treasure may consist of many different kinds of things. But the pearl is but one; now this may be the Church, which is the body of Christ, one with Him.

There may, however, be another interpretation of these two parables. The treasure *hid in the field* may mean the earthly redeemed who will shine with "glories terrestrial" in the kingdom of their Father; while the pearl of great price may mean those whose portion and glory will be celestial.

I do not speak dogmatically on this, but leave it to the judgment of those who hear to determine for themselves. But I would protest against the idea that one of these glories is *necessarily* higher than the other. All will be Christ's; all will be sons of God; all will be conformed to the image of God's Son; and all will be instinct with the same life, while in the wonderful counsels and ways of God, their places of abode and spheres of endless service may be different.

The last parable is that of the net cast into the sea, which gathered of every kind. It is the last cast of the net, as well as the last parable of the seven. *They draw it to land and sit down*: they gather the good into vessels and cast the bad away. This I hold to be the preaching of the Gospel of the Kingdom, which will succeed the present testimony of the Gospel of the Grace of God.

The present election are caught up by the call of Christ Himself; living and dead saints both hearing His voice. We have no hint that angelic action will have any place here. But in this gathering spoken of in Matt. xiii., it is angels who do the work of separating the good from the bad; and it is the wicked who

are *separated from amongst the just*, and bound in bundles to be burned; while the just are left to shine forth in the kingdom. But in the action of the Lord in taking up His saints, He *takes them out from amongst the wicked*, who are left behind for judgment.

The Lord here asks His disciples if they have understood these things, and they say, "Yea, Lord." Then said He, "Every Scribe instructed unto the Kingdom of Heaven is like unto a man that is an householder which bringeth out of his treasure things new and old."

The "old" things refer to all things that were narrated in the first twelve chapters, that is, the fulfilment of all the ancient prophecies to Israel. The "new" things were the mysteries of the kingdom in which He has just been instructing them; or, the kingdom in its present form, whilst Christ is rejected.

It may not be out of place here to refer for a moment to the events narrated in the fourteenth chapter, which typify in a most striking way what will occur in the 70th heptad referred to before in our lectures on the book of Daniel.

John the Baptist, the Lord's forerunner of that day, who came in the spirit and power of Elias, is slain by Herod, the anti-christ of his day, who first tries to destroy Christ (the man-child, Rev. xii.) when He is born, and Herod is seen here in illicit association with Herodias, the apostate woman of her day, in whose hands was found the blood of God's servant; she has the head of John the Baptist in her hands (typifying the apostate system of Rev. xvii.), of whom it is affirmed, "that she commits fornication with the kings of the earth, and in her was found the blood of God's servant."

Then follows the miracle of the Lord feeding a multitude, answering to what we read in Rev. xii. of God feeding, miraculously, the woman, which I understand to be the Jewish people, in the wilderness. But this is not all; for we next see the disciples, a remnant, so to speak, going through a troubled sea, in which they are about to be swallowed up, when the Lord comes to their help just as, in Rev. xiii., the dragon tries to destroy the remnant with a flood of water.

Finally, the Lord heals all those that were sick, and they acknowledge Him to be the

Son of God. And so it will be by-and-by. "His people shall no more say, I am sick; and Israel shall say unto Him, My God, we know Thee."

This wonderful analogy would be striking in itself; but coming in as it does after Matt. xiii., which gives us the history of this dispensation in parables, it gets a significance which will not be ignored by the scribe instructed unto the Kingdom of Heaven.

Time would fail us were we to dwell at any length on the remaining chapters of Matthew's gospel, pregnant with instruction and typical foreshadowing though they be; but we must not omit to note, that the Lord's rejection brings out the declaration of His purpose to build His Church, which, as we will see when we come to speak on the book of the Acts of the Apostles, was to take the place of the kingdom, as promised to the fathers.

The heir is about to be killed and cast out of the vineyard; and the sentence against the unfruitful fig-tree, from which the Lord had been seeking fruit during the three years of His ministry, had gone forth; but the entreaty of the vinedresser, "Lord, let it alone this year also," finds its fulfilment in the Lord's prayer on the Cross—"Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." That prayer was heard, and received its answer in the offer of the kingdom to the nation again in the Acts of the Apostles. But this must be the subject of our next lecture.

THE FIRST EPISTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS.

CHAP. xiv.

FROM NOTES OF AN ADDRESS BY J. R. C.

ALMOST the only gift for ministry in the Church referred to in this chapter is that of prophecy. No reference is made to pastor, teacher, or exhorter. All ministry of the Word appears under the one head of "prophecy."

I believe this is accounted for by the fact that the Scriptures as we have them were not in existence in the church of Corinth, or in any of the churches at that time. Therefore they were dependent upon direct communications of the mind of God apart from the written

Word, and God chose that their edification should be secured through the exercise in their midst of this gift of prophecy.

I have before endeavoured to show the difference between prophecy and teaching, and that whilst teaching which deals with the written Word is a permanent ministry, prophecy was not necessarily permanent, and, as a matter of fact, did cease along with the completion of the Scriptures.

But if we grant that the gift of prophecy no longer exists, the danger immediately arises that this whole chapter will be set aside as being entirely inapplicable to the present time.

And, truly, it has been so treated and practically set aside by the whole of Christendom.

Chaps. xi., xii., xiii., and xiv. form a section of this book, and all concern the structure and order of God's assembly.

Chap. xi. gives us the appointment of the Lord's Supper, and Divine ordering of the assembly in connection therewith.

Chap. xii. gives us the structure of the assembly according to the Divine ideal of the membership of the human body, and this as bearing upon the function of each individual member; and the performance of such function being essential to the well-being of the whole.

In chap. xiii. we have the element in which all gifts must be exercised in order to their being for the glory of God and for the edifying of the body. As one has beautifully remarked, "The gifts of chap. xii. must be baptised in the love of chap. xiii. in order to their being exercised in the power of chap. xiv."

Chap. xiv. is entirely a chapter of *order*. We learn from it that God has an order, and has in His love and faithfulness revealed the order that is best fitted to fulfil all His purposes in His assembly.

If God has spoken—if God has revealed His will in this matter, then we dare not set it aside. I challenge any one to show me in the New Testament any other ordering of God's assembly than that which we find in this chapter; and although there be no gift referred to but that of prophecy, this in no way affects the general rules laid down, nor can it afford any warrant to a true heart to treat the chapter as though it had never been written. The order holds good whatever be the functions that are in exercise, whatever the nature of

the ministry by which the Church is to be edified.

I do not find here that which prevails throughout Christendom—the gathering together of a promiscuous assembly of saved and unsaved, “children of God” and “children of the wicked one,” in which assembly one man alone ministers, whether in the Word, or in prayer, or otherwise.

I do not find a certain class set apart to minister, whilst all the rest must be silent; this order is not in the New Testament, and therefore I cannot recognise it in any way to be of God.

It may be a way that is honoured by centuries of human tradition, but in order to find it I have to go outside the Word of God.

Now, it is remarkable that there is one verse in this chapter which most solemnly claims for it, as a whole, our special subjection, viz.:—

Verse 37—“If any man think himself to be a prophet, or spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things that I write unto you are the commandments of the Lord.” I do not know any stronger verse than that in all the Scriptures. To set aside this chapter, then—to depart from its order—is to set aside and depart from *the commandments of the Lord*.

I hold that this chapter contains the Lord’s commandments to us as to the order of His house; that we are bound in loyalty to Him to carry it out, and that we dare not acknowledge or countenance any order of ministry in the assembly of God that is not in accordance with the instruction here given.

Whatever be the differences that exist amongst the many sects of Christendom, there is one feature common to them all—they are all agreed as to the setting aside of the Divine order here given for the assembly.*

Let any servant of Christ, be he ever so honoured and godly, and competent to minister, be found in any one of the so-called “churches” or “chapels” of Christendom, he is by human rule and arrangement prohibited from delivering a message from God, be he ever so distinctly entrusted with the responsibility. He is instructed in the Word of the

Lord, as a good steward, to minister according to the grace given to him, but there is no room for his ministry; man’s will interdicts his fulfilling his responsibility to his Lord.

But I ask, is there such an order to be found in Scripture as this, in which there is no room for the exercise of those gifts which the Holy Spirit has bestowed? Is there such a functionary to be found in Scripture as the “clergyman” or “minister,” whose sole prerogative it is to preside and minister in the assembly of the saints?

I speak against no man. I would seek to honour all men, and to value both the gift and the grace bestowed upon many who occupy a position that is so plainly unscriptural; but I seek to expose the error of a *system* which is devised by man and not found in the Word of God, the object of which is to gratify the wisdom and the will of man, and the result of which is to set aside the distributed gifts and energies of the Holy Spirit, and so to cramp and hinder their exercise that an assembly which ought to be, instinct with the manifold energies of a present God is degraded below the level of a Jewish synagogue (see Acts xiii. 15).

But carnal Christians and religious worldlings have this in common, that they find it easier and pleasanter to elect, call, and pay a man, educated and qualified according to a human standard, to perform the service in which they neither desire nor are fitted to have a part; they sit in their pews reverentially till “Divine service” is performed, and so their religion is done for the day, or the week.

God’s idea is that there be room for the exercise of every gift which the Spirit of God has bestowed—room for every member of the body to perform its own function. Thus would God have many channels open by which to supply nourishment to the whole. Sometimes even a very young believer, if he be walking with God, may be the channel for a word of exhortation or the reading of a Scripture or the giving out of a hymn, the appropriateness and power of which is felt by all. Why should the Church be deprived of such help? Yet man steps in and ruthlessly demolishes the beautiful order of the Divine plan—calling God’s order “confusion,” and substituting a system according to his own will which is “confusion” in the sight of God.

* Perhaps one exception ought to be here noted, viz., the Society of Friends, in whose meetings ministry is not limited to a clerical functionary. But they ignore chapter xi., treating the Lord’s Supper and also baptism as purely spiritual, and so practically doing away with both.

We shall now proceed to the chapter, remarking on a few points in passing. Verses 3, 4—"He that prophesieth speaketh unto men to edification, exhortation, and comfort." This was the Divinely-instituted test as to whether a man was really speaking by the Spirit of God or not. If what he was saying served this purpose, then they were warranted to conclude that the speaker was prophesying.

This verse does not prove, as some have tried to make out, that all who speak to edification, &c., are prophets. What it does prove is, that a prophetic message from God will invariably be of such a nature as to edify, exhort, or comfort.

Verse 6—"Now, brethren, if I come unto you speaking with tongues, what shall I profit you, except I shall speak to you by revelation, or by knowledge, or by prophesying, or by doctrine?" We often read the Scriptures carelessly, and so miss their special import. There are here four things brought together. The first couple "revelation" and "knowledge," the second "prophecy" and "doctrine," or teaching. Before one can *prophesy*, he must have a *revelation*; before one can *teach*, he must have *knowledge*. Thus we have two functions by means of which God was pleased to communicate His truth for the edification of His people, viz., "prophecy" and "teaching." How did the prophet obtain from the Lord? By revelation. How did the teacher obtain from the Lord? By the knowledge of His Word. So the apostle says, "I must either come to you in *prophecy*, the result of Divine *revelation*, or in *teaching*, the result of Spirit-taught *knowledge* of the Scriptures." To come with an unknown tongue might astonish, but it could not edify; for it is only through the understanding that edification is supplied.

We make no profession of having revelations or the gift of prophecy; but we do come to you with such knowledge as we have obtained by patient searching of the Word of God, in dependence upon the promised teaching of the Holy Spirit.

"THE way to preserve inward calm in the midst of external causes of trouble is this: to receive *everything*—interruptions, crosses, visits, unadvised questions—as coming from God."

THE GOSPEL OF JOHN.

CHAPTER XVII.—(CONTINUED.)

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

THEN Fourthly, we are sent into the world even as was Christ. "According as I am not of the world, they are not of the world; according as Thou hast sent Me into the world, I also have sent them into the world." We must not lean too much upon our being pilgrims and strangers, as if we would hurry home; we are here by the Lord Jesus Himself putting us here, and for a definite purpose,—to serve Him, to suffer with Him, to do His bidding. And we are not to be in haste to get away, but to be content to be here and wreath the world's scorn around our brow. Here it is church truth, family truth, all seen together one in Christ, and this truth we are more ready to apprehend than the other; but Matt. xix. and xx. is scripture as much as this, and there we see kingdom truth, and that there is a connection between our suffering here and our place in the kingdom by-and-by. Like as God has certainly chosen a people in Christ, and yet is sincere in inviting everybody to come to Christ; so is it true also that our place in glory is connected with our identification in suffering with Christ, though it is prepared for us of the Father.

The remaining three of these sections are very important. We read (verse 20), "Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on Me through their word; that they all may be one; as Thou, Father, art in Me, and I in Thee, that they also may be in us (notice the corrected reading): that the world may believe that Thou hast sent Me. And the glory which Thou gavest Me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one: I in them, and Thou in Me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that Thou has sent Me, and hast loved them, as Thou hast loved Me." The prayer is that we may be in God; and, in the next verse, that God may be in us. And the two are often brought out in the epistles of John. "Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him, and he in God. And we have known and believed the love that God hath to us. God is love;

and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him" (1 John iv. 15, 16). In the gospel it is the Lord Jesus requesting, in the epistle it is stated as an absolute fact.

So we have it, "that they all may be one." And here is the first stage: "As Thou, Father, art in Me, and I in Thee, that they also may be in us." Look down the chapter again to see the manner in which Jesus is with the Father; there is no mounting, He seems quite at home with God. Then listen—"As I am in Thee, that they also may be in us." We, also, with no occasion to mount in our spirit. Are we not learning the wonderful lesson, however we fail in our enjoyment of God, that in Christ we may at once be in the full presence of God? There are certain ways, of course, in which Christ ever has the pre-eminence. Christ is the giver; we the receivers. Christ is the Only-begotten. Still, here we see the manner of His approach to the Father, and so may ours be in Christ; in a moment, however far experimentally. More wonderful is this if we reflect upon the two great intervals that occur between God and fallen man. One the interval between God and the creature. Angels may come down from their created position and speak with fallen man; but who shall bridge the interval between the highest creature made by the voice of Jesus and the uncreated God. The gulf between him and God is vast, and such that no created being could ever carry creature over; but what shall we say of that second gulf that sin has opened between God and His creatures? Yet by the blood of Jesus, and in a risen Christ, are we carried up over the two.

But look at the next. It says, "And the glory which thou gavest Me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one: I in them, and Thou in Me, that they may be made perfect in one." The Lord states the way which it is to be done; Christ in us, and God in Christ. Not brought to God apart from Christ, but in Christ put so very close to God; that is the important fact to notice. And that by these two stages, they may be perfected in one. I believe it refers to the future, when God has His own way with us, as He will; not only as it is true now, but evidently something beyond, and evidently a time of glory. God is building a

church together on purpose to come and dwell in us. The two together are the consummation of chapter xv. Christ in God is a Christ at rest; God in Christ is a God at work. So when it is said, "they in us," there is our rest; rest in Christ, and, through Christ, in God. Then there is God on the other hand coming forth in Christ; Christ dwelling in us, and heading up creation.

The last of these seven is so blessedly simple that I need not dwell on it for explanation—"Hast loved them, as Thou has loved Me."

Then I would call attention to one other point in this chapter. We find that the word "Father" occurs six times; three times speaking generally, and three times for those believing through His word. "These words spake Jesus, and lifted up His eyes to heaven, and said, Father the hour is come; glorify Thy Son, that Thy Son also may glorify Thee." Christ begins and hangs all this chapter upon His own glorification. We begin where Old Testament saints leave off; our blessing is here.

Secondly, "And now, O Father, glorify Thou Me with Thine own self with the glory which I had with Thee before the world was." Oh, what a Being we have in whom we trust! One with whom God entered into these covenant arrangements before the world began. We feel Christ spoke the truth here; the uncreated Son of the eternal God speaks of living before there was a creation.

Thirdly, "Holy Father, keep through Thine own name those whom Thou hast given Me, that they may be one, as we are." At the end of the chapter it is "righteous Father." What is the difference? When it is a question of controversy between Him and the world, then it is "righteous Father"; "My Father judge between the world and Me." But when it is a question of His keeping the saints separated, then is it "Holy Father"; a separated Being.

Fourthly, "That they all may be one; as Thou, Father, art in Me, and I in Thee, that they also may be in us." Brought right up to the Father, so that He may say, as He does in chapter xx., "My Father, and your Father; My God, and your God."

Fifthly, "Father, I will that they also whom Thou hast given Me be with Me where I am."

This is not a prayer, and the "I will" again shows that He considers Himself in heaven; for upon earth it was, "Not My will, but Thine be done." So we have Him saying in chapter xxi., "If I will that He tarry till I come," as the risen, glorified Master. Observe that there are two requests backed by three incentives. "That they may be with Me"; "that they may behold My glory." First, "for such is My will"; as if God would be glad to accomplish it. Second, you gave them Me for that very purpose. Third, He appeals to His Father's love of Him,—not them.

The sixth is the word "righteous Father," upon which we have already spoken.

CHAPTER XVIII.

If we look down this chapter we shall see that it has pleased the Holy Ghost continually to present things together in contrast. For example, He speaks of something about Christ, and then something about His erring disciple Peter; and thus again and again. Like as in chapter i., the contrast is maintained between Christ and John the Baptist. Thus we are first of all told that "when Jesus had spoken these words, He went forth with His disciples over the brook Kedron." It is remarkable that a thousand years before, a father went over that very brook Kedron, a fugitive, owing to the rebellion of his son. David was fleeing before Absalom. Here, on the other hand, is a Son going over that brook in full obedience to do His Father's will. What a perfect contrast. "As the Father gave Me commandment, even so I do. Arise, let us go hence."

Then He went forth into a garden; and here another contrast strikes us. When the Lord God made man He planted a garden in Eden, and there He put the man that He had made that he might enjoy it; but the man disobeyed God. Here we have the second man, the Lord from heaven, in a garden; and He, not to disobey, but in beautiful, perfect submission to His Father's will. You know what was the object of His suffering in Gethsemane. You know that the wrath was not borne until Calvary; the object of the scene in Gethsemane was this,—He drank the cup in anticipation, He went through all the scene

of the Cross as it were under His Father's eye, to nerve Himself for the time when He came to go through it in fact. How often when we are in a little suffering we break down and fail; because when we certainly see the trial coming, we have not talked it over with our Father first. He, when that mighty tempest of suffering was gathering round Him, would first spend a time with God.

Then we are told that presently the soldiers and officers came to apprehend Him; and He went forth to meet them. If you look at John vi. you will notice a contrast at once. "When Jesus therefore perceived that they would come and take Him by force, to make Him a king, He departed again into a mountain Himself alone." When they would make Him a king, He went away from them; when He was to be offered up as the Lamb of God, mark the contrast. "Jesus therefore, knowing all things that should come upon Him, went forth, and said unto them, Whom seek ye?" Knowing all things which *should* come upon Him, not *had* come. And note that He knew it all, all was patent to His eye, not a single thing that He was not fully aware as to what should transpire; and then He says to them, "Whom seek ye?" He would not receive His kingdom save from His Father's hands; the only thing He would have now is the homage, the adoration, the confidence of His people's hearts. Those who are to be the companions of Jesus will be His worshippers. In John's gospel it is worshippers, in John's epistle it is companions.

"They answered Him, Jesus of Nazareth. Jesus saith unto them, I am (he). And Judas, also, which betrayed Him, stood with them. As soon as He had said unto them, I am (he), they went backward, and fell to the ground." Officers, men, and Judas; lanterns, torches, and weapons licking the dust before the word of the mighty Son of God. "I am!" and down they drop. I see, also, a contrast here. When they came to apprehend Him, in Matthew, He speaks as a king, as surrounded with all the ensigns of power. For every one of yon poor trembling men, a legion of angels. But not now the might of a king, but that mightier word still. Who is He that hung upon that Cross? "I am." I do not think it was a miracle that He wrought here,

that caused them to fall down. In that absolute calmness in which He dwelt, that full repose of unruffled spirit in which He always was, nothing could surprise Him, nothing perturb; therefore, when they came with all violence to apprehend Him, He had only to look from that calmness in which He dwelt, and they fell to the ground.

EXPOSITORY LECTURES on the TEMPLES of SOLOMON and EZEKIEL.

BY THOMAS NEWBERY,
Editor of "The Englishman's Bible."
(From Notes by W. K.)

The Site and Foundation of the Temple.

SILVER SOCKETS OF THE TABERNACLE.

GOD commanded that when the children of Israel in the wilderness were numbered as the people of Jehovah, each one that passed under the numbering rod was to bring as a ransom for his soul a half-shekel of the sanctuary; the rich were not to give more, and the poor were not to give less than a half-shekel (Ex. xxx. 11-16). They were to pay the redemption price that there might be no plague among them when they were numbered.

The silver of them that were numbered of the children of Israel amounted to one hundred talents, and a thousand seven hundred and three score and fifteen shekels. A talent is reckoned to be about 114 lbs. weight, or £343 3s. 9d. in value. One hundred talents were used for the 96 sockets under the 48 boards of the tabernacle; two sockets under each board, and the four sockets of the pillars of the veil. Thus, typically, the tabernacle in the wilderness, though pitched on the sand of the desert, was founded on redemption.

The tabernacle in the wilderness we understand to be typical of the Church of God in this present dispensation. And by the Church of God we mean every soul ransomed by the blood of the Lamb; every one regenerated by the Spirit of God, builded together for a habitation of God through the Spirit. "Other foundation can no man lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ" (1 Cor. iii. 11); and, "If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His" (Rom. viii. 9).

PETER AND THE TRIBUTE MONEY.

On one occasion those that received the tribute money, the half-shekel, came to Peter, and said—"Doth not your Master pay tribute?" That is, pay the half-shekel. This was not tribute to Cæsar, but the half-shekel commanded by Moses, which at that time went to the maintenance of the temple. Peter, with his usual impetuosity, answered, "Yes." But our Lord, when He came into the house, anticipated him, saying, "What thinkest thou, Simon? of whom do the kings of the earth take custom or tribute? of their own children, or of strangers? Peter saith unto Him, Of strangers. Jesus saith unto him, Then are the children free" (Matt. xvii. 24-27). The Lord Jesus, as the Only-begotten of the Father, and "holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners" (Heb. vii. 26), was the only one of the children of men who needed no redemption price to be paid for His soul.

THE SITE CHOSEN BY DAVID FOR THE ALTAR AND THE TEMPLE.

When David, at the instigation of Satan, had the people of Israel numbered, "that he might know the number of them," there is no record of the redemption price having been paid. And what was the consequence? There came a plague, as threatened by the law of Moses, so that seventy thousand men from Dan to Beer-sheba fell under the destroying sword of the angel of judgment.

On David's confession of his sin, God commanded him by the prophet Gad to set up an altar in the threshing-floor of Ornan (or Araunah), the Jebusite, and to offer burnt offerings and peace offerings thereon. And God answered him by fire from heaven—showing His acceptance by consuming the sacrifice, thus causing it to ascend as a sweet savour—a "savour of rest" unto God. We read in 1 Peter i. 18, 19, "Knowing that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver or gold . . . but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot."

When David saw that God answered him by fire from heaven, he fixed on that spot as a site for the altar of all Israel. He purchased the threshing-floor for fifty shekels of silver,

the ransom price for one hundred souls, and there erected the altar. He also purchased at the same time from Araunah, the Jebusite (who probably had been king of Jerusalem at the time when David took the city), the surrounding field or land for six hundred shekels of gold, as a site for the temple of God, and for the temple courts. Thus the temple as well as the tabernacle was typically founded on redemption.

THE FOUNDATION PLATFORM OF SOLOMON'S TEMPLE.

In order to raise the surrounding ground to a level with the threshing-floor on the summit, Solomon built a foundation platform of stupendous structure. It was to form this foundation platform that "the great stones, costly stones, and hewed stones," mentioned in 1 Kings v. 17, and vii. 10, were prepared. These stones vary from 3 feet 3 inches to 6 feet in height, and some of them 20 and 30 feet in length. This is the foundation platform on which the temple of Solomon was erected, and in the construction of which a vast army of hewers, stone-squarers, and other workmen were engaged.

It is a remarkable fact that this platform, erected by Solomon, remains to the present day, and is known as the Haram Area, or *Haram-esh-Sherief*—that is, Noble Sanctuary—standing on Mount Moriah, in the centre of which the Mosque of Omar, or Dome of the Rock, now stands on a raised platform, 16 feet in height, above the surrounding ground, corresponding in its width exactly with the court of the priests as described by Ezekiel. The persons employed by the Palestine Exploration Committee have examined this platform with exceeding care. It is, I may say, in round numbers, a vast oblong structure about 1500 feet from north to south, and about 1000 feet from east to west. On the centre of it stands the platform on which the Mosque of Omar is erected. When our Lord, speaking of the temple of Herod said, in reference to the great stones composing that temple, there should not be left one stone upon another that should not be thrown down, He was not speaking of the foundation underneath, but of those stones composing the temple erected by Herod. That which

remains of the surrounding wall above the surface, to the height of from 60 to 70 feet, has been replaced with smaller stones. But beneath the surface, the original massive stones are still to be seen in perfect preservation, some from 20 to 30 feet in length. There is one stone 38 feet 9 inches long. The Palestine Exploration workmen have sunk shafts down 60, 80, and even 120 feet, through a mass of rubbish, to the solid rock of Mount Moriah.

The stones are so closely fitted that even a pen-knife could not be inserted between them. They form a mass of solid masonry, unequalled in the world. On some of them may be seen, at the present day, the marks in vermilion of the original builders. Probably each stone was made ready before it was placed in its position; and no cement was used or required.

Within the area or enclosure the stones of the marble pavement have been removed, and it is only in the centre platform, about 16 feet in height above the surrounding surface, that a stone pavement is to be found.

THE TYPICAL TEACHING OF THE FOUNDATION OF SOLOMON'S TEMPLE.

As to the typical teaching of this firm foundation of Solomon's temple, as the tabernacle in the wilderness was founded on the sockets of silver, the redemption-money paid for the ransom of souls, so also the temple of Solomon was built on that site, where sacrifice had been offered and accepted, and thus atonement made. Solomon, as a wise master builder, digged deep, and laid the foundation on a rock. This is very beautifully illustrated in the parable of our Lord in Matt. vii. 24, and Luke vi. 48. What is that rock? Isaiah xxvi. 4 tells us—"Trust ye in Jehovah for ever, for in Jah Jehovah is the Rock of Ages." Faith's foundation for time and for eternity must rest on the sure and certain testimony of God to His beloved Son. The Christ we believe in must be the Christ of God, revealed in the soul by the Holy Ghost, through the Scriptures, the Word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever.

FORGIVEN much, you will love much, and live to the service of Him whom you love.

Correspondence.

[The article in our last, "On Breaking the Bread," has elicited no small amount of correspondence. It would be impossible to insert the whole, so we have selected one letter which seems to us the best fitted to give an idea of what others have to say upon the subject, and we hope in our next to refer to it again.]

That trouble and even division is being caused by this question in many assemblies—far more, indeed, than we had any idea of—is sufficient warrant, surely, for an endeavour to obtain light from the scriptures that may guide to unity of mind and action. In Acts xv. 7, there was "much disputing"; in verse 25, "one accord." Ought we not to count upon Phil. iii. 15, being fulfilled to us?—Ed.]

ON BREAKING THE BREAD.

MY DEAR BROTHER,—The article on the above subject in last month's *Witness* calls for notice. For whilst it is no doubt very desirable that we should all be of one mind in the Lord as to "breaking of bread," still I question the propriety of giving this subject such a prominent and one-sided place at present, in the face of certain recent events in some assemblies in this country.

Let me state that the subject as there presented is not new, for sixteen years ago the same question was discussed; and I, then much younger in years and knowledge, was captivated by it. But is there not another side to the question, and are those who conscientiously and intelligently differ from the views in last month's *Witness* to be set down as acting either in self-will or ignorance?

"By what authority doest thou these things?" brings us directly to the point in dispute; and as we have heard H. W., backed up with much Greek (whose views let us call *A* side), let us now hear what our brethren on the *B* side have to say. These urge—

I. That the disciples partook of a "broken loaf," whilst the *A* side present to the assembly an "unbroken loaf."

II. That the same scripture which gives authority for "giving thanks," gives authority for breaking the loaf. In both cases it is simply following the Lord's example.

III. That to "break the loaf" before handing to the believers is no more an "official or ministerial" act than to "give thanks" before partaking of the bread or wine, and that there is no more taking the "Lord's place" in the one than in the other.

IV. For that it is the privilege of any brother (not a novice), gifted and led of the Spirit, to give thanks.

And they also point out the inconsistencies connected with, and tendencies of, the *A* side, such as—

(a) Certain believers gathered at _____ are so determined on the subject of an "unbroken loaf" that they split the assembly; yet these same, for expediency or convenience, have no compunction in a large gathering to break the loaf in two or more pieces.

(b) Again, we know of some more advanced, who will not tolerate any brother "taking the Lord's place" in giving thanks, and so it is partaken of in silence, or each audibly giving thanks as he breaks the bread.

(c) Again, some more advanced still, are urging that, as the "Lord in Spirit" presides over His own table, the proper way is for each to rise and go to the table and "break off" a piece from the "one loaf," and so, as it were, receive from the Lord's own hands.

We state these to show that the *B* side have something to say, before accepting the *A* side so dogmatically taught as scriptural and right by H. W., who, whilst assuring his brethren it is *wrong* to partake of a "broken loaf," still thinks it *right* to partake of a "divided loaf,"—divided for the convenience of the assembly,—and whose inconsistency in the matter may encourage some more advanced than himself to propose further changes, and so many true-hearted ones fall back upon and follow the example of the Lord Himself.

This question has gendered strife in some assemblies, damping and paralysing gospel effort, many being more occupied with the order of the house than the Master of the house, and with the etiquette of the table than with the Lord of the table.

Whilst on this subject, let me say I think too much is made of the expression "loaf." If it is used so as to give the readers the idea of an ancient or modern Jewish passover loaf, all right; but if "loaf" is used and emphasised so as to convey the idea of an English loaf, then this produces a wrong impression, for we know that the "loaf" used was more like a cake. Alas! that even the shape of the bread the enemy has used to cause strife.

We write with a true desire to "keep the ordinances as delivered" and think that to dogmatise on this subject is akin to being "baptised in the name of the Lord," and we have known both to cause divisions, contrary to the doctrine we have learned.

Yours in the Lord,

J. R. S.

Questions and Answers.

We desire to express our thanks to all who have sent answers.

We particularly request that each writer will give his name and address in full, not for publication, but that we may know who it is that seeks to help, and, if desirable, that we may communicate privately.

When more than one question is replied to, let the answer to each question be upon a separate piece of paper.

Replies to appear in the next number require to be sent in not later than 15th of present month, and so on; the 15th of the month being always the latest to which we can defer making up for press.

We again urge the importance of replies being *short*; it is essential, in this particular line of things, to be *concise*.

We shall greatly value remembrance in prayer that special wisdom and grace may be given for this service. THE EDITOR.

Replies are invited to the following questions:—

Does Heb. xi. 40 mean that God has provided some better thing for us, the saints of this dispensation, or that the Old Testament saints are waiting for us, both being perfected together and to share the same blessings?

Has God ordained some to be saved and some to be lost, when He has so clearly said in His word, "Whosoever believeth on Me hath everlasting life"?

Is it according to Scripture and conformable to British law for believers to be married in the place of meeting by an evangelist or any Christian?

1 Peter ii. 12.—Does, “the day of visitation,” refer to any future day, or to the present day of grace and privilege?

Have we any authority from Scripture to say that the unconverted have power to resist the Spirit of God?

NATHANAEL, &c.

QUESTION 293.—“Behold an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile” (John i. 47). How does this agree with “They that are whole have no need of the physician, but they that are sick: I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance”? (Mark ii. 17).

Ans. A.—There is, of course, no disagreement between these two scriptures, as there is none between any other portions of God’s inspired Word, when rightly understood. At the time the Saviour came there were those, who, like Simeon and Anna, “waited for the consolation of Israel,” and this was undoubtedly Nathanael’s attitude “under the fig-tree.” His progenitor, Jacob, far from being free from “guile,” the subtlety of his nature has since his days, been proverbial. But an important turning-point was reached “by the ford of Jabbok,” where Jacob, in a single night, was so transformed by the power and grace of God, that he goes forth like “another man,” bearing the new name of Israel—“a prince with God.” A lineal descendant of Jacob, Nathanael, as likely as not, inherited the natural characteristics of his ancestor, but, being now such as the Lord Jesus could declare “an *Israelite* indeed, in whom is no guile,” we conclude that the same grace which had wrought so blessedly in his forefather, was again magnified in him. As a sick one and a sinner, Nathanael had already found in “the God of Jacob” a Physician and a Saviour. The hesitancy which he displayed (not to be wondered at) when “Jesus of *Nazareth*” was announced, as the One of whom Moses and the prophets had written, calling forth his question—“Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?” soon gave place to the full hearty confession, “Rabbi, Thou art the Son of God, Thou art the King of Israel.” Asevidence was given of the omniscience of the One in whose presence he now stood, the supposition is not without good ground that Nathanael is identical with the apostle called Bartholomew, which would go to enhance the interest of this narrative.—D. R.

Ans. B.—Comparing John i. 47, and Mark ii. 17—these passages do not conflict. Of Nathanael a *true* Israelite, the Lord speaks as of one, who, like Simeon and Anna, was waiting for Him. Such would ever be of those who clung most to the efficacy of the sin-offering, and to the hope of the coming Deliverer from sin. Guilelessness in Nathanael was integrity towards God—not guiltlessness. But in Mark ii. 17, the figure is clear as referring to the self-righteous Pharisee, and to the truly sin-convicted. The former scorn the necessity of God’s salvation. The latter most gladly turn to the Physician of souls for healing.—A. O. M.

Ans. C.—I understand “in whom is no guile” not to point directly to Nathanael but to “an *Israelite* indeed.” In regard to the word guile, I might say I

distinguish between guile and sin; every Christian sins, but none should have guile. Perhaps the scripture 2 Tim. ii. 22 will show my meaning—“Out of a *pure* heart.”—J. S. C.

Ans. D.—When the Lord said that there was no guile in Nathanael, it simply meant that he was true-hearted, transparent; he was not afraid to let the light of God manifest him. Does it not seem likely that when the Lord referred him back to the fig-tree, it was because Nathanael had been there waiting upon God? He was one who had seen himself a sinner and sick, and was ready to receive the Great Physician (see also Psalm xxxii. 1, 2).—R. R.

[Editor’s Note.—“They are not all Israel which are of Israel” (Rom. ix. 6). The nation of Israel, Israel after the flesh, contained within it an elect people, who, being taught of God, were waiting for the promise, and prepared to receive first the testimony of John, the forerunner; and next, the person of Christ when He was presented to them. The characteristic then and now, and in all ages of God’s elect is, not that they are sinless, but that they are opened out honestly to God. They confess their true condition; they loathe self; they find rest in nothing but the assurance that “He who searches the hearts” has put away their sins. This we take to be the meaning of the “honest and good heart” of Luke viii. 15. It is not any essential goodness in the man, but a heart which, like the plowed ground, has been opened up to God, and thus prepared to receive the seed. That Nathanael dealt with God alone “under the fig-tree,” where he supposed no eye could see him, is evidence that he was such a one as we find in Ps. xxxii. 1-5.]

THE ANGELS THAT SINNED.

QUESTION 294.—Could any one explain why it is that in 2 Peter ii. 4 the angels that sinned are depicted as being bound with chains of darkness, &c., in hell, there to await their judgment, while in Rev. xii. 7 they are portrayed as being in heaven fighting with Christ and His saints?

Ans. A.—Confusion and difficulty are often created by failure to carefully distinguish between things that differ. This is a case in point. The “angels” of these two passages belong to two distinct classes which in Scripture are never confounded the one with the other. “The Devil (or Dragon) and his angels” have their present habitation and scene of operations in “the air” and “the heavenlies” (Eph. ii. 2, vi. 12), and it is these who are to fight with Michael and his angels. Those of 2 Peter ii. are evidently the same as “the angels which kept not their principality,” &c., described by Jude, who are now “reserved in everlasting chains, under darkness, unto the judgment of the great day.”

D. R.

Ans. B.—Both in 2 Peter ii. 4 and in the corresponding passage in Jude 6 the word is simply “angels,” not “the angels.” The teaching is not in either passage that *all* the fallen angels have been cast down “into pits of darkness,” but that certain angels have sinned (some distinct overt act of sin and transgression of the commandments of God). They “kept not their own

principality, but left their proper habitation" (Revised Version); *open undisguised* disobedience and rebellion against God, and, comparing Jude 7 with Gen. vi. 2-4, we have reason to believe they were guilty of a flagrant enormity. Rotherham in his translation seems to almost prove this, as in Jude 7 he translates, "As Sodom and Gomorrah, and the cities round about them, because in *like manner to these* (angels) they went out to commit fornication, and departed after *flesh of another kind*, are set forward," &c. Anyhow these angels *sinned overtly and manifestly* against the God of heaven in such a way as called for immediate and condign vengeance. The argument, then, is, that even angels or *angelic* beings that sinned were not spared; how much more shall ungodly man, in his natural estate so far inferior to them, not be spared, but sooner or later receive judgment at the hands of a *now* long-suffering God (2 Pet. ii. 11). In the case of the Devil and his angels there is every reason to believe from the study of the Word of God that he committed no such *manifest* and *overt* act of rebellion, but he has corrupted himself by his beauty. In Ez. xxviii. 17, we read, under evident *allusion* to the Prince of this world, though there *directly* referring to one of the great ones under him, "Thine heart was **LIFTED UP** because of thy beauty; thou hast corrupted thy wisdom by reason of thy brightness." Mark the words, "lifted up," agreeing exactly with what Paul says, "Lest lifted up with pride they fall into the condemnation or judgment of the Devil." *Pride*, then, is the error of the Devil, but that arch dissembler has sought to conceal his real attitude of hatred to, and rebellion against God, and as the "*anti-dikos*" or "adversary-in-law," seeks *under show of justice* to thwart God's purposes in every way (1 Pet. v. 8). Some men's sins go before to judgment, and some follow after. So some angels' sins have gone before to judgment; they are already punished. But some angel's sins, as those of the Devil (or Satan), and of his angels, who tread in their leader's steps, follow after. Their punishment is yet to come.

M. T. B.

WHICH BEAST IS TO BE WORSHIPPED?

QUESTION 205.—Is it the first or second beast mentioned in Rev. xiii. which is to be worshipped by the entire Roman world in the latter half of the seventieth week mentioned in Daniel ix.?

Ans.—In Rev. xiii. the first beast spoken of as rising up out of the sea, whose description corresponds with the beast in ch. xvii. 3, is also mentioned in chaps. xiv. 9, xv. 2, xvi. 10, 13, xix. 19, 20, and lastly, in xx. 4-10. In ch. xiii., after a description of the beast, we are told that,—The dragon gave him his power, and his seat, and great authority. . . . And they worshipped the dragon which gave power unto the beast: and they *worshipped the beast*, saying, Who is like unto the beast? . . . And power was given to him to continue forty and two months (3½ years, or half a heptad). . . . And it was given unto him to make war with the saints, and to overcome them: and power was given him over all kindreds, tongues, and nations. And all that dwell upon the earth *shall worship him*, whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the

world." Here we are told that *the beast* shall be worshipped by all whose names are not written in the Lamb's book of life. Then we read, "And I beheld another beast coming up out of the earth; and he had two horns like a lamb, and he spake as a dragon. And he exerciseth all the power of the first beast before him, and causeth the earth and them which dwell therein to *worship the first beast*, whose deadly wound was healed." This beast, who is also called the false prophet in other passages, does great wonders, makes fire come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men, and deceives them that dwell on the earth by his miracles, "Saying to them that dwell on the earth that they should make *an image to the beast*, which had the wound by a sword, and did live. And he had power to give life (breath) unto the image of the beast that the image of the beast should both speak, and cause that as many as would not worship *the image of the beast* should be killed. And he caused all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, to receive a mark in their right hand, or in their foreheads: and that no man might buy or sell, save he that had the mark, or the name of the beast, or the number of his name." In ch. xiv. 9, we read, "If any man *worship the beast and his image*, and receive his mark in his forehead or in his hand, the same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of this indignation." The beast and his image are mentioned again in v. 11. In ch. xv. 2, *the beast and his image* are again spoken of. In ch. xvi. 2 we find, "And there fell a noisome and grievous sore upon the men which had the mark of the beast, and upon them that *worshipped his image*." Verse 13, "And I saw three unclean spirits like frogs come out of the mouth of the dragon, and out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet. For they are the spirits of devils, working miracles, which go forth unto the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty." Then in ch. xix. we have a description of the armies, and the result of the battle (v. 19)—"And I saw the beast, and the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war against him that sat on the horse, and against his army. And the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet that wrought miracles before him, with which he deceived them that had received the mark of the beast, and them that *worshipped his image*. These both were cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone." Once more only is mention made of them, in ch. xx. 10—"And the devil, that deceived them, was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever." In none of the passages where the beast, the image of the beast, and the false prophet are spoken of do we find any mention made of homage being done to the second beast or false prophet; but the first beast and his image appears to be the principal object of homage. The false prophet is the instigator and deceiver, "whose coming is after the working of Satan, with all power, and signs, and lying wonders." He, fully energised by Satan, who is cast down to the earth during the latter half-week, causes the great tribulation, and goes into perdition at the coming to earth of the Lord Jesus Christ.

W. D. B.

CHRIST IN THE HEART.

"That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith," &c.
(Eph. iii. 17).

ONE very blessed feature in the life and ways of our Lord, when on earth, was the evenness of His conduct, and its perfect adaptation to every circumstance.

In every varied scene, under every varied trial, He still preserved the same unflinching and simple dependence on God; unruffled by all that passed around Him, never unprepared for the emergency of the moment.

Whether alone with the Father in prayer on the mountain, or in the wilderness tempted of the devil; whether in the temple or in the house; whether surrounded by cavilling Pharisees, or in the midst of publicans and sinners; if at the rich man's table, or with the poor, the lame, and the blind; if ministering comfort to His disciples, or mocked by the brutal soldiery of Herod, there was in Him an unwavering steady grace, a wisdom, a beauty, a fitness, yea, an adorning of the circumstances in which, by the counsel of God, He was placed, which cannot fail to fill our hearts with wonder and praise; especially when contrasted with the instability and uncertainty of conduct exhibited by ourselves in the little chequered scenes of our lives.

The fact is, as to ourselves, we but little realise the truth of God's presence *with* us and *in* us, and thus failing to walk with God, we are taken by surprise with many of the events which happen to us, and we do not meet our difficulties and trials in the steady assurance that they are all appointed of the Father, and that we have Christ with us to help us to bear them, to make us more than conquerors in them, or to give us deliverance out of them.

Our faith is too much kept, as it were, for great occasions, or for the question of our salvation only; and the exercise of it in the ordinary occupations of life, the habit of living by faith, is comparatively unknown to us. But surely one great purpose of God in giving us the history of our Lord's life on earth is, that we may see in Him the blessed example of living active faith, and ceaseless trust in the Father, and that we may follow His steps.

And one object of the indwelling of the Holy Ghost is, that we may have God always with

us and in us, to strengthen, to help, to comfort, and to guide us; so that we may live our life in the flesh, by the faith of the Son of God, who loved us, and gave Himself for us.

There are three principal spheres for the exercise of our faith—our own hearts, our houses, and the church of God; and we shall find, that in proportion as we cultivate the presence of Christ in either of these three spheres, so shall we find Him with us in the other two.

But our first and most important duty is, the being exercised about our own hearts, and cultivating secret communion with Christ there, before we even seek His presence elsewhere. We shall find need of the ceaseless exercise of faith for the repression of evil within our own bosoms, and if we would have Christ dwell in our hearts, we must, as it were, prepare a place for Him, by watching against the intrusion of our own corruptions, and the first risings of the flesh; surely, here it is that we have all failed.

We have seen errors in our brethren, and disorders in the church of God; and we have sought to remedy these evils without having first cleansed our own hearts; and the flesh has been allowed to remain working in our own selves, whilst we have been turning our attention to rectify the faults of others. But what does our blessed Master say?—"Cast first the beam out of thine own eye." He concludes, that we necessarily have a greater defect ourselves than that which we perceive in our brother; nay, the very keenness of perception as to the failing of another, is, of itself, a proof of ignorance as to our own condition; and the sudden endeavour to remove an evil from a brother, is evidence of an unconsciousness of the darkness within ourselves.

All external action should begin with self-judgment and self-humiliation. The more Christ dwells in our hearts, the more shall we discern what we ourselves are: no mere self-contemplation will reveal the secrets of our evil, but light alone will make manifest the darkness. Christ's presence will detect the deep roots of corruption, the leaven hidden in the corners; and the day-dreams of vanity, the airy visions of our foolish imaginations, and the idle speculations about the future, will fall before the living reality of Christ.

But how are we to attain this greatest of present blessings—Christ dwelling in our hearts? The way seems clear: “If My words abide in you,”—“If ye keep My commandments, ye shall abide in My love.” “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 to him.” “Abide in Me, and I in you.” The word of the Lord must be the ground of all fellowship with Him, and if His word dwell richly in us, He will be with us. His word will be the light to search us, but He is present with the light; and thus, in the very act of searching, we shall have the comfort and peace of His abiding with us, who is Himself the light.

The chambers of imagery lie deep, and the prophet had to dig before he could have a sight of that fearful exhibition of evil which was disclosed to him; so must we pursue somewhat heartily the search into ourselves, but the detecting of the hidden evil will prevent its open manifestation; and above all, the fact of Christ’s presence with us to aid our inquiry, will of itself give peace and tranquility, as well as power to the soul, which will amply compensate for the trouble, and even sorrow, we may have at the discovery of our own evil.

One way, therefore, of cultivating Christ’s presence in the heart, will be the seeking, by means of the light of the word, to become acquainted with ourselves, and thereby to overcome our secret sins. Another way, and one inseparable from the former, is the constant eating the flesh and drinking the blood of the Son of Man. Keeping His Cross constantly before us. “He that eateth My flesh, and drinketh My blood, dwelleth in Me, and I in him.” Observe, the doctrine about the Cross is not enough. Christ’s death must be as much appropriated to ourselves individually, and relished by us, as the food we eat for the sustenance of our bodies. This is, indeed, the never-failing source of our strength, and peace, and joy. What is meant by the Lord coming in to sup with us, and we with Him (Rev. iii. 20), but that He will place this bread from heaven before us, and minister it to us in holy and happy fellowship with Himself? This is the bread and wine with which our great Mel-

chizedek ever delights to strengthen and gladden us. He hath toiled and travailed in soul; He hath been the “Man of sorrows,” and hath “poured out His soul unto death,” in order that He might give us His flesh to eat. This is meat indeed, and drink indeed.

And will it not be a chief joy in the glory, to hear from His own lips the marvellous tale of His own sufferings? Shall we not then sit at His feet and learn how He bled, and sorrowed, and died for our sakes? Will He not repeat to us, and explain the depth of the meaning of that bitter cry, “My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?” And shall we not again and again raise the new and eternal song, “Worthy is the Lamb that was slain, to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing”?

It was the Lord’s own discourse about His sufferings that made the hearts of the two disciples burn within them, as they walked on their way to Emmaus; and we may be assured, that if Christ is much in our hearts, His Cross will be much in our thoughts; and if we meditate on His sufferings, though it may be very ignorantly, He will soon draw nigh and have companionship with us by the way.

But may He be found not as an occasional visitant, but to *dwell* in our hearts by faith. O that He may turn in and tarry with us all the night, till “the daybreak, and the shadows flee away!” With what joy shall we then hail Him as the “bright and morning Star!” A true-hearted desire for His presence in us now, is the best evidence that we really long for His appearing. He must be well known and beloved, if we would heartily say, “Come, Lord Jesus.” The bride, in the Song of Songs, was able accurately to describe the graces of her Beloved; she could tell forth His beauties, and His features were engraven on her heart. Let us delight ourselves in Him who is “altogether lovely,” and seek to walk in His steps of holiness and grace.

THE Christianity of the closet and the Christianity of busy life, are not, as is often found, conflicting things. The man who has fellowship with Jesus in his solitude knows how to carry the savour of the fellowship even into the most common affairs.

THE COURTS OF THE TEMPLE.

EXPOSITORY LECTURES on the TEMPLES of SOLOMON and EZEKIEL. By THOMAS NEWBERY, Editor of "The Englishman's Bible." Notes by W. K.

THE courts of the temple are only mentioned in 1 Kings vi. 36 and 2 Ch. iv. 9, but their dimensions and structure are not given; these are fully given in the prophecy of Ezekiel.

There is, first, the great court, or the outer court of the temple. This outer, or great court, was 500 cubits square. Taking a cubit to be nearly 1 foot 10 inches, Ezekiel's cubit being a hand-breadth longer, or about $3\frac{1}{2}$ inches more, will make the cubit 2 feet $1\frac{1}{2}$ inches. In order to give an approximate idea, we will suppose each cubit to be about 2 feet. So the outer court of 500 cubits will represent 1000 feet square.

Then there is the court of the priests, 300 cubits square, which the priests and Levites only were permitted to enter.

The outer court was elevated above the surrounding ground by flights of seven steps in front of the three gates, and the court of the priests was elevated above the outer court by flights of eight steps.

Next, there is the court of the altar, in the centre of the courts, 100 cubits square; and to the west is the separate place, also 100 cubits square, on which the temple stood.

The court of the altar and the separate place formed what was styled the inner court, which was surrounded by a wall 5 cubits thick, built of three rows of hewn stone, with cedar beams on the top.

The walls of the outer court and court of the priests were 6 cubits broad and 6 cubits high. There were three gates to the outer court—the north gate, the east gate, and the south gate—but no gate to the west; and there were three gates to the court of the priests, over against and corresponding with the three gates of the outer court. These gateways had two porches each.

THE TYPICAL TEACHING OF THE COURT.

The outer court, ascended by flights of seven steps, may be regarded as typical of earthly and millennial rest.

The court of the priests and inner court, ascended by flights of eight steps, we may regard as typical of heavenly, resurrection rest.

The arrangements of the courts may also afford us valuable instruction respecting our approach to God and nearness of communion with Him.

As worshippers in the outer court we simply realise we belong to the people of God.

As ministering in the court of the priests, the believer is reminded of his priestly standing and privileges by virtue of the anointing.

The court of the altar, with its sacrifices ever ascending, reminds him of the ground of his access and acceptance with God.

While the separate place, with the temple erected upon it, teaches the necessity for separation from evil, and that holiness becometh God's house for ever.

QUESTIONS ASKED AT MR. NEWBERY'S MEETINGS, AND ANSWERS GIVEN.

"Will Ezekiel's Temple continue to perpetuate, and will Sacrifices cease?"

AT the close of the millennial period we are told that Satan is again loosed, and Gog and Magog come up and surround the beloved city, fire comes down from heaven and destroys the enemy. Then we are told that "the heavens, being on fire, shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat; . . . the earth also, and all that are therein, shall be burned up" (2 Pet. iii. 10-12). And as God knew how to preserve Noah and those that were with him in the ark from the deluge of water, He knows equally well how to save His people from that deluge of fire. But with regard to the earth—the world that now is—all these things shall be dissolved; so that, when the Great White Throne is set up the earth and the heavens fly away, and there is found no place for them. Then the rest of the dead, who lived not again until the thousand years were finished, will be raised to stand before the Great White Throne; and death and hades will be cast into the lake of fire. The present order of things will have passed away for ever. Then, says the apostle, "I saw a new heavens and a new earth." The former things passed away; no more death, no more sorrow, no more crying, no more pain; all these things gone for ever. All things new. Everything is headed up in the second Adam, when the history of sin will be completed, and the eternal destiny of the wicked fixed.

There will be no more sacrifices then. Instead of the temple being on earth, we read of the holy city, the new Jerusalem coming down from God out of heaven. The bride of the Lamb will be associated with Christ in His eternal as well as in His millennial reign. Then we read of the tabernacle of God being with men when He shall dwell with them and they shall be His people, and God Himself shall be with them and be their God. It will be no longer the temple, but God tabernacling with men. Just as when He put Adam and Eve in the garden of Eden He claimed companionship with them, and walked with them in the cool of the day; and when He brought Israel out of Egypt He told them to make Him a sanctuary, that He might dwell among them. Thus the desire of God for fellowship with His people shall be fully accomplished. Then the tabernacle of God will be with men; no longer a temple on earth, an earthly shadow of heavenly things, but the heavenly things themselves, as foreshadowed by the temple, will have a full accomplishment, and be in everlasting existence; no longer the Lamb on the altar, but the Lamb on the throne; no longer the shadow of heavenly things, but the heavenly things themselves, the shadows having fled away.

“What proof is there that Daniel’s 70 weeks are not accomplished?”

THERE is nothing more simple than the interpretation of the 70 weeks of Daniel, if we only allow Scripture to speak for itself. The decree to restore and to build Jerusalem was given 446 B.C. Take 446 years, and add 37 years to it; because A.D. commenced four years after the birth of Christ, so the Lord Jesus must have been 37 years at the time of His death, A.D. 33. Inasmuch as A.D. commenced when he was four years of age, so the four years must be added to all chronology in the New Testament. 37 added to 446 makes 483 years; that is 69 weeks of years, for the Jews reckon their years by weeks as well as by days. And the word for weeks is simply from the root seven. That brings us on to the time when the Messiah was cut off. And such was the fact, when 483 years were run out the Messiah was cut off, and “not for Himself” (Heb., nothing to Him). From

that time Jerusalem ceased to be regarded as the holy city, and “Lo-ammi” is written upon Israel; they ceased to be Jehovah’s people. Jerusalem is called “the holy city” up to the time of Christ, but not after, until the time of Antichrist (Rev. xi. 2). Messiah was cut off at the end of the 69th week. That leaves one week still to be accounted for. Then we read, after Messiah is cut off, “the people of the prince that shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary.” The Roman people destroyed the city, A.D. 70; 37 years after the death of Christ. And the prince that shall come must therefore be the future prince of the Roman empire; the one who, in its last form, shall be at the head. But during the interval, from the time that Messiah is cut off, “desolations are determined unto the end.” During this period Jerusalem is trodden down, and God is taking out of the Gentiles a people for His name. From the time that Messiah is cut off till the time that the prince, or Antichrist, will confirm a covenant with the Jews, is the time of the present dispensation, which has lasted already more than 1800 years. When he comes he confirms a covenant with the Jews for one week of years, but breaks it in the midst of the week (3½ years). He had allowed them to have Jerusalem and their temple, and to reinstitute their sacrifices; but in the midst of the week he breaks the covenant, and takes away the daily sacrifice. And in this temple, recognised by God as His temple, Antichrist himself will sit, and set up “the abomination of desolation.” Then will come the time of “the Great Tribulation,” and then destruction will be poured upon the desolator, and “the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with His mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ” (2 Thess. i. 7-10). Also, “taking out of His kingdom all things that offend” (Matt. xiii. 41), and establishing His millennial kingdom.

“For what purpose were Sacrifices instituted from the beginning?”

“Not all the blood of beasts
On Jewish altars slain,
Could give the guilty conscience peace,
Or wash away one stain.”

SACRIFICES were never efficacious as to the putting away of sin. They might have had a ceremonial value; but they could never "make the comers thereunto perfect" (Heb. x. 1), "as pertaining to the conscience" (ix. 9). Then, for what purpose were sacrifices instituted? Not as having any value in themselves, but as foreshadowing the great sacrifice of Calvary's Cross. "They were a shadow of good things to come" (Heb. x. 1), the body and substance being Christ. As coming events cast their shadows before, so accomplished events leave their shadows behind. For the same purpose for which they were instituted from the beginning, they will, when the present spiritual dispensation of the Church is completed, be again observed.

These sacrifices instituted by God were the embodiment of the Divine thought concerning the Person and atoning work of the Lord Jesus Christ. I do not believe they have answered as yet their original purpose and design. But no sooner will the present dispensation be past, than they will come again into observance during the last week of Daniel's 70 weeks and in the millennium, but with most important and significant alterations. For instance, under the former dispensation, in connection with the tabernacle and temple, there was a morning and an evening lamb offered daily. In the millennial period there is no mention of the evening lamb, but only of the morning. The evening sacrifice has received its accomplishment in the Cross of Calvary. The morning lamb is the memorial, or the bringing to remembrance of the same. Just as now the Lord has instituted His own Supper in remembrance of His atoning work.

Neither is there any mention of the Feast of Weeks, or Pentecost, in connection with the millennial institution, because it has received its accomplishment in the present Church dispensation. The Holy Ghost, as Comforter, has come down to carry out the Divine purpose kept secret in God's heart until the Lord opened the dark saying in parable, and the Spirit revealed this mystery; that is, the taking out from the Gentiles a people for His name, and a bride for the Lamb.

Neither is there any mention of the Day of Atonement; that is now receiving its accomplishment. The High Priest of our

profession is now in the holiest, presenting in antitype the blood of the bullock on behalf of Himself and the Church, His house. The sacrifice on behalf of Israel is foreshadowed by Aaron going the second time into the holiest with the blood of the goat. So, when the Lord Jesus Christ will have presented that blood on behalf of Israel, and comes forth in fulfilment of the type (the high priest putting on his robe and coming forth), then the Day of Atonement will have received its accomplishment.

We read, in Psalm l., of God calling Israel to His bar, just as the Son of Man will call the nations of the earth before His throne of manifested glory, when He shall set the sheep on His right hand and the goats on His left. Psalm li. is the response of Israel to that judgment of God in Psalm l., when looking on Him whom they pierced; and, convicted of their sin, they cry to be delivered from blood-guiltiness, which has so long rested upon them. Then the Spirit teaches them to say, "Thou desirest not sacrifice; else would I give it . . . The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, Thou wilt not despise." Then will they further say, "Do good unto Zion: build Thou the walls of Jerusalem. Then shalt Thou be pleased with the sacrifices of righteousness, with burnt offering, and whole burnt offering: then shall they offer bullocks upon Thine altar."

THE RESTORATION OF SAINTS AND THEIR GOSPEL SERVICE.

(Psalm li. 13.)

"I WILL bless thee, and thou shalt be a blessing," is God's great and gracious way with us. And no part of His ways of blessing us is richer to us, or more to His own glory, than when He recovers any of us from a time of secret declension, or of open backsliding. And one of the fruits of such recovery always is an even-more-than-former zeal of the Gospel to the still unsaved.

Declensions and backslidings are either in individuals, or in local assemblies, or in the Church as a whole, in this or that period of its sojourn here below.

In all three of these the fruit here named will be found. David is an example of the first of the three. In Psalm xxxii., when his "moisture" returned by acknowledging his sin, and it was no longer to him "the roaring all the day long," and "the drought of summer," not only does he give *himself* afresh to God, but he bids *others* "be glad in the Lord, and also shout for joy." And in Psalm li. he makes it a plea for having the joy of God's salvation restored to him, that he will then "teach transgressors" God's ways, and "sinners shall be converted" to Him. And we can hardly doubt that Solomon's earnest voice of "wisdom" to sinners, wandering in the broad road of folly," which he so touchingly pours out in the first nine chapters of Proverbs, was uttered in his elder days, and was the fruit of his soul's restoration. With Peter's case we are all familiar. And have not we ourselves found that every debt we have owed the Saviour for recovering grace has not moved us afresh to tell of Him to those that knew Him not?

It is the same with assemblies of saints. We see this in the church at Corinth. In his first epistle to them Paul wept over them (see 2 Cor. ii. 4) for the lax state into which they had sunk, both in doctrine and in habits of life. His sharp yet tender words brought them back, it may be, to more than their first love and zeal. And in his second epistle, the apostle at once yokes them with himself and his fellow-labourers in the work of the Gospel to others; beseeches them not to receive this "grace of God in vain," for God has given now to the feeblest of His saints "the ministry (*i.e.*, the servanthip) of reconciliation," and has "put" in such "the *word* of reconciliation," that they might now be saying to men, "Be ye reconciled to God."

The same is true of the Church of God *as a whole*. Whenever God has "in the midst of the years revived His work" (Hab. iii. 1), this quickening of His people has always borne the fruit of warmer and wider testimony than before to the unsaved, both close around and in parts far of.

The work of Whitfield, Wesley, and others at the end of last century, kindled heavenly fire afresh in the hearts of God's own children in this country, in which it had burned low;

and the "Missionary Societies" of Great Britain date from the beginning of this century. And all other revival work in the souls of Christians since has of necessity borne a measure of the same Gospel fruit.

Many labourers in other lands are such as have tasted the joy of that revival which God has been causing in His Church of rich but long-forgotten truths; and enriched out of these newly-opened treasures, they have, like the children of the captivity, when set free in Nehemiah's day (see Neh. ix. 9), not been content with only themselves "eating the fat and drinking the sweet," but have hastened to carry "portions also for them for whom nothing is prepared." H. D.

PROPHETIC PAPERS. No. 9.

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES.

BY F. C. BLAND.

WE referred at the close of our last lecture to the Lord's prayer on the Cross for the guilty nation that had crucified Him, and pointed out that the offer of Him to the Jews again in the book of the Acts was God's answer to that prayer.

We all remember the teaching in the eleventh chapter of Romans, where we are taught, under the symbol of an olive tree, how the Jews, the natural branches, are broken off from the stem of promise, while the Gentiles, or "the wild olive branches," as they are called, are grafted in.

I may say, then, that the book of the Acts gives us the history of the breaking off of these natural branches, and the grafting in of the wild olive branches into the blessings and promises which were forfeited by the Jews because of their unbelief.

The third chapter of the Romans tells us that between Jew and Gentile there was "no difference"; but there must be a reason for such a declaration, and the further rejection of Christ, when offered again to the nation in the book of the Acts, gives this reason. In fact, the statement in Rom. iii. would have no apparent basis if the book of the Acts had not been given to us.

It was written by St. Luke; indeed, in the first verse he refers to his Gospel as a treatise

of all that Jesus *began* both to do and teach ; an expression which would appear to intimate that the Lord's personal teaching in the Gospel was to be supplemented by that of the Holy Ghost, whom He said "He would send from the Father," and who would teach them all things. The Lord's command to His disciples in Luke was, that "they should go to Jerusalem and wait for the promise of the Father"; the book of the Acts opens showing us the disciples waiting in the place they are commanded to tarry in, until that promise was fulfilled, and the Holy Ghost was sent down.

The answer to the disciples' question in verse 6, "Lord, wilt Thou *at this time* restore the kingdom?" is of great significance; for, though "known unto God were all His works from the beginning," the question is left, so to speak, to man's responsibility to decide as to whether the kingdom was to be set up then, or postponed to make room for the people of a heavenly calling, who should be the objects of God's counsels, until the time when the veil which is on the heart of His people Israel shall be taken away.

I do not pretend, in a lecture which must necessarily be concise, to give any detailed exposition of the book of the Acts of the Apostles,* but merely to note some of the salient points in it which have a dispensational bearing, and are in keeping with the character of these lectures. And, in the first place, I would remark that the testimony in the Gospel of Luke is to the Son of God come down to earth. The testimony in the Acts is to the Son of Man gone up to heaven, where, it will be noted, Stephen sees Him in chap. vii., having taken the place appointed for Him in Psalm cx.

A further respite is here given to the fig tree of Luke xiii. 6. The additional culture of the testimony of the Cross is to be added to all that the dresser of the vineyard had before done for it, and a *bona fide* offer is again made to the Jews, of Jesus, whom they crucified. And if they bore fruit then, well; but if not, they were to be cut down.

In the Gospels He is offered to them as Jesus Christ come in the flesh; in the Acts they must accept Him from heaven and the resurrection side of the Cross.

Here we have the fulfilment of the parable of the servant who owed his master ten thousand talents, who is forgiven all that debt. The Jews had incurred a debt to God by crucifying His Son which they could never repay. God forgives them, in answer to the prayer of His Servant, Jesus, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." But when mention is made of forgiveness to their fellow-debtor, the Gentile, the Jews, as they did in Luke iv. 28, and as we read also more than once in the Acts, and again in 1 Thess. ii. 16, forbid the disciples to speak to them that they might be saved, filling up their sins alway. Therefore wrath is come upon them to the uttermost; and, as a people, they have to pass through the day of Jacob's trouble, "though they shall be saved out of it."

It will be noted here that the Lord is not announced as the One, who, being descended from Abraham and David, is entitled to the kingdom, but as the rejected and crucified One, whom God has *made both Lord and Christ*; and on their hearing this, and being cut to the heart (chap. ii. 37), when they ask Peter what they shall do, he tells them to repent and be baptised to the acknowledgment of Him as Lord (verse 38).

We read in the end of chap. ii. that about three thousand souls were converted; and it is said of them that they continued in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship and in breaking of bread and prayers; but, it is added, they *continued daily in the temple* whilst breaking bread from house to house, showing that breaking of bread had not yet become a church ordinance as we find it in the Corinthian sense (1 Cor. x. and xi.), where we read that it was given again, and in a special sense, to Paul as "the minister of this dispensation of the mystery," which, though begun as a *fact* at the resurrection, was not declared as a *doctrine* until it was revealed to Paul and entrusted to him on the final rejection of Christ by the nation. The temple is still recognised as long as the offer of the kingdom remains open to the "men of Israel," as they are still addressed.

* I would commend to the reading of those who are interested in the subject a little book, entitled "The Structure of the Book of the Acts" (Elliott & Stock), which gives a most admirable exposition of the book, and which contains a grasp of the subject that I have not met with in any other writing on the Acts.

We are told, in verse 47, that the Lord added to them daily such as were being saved. We have, then, two things on the scenes,—the nation and those gathered out of the nation,—and the question is still left to the responsibility of the Jews to decide, which of these two things God will connect His Name with, and with which, the history of God's people in the world is to be carried on.

In chap. iii. the apostles are still seen going up to the temple, and again the power of God is put forth in signs and wonders characteristic of the kingdom. The lame man, according to Isaiah xxxv., “leaps as an hart,” entering with the disciples into the temple.

Peter speaks to them of the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and addresses them still as “ye men of Israel,” showing that the link with the nation is not yet broken, and when exhorting them to repent, he tells them that “God will send this Jesus which before was preached unto them, whom the heavens must receive until the time of the restitution of all things.” And he connects the *times of refreshing* for the nation with the *times of the restitution* of all things, and connects *both with the presence of the Lord*, and *not with the Holy Ghost present amongst them* as at that time. And chap. iii. ends with the words, “*Unto you first* God, having raised up Jesus, sent Him to bless you, in turning away every one of you from his iniquities.”

The question, as we have said, rests with the men of Israel whether they will have Him or not; but as the pennant on the mast tells the way the wind is blowing, so the fourth chapter gives an indication of how it will be, for the second verse tells us that they were grieved that they preached through Jesus the resurrection of the dead, and they laid hands on them. Now, all the twelve tribes believed in the resurrection, as we read in chap. xxvi. 7, but its being preached *through the One whom they had crucified*, but whom God had raised from the dead, was more than they could bear.

When the disciples are asked where the healing power comes from, they tell them that it was through faith in the name of Jesus that the lame man stood before them whole. It is no longer the pool of Bethesda, nor the temple, but the name of Him whom they had crucified; and the apostles quote Psalm

cxviii., warning them that this is the stone which was set at nought by the builders. Upon this they threaten them, and command them to speak no more in that Name. And being let go, we are told that “they went to their own company”—a little company, getting gradually more separated from the people, but which might still have become the first-fruits of repentant Israel *as a nation*, if they had even then turned to the Lord; but which afterwards was to become the beginning of the church of this dispensation, on the definitive rejection by the Jews of the Christ.

We noticed, when speaking on Matt. x., that the disciples were restricted in their ministry to the lost sheep of the house of Israel, and so here the testimony is to the Jew *first*. But, again, we read in Matt. x. 23 that they should not have gone over the cities of Israel till the Son of Man be come, and so here we see the first indication that that testimony was about to be interrupted, and we would conclude that it will never be completed until the Lord comes.

The question in Matthew is whether they would receive Him *or cast Him out*. Now the question will presently be whether they will receive Him *or be cast out*.

In verse 25 the second Psalm is quoted as having a fulfilment in the kings of the earth and the rulers taking counsel together against the Lord and against His Christ, while at the same time we are told of the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God in the matter. It is scarcely necessary to remark that the second Psalm awaits a darker fulfilment still, when the kings of the earth will agree to give their kingdom and power to the beast, and will gather to make war with the Lamb (Rev. xix.).

In chap. v. the numbers are increased to five thousand, and in expectation of the kingdom and of the day of jubilee, they sell their possessions and have all things in common, a state of things which would be consistent with the presence of the King in their midst, when, according to Ps. cxviii., “as the eyes of a servant looked to the hand of his master, and the eyes of a maiden to the hand of her mistress,” this people will say, “So our eyes wait on Thee, O Lord”; but which is nowhere enjoined or even contemplated in the directions to the Church,

where full injunctions are given as to the right use to be made of the things of this life by those who are rich in this world.

In verse 24 they cast all upon God, and in answer to their asking that He would magnify the name of His holy Servant, Jesus, the place was shaken and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost.

This second appeal to the nation is like the angels' song in Luke, when peace and good will to men was sung, but the Son of Peace was not there, and so His peace must return to Him again.

In Luke ii. 14 God sought to unite heaven and earth on one object, namely, His Son. Here, again, He offers to send Him back to the nation, but they reject Him again. But whilst this is so with the nation, great grace and great power are upon those elect ones who are gathered out of the nation, and who have accepted the crucified One as Lord.

In the case of Ananias and Sapphira we see judgment exercised in power in the Church or assembly, and here we must note the difference in the judgment on the first sin committed in Eden and the first sin committed in the Church. When a man and a woman sinned in Eden they were driven out; when they sinned in the assembly they were taken out dead; a fact which should fill us with the deepest solemnity as to our behaviour in the House of God.

I think there can be little doubt that here we have an instance of apostolic power, binding on earth and God, ratifying the judgment from heaven.

Peter binds Ananias' and Sapphira's sin upon them, and immediate judgment on them from heaven is the result.

I need hardly stop here to say that no such power is now vested in the Church, which has become apostate, and become wholly unfitted to be entrusted with such a power. Now, when I say "the Church," I mean that to which was committed the place which Israel lost, namely, the place of being God's witness in the earth. And some difficulties respecting this may be cleared away by considering what is meant by the expression so often used, "the professing church."

Let us begin here at the beginning, and we find that the Church, or that which now

stepped into the place of God's habitation here below, consisted of five thousand souls, and of the *rest durst no man join himself unto them*. The professing thing, then, that which rightly and truly was God's witness on earth, His candlestick, consisted only of real believers, or members of the body of Christ. *The professing thing*, and the *real thing*, then, were *exactly co-extensive*.

Soon, professors began to creep in,—Simon Magus, it may be, and others such,—but still those gathered out of the nation maintained the place of being God's witness, and did not cease to be the "professing church." Then, as another has said, the door was carelessly kept, and more professors crept in, until the tares became more than the wheat; still it professed to be the assembly of God. Not the false ones in it, or the true ones, but the whole thing as contrasted with that which went before. This is the eleventh of Romans aspect of it, where, as we have before remarked, the Gentiles *as a class* were grafted in because of the unbelief of the Jews. And it is declared to them that they should be maintained in that place if they stood by faith and continued in His goodness, it being added as a warning, "Otherwise thou also shall be cut off." I need not ask whether it has continued in His goodness and stood by faith; or whether it has not forfeited all claim to be God's witness on earth. A light is cast on this by Rev. ii. and iii., where, under the figure of seven candlesticks, this professing thing is seen, with the Lord walking in the midst of them. "Repent," He says, "or I will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent." Has it repented? This is the warning to the first church addressed. The last is, "Because thou art neither hot nor cold, I am about to spue thee out of My mouth"; and here, in Laodicea, He is not seen in the midst of His churches, but outside and asking for admission.

I ask again, Has it admitted Him? or has it not rather proved in every conceivable way that it can do without Him? Churches and systems in all ages have claimed this place—Rome by apostolic succession, and Protestantism by a mere protest against what is asserted in Rome. But this does not give to either or to any body of saints, however orthodox, or however separated to God in walk or life, the place of

the candlestick or the powers of binding and loosing. There are some who have come out from systems of men, and have sought the original ground of worship and ministry; but these are witnesses, not to candlestick position, but to the ruin of the Church as such, and to assume the place of the candlestick again would be to deny the ruin and to set up Popery again on a small scale.*

The events in this (chap. v.) are like the rumblings before the storm, which show that the storm is coming and which way the tide is going to set in.

In verse 19 the prison doors testify to the power of God present. In verse 30 the apostles declare that God has exalted Christ to be a Prince and a Saviour; and in verse 40 the storm has risen and set in with all its force against God's witnesses.

We will leave the consideration of the remainder of the book of Acts for another lecture.

THE FIRST EPISTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS.

CHAP. xiv. 8.

FROM NOTES OF AN ADDRESS BY J. R. C.

“For if the trumpet give an uncertain sound, who shall prepare himself to the battle?”

THE reference here is to the custom of summoning to battle by the sound of a trumpet, as in Judges vi. 34; but it also naturally leads us to Num. x., where we find the Lord's instructions regarding the silver trumpets. There we read of both trumpets being sounded to summon the whole congregation. The sounding of one trumpet only was the signal for the princes or heads of Israel to gather at the door of the tabernacle. The sounding of a note of alarm was to precede their journeyings and also their going forth to battle. These various sounds were to be distinct and definite, so that Israel might instantly understand what they were to prepare for.

Indefiniteness forms no part of God's

* Referring to the subject of the ruin of the Church and the position those should occupy who have come out from the systems of men to Christ, I would commend the reading of a little paper, called “Fragmentary Remarks,” by J. N. D.

methods. His Word is definite; His commands are definite; His promises are definite. Therefore, our obedience and our faith must be intelligent and definite also.

This is a day of compromise and indefiniteness as to almost every truth in the Word of God, and every species of error is cloaked by a veil of indistinct utterances, which may mean anything, but which always go to favour that which is false.

Let those who sound the trumpets of God, whether it be the Gospel to the world, or the truth that gathers to a Divine centre the people of God, see to it that they understand distinctly that whereof they speak, and that they utter in no obscure or uncertain way the testimony they have to deliver.

“So likewise ye, except ye utter by the tongue words easy to be understood, how shall it be known what is spoken?”

Those who seek to minister the Word of God in any measure, should give earnest heed to these words. I fear that much of our preaching and teaching goes over the heads of the hearers. It is not *plain* enough. Everything ought to be considered that will tend to edification. Often a hymn is given out so indistinctly that few, if any, hear what hymn it is, thus causing needless distraction.

One sometimes leads in prayer; but his back being toward the bulk of those assembled, his voice is not heard. Why should he not consider what is for the edifying of all, and turn towards the assembly and speak out clearly?

Another great hindrance to edification, especially in our larger gatherings, is the habit of coughing, and otherwise disturbing the meeting, without the slightest effort to repress it or to select the most fitting moment. I believe that Satan has more to do with this than we imagine. In a worldly concert where thousands are gathered, and all *intent to hear*, such conduct would not be tolerated; and anyone who had such a severe cold that they could not avoid coughing much, would deny themselves the pleasure, and stay at home rather than spoil the enjoyment of the many. But truly “the children of this world are more prudent in their generation than the children of light.” The heartless indifference with which such interruptions are inflicted upon a meeting for the edification of believers

is too sure a sign of how little true edification is really desired and valued by the many.

Mothers will bring their infants and take their place right in front of the speaker, where the child, in the mother's eyes "as good as gold," is a sore distraction to the speaker. Others who know that they will have to leave early, instead of sitting conveniently to the door are found at the head of a form, all the occupants of which must rise to let the other out! Some may regard it as frivolous to mention such things in connection with edification; but, solemnly believing that these practices are real hindrances, we make no apology for speaking plainly about them.

Verse 12—"Seek that ye may excel to the edifying of the Church."

Observe how often the word "edify" occurs in this chapter. It is fitting, when gathered together, that our worship should ascend to God. His Word of old was, "None shall appear before Me empty"; and, surely, worship in the Holy Spirit and in truth out of full hearts is that which is due to the Lord in the assembly of His saints. But that can only be rendered as the Church is edified; and here, in this chapter, the ordering is not so much regarding the worship that ascends as the ministry that descends for the edification of the Church.

Verses 13 to 16 may be illustrated thus:—Suppose that I were in Paris and went to a little assembly there, composed entirely of French people who knew no English. As I waited among them, before the Lord I rejoiced in spirit. And, by-and-by, suppose that I began to give thanks audibly in English. I would thus be gratifying myself; and were I with those who could understand me, it might be profitable. But those present could not be edified, for they could not understand. Under such circumstances, what are God's instructions? Either be silent, or secure the help of some one, who knows both languages, to interpret. Thus we are clearly taught that there is no mysterious, incomprehensible way of communicating grace. It must be by the truth, and it must be through the understanding.

In **verse 16** there is another point. The assembly is supposed to be gathered, the table is spread, and, as some one gives thanks, the others say "Amen."

This is the manner of response that has the Divine approval. Every request in prayer, every expression in thanksgiving, should be of such a nature, and so distinctly uttered that all the saints present can intelligently and heartily add "Amen." Sometimes responses in prayer are carried to an extreme—so loud, so continuous, that the voice of the one who leads is almost drowned, and excitement takes the place of the intelligent "Amen."

This is not to edification. When the law was read in the hearing of the people of Israel, they responded with "Amen." And we believe that a hearty "Amen," in response to ministry of the Word which is felt to be in the Spirit, would be both becoming and edifying. So also, as expressive of fellowship in prayer and thanksgiving, when it comes from the heart it is assuredly scriptural, and we are persuaded it would be glorifying to God and edifying to the assembly.

Verse 19.—Here the apostle recognises a possible ministry of "five words." The ten thousand words, if in an unknown tongue, or if "over the heads" of the hearers, may be quite unedifying; on the other hand, a very few words may at times be most instructive and profitable. It is a loss to the Church that there is so little such unpretentious ministry. So many seem to think that if they do not occupy half an hour, they need not speak at all! This is a serious mistake. Short, pointed, pithy words are greatly needed.

Verse 21.—Here he quotes from the Old Testament to show the purpose for which the gift of tongues was bestowed. This gift was not intended for the edification of the assembly, but as a sign to the unbelievers. On the other hand, "prophecy serveth not for them that believe not, but for them which believe." For the unbeliever, there is the Gospel in all its fulness and simplicity—"Seek that ye may excel to the edifying of the Church." The object in view is not to show how much you know or how well you can speak—alas! that such unclean motives should ever have place—but to edify the saints. Brethren, are we seeking this earnestly, diligently, perseveringly? God has bestowed no gift of such a sort that it enables a man to dispense with labour. There must be

diligent searching of the Scriptures, diligent walk with God, if there is to be excellence in the edifying of the Church. Above all, let us cultivate a spirit of *love* and of *meekness*. If these be lacking, edification will cease, barrenness will surely result.

BREAKING THE BREAD.

AS my humble service among the lesser churches, where this difficulty is most keenly felt, has rendered it necessary for me to give this matter my careful attention, I should like, with your kind permission, to give your many readers the help I have endeavoured to give in those special cases where my counsel has been sought.

The enemy is using this question in many places as a bone of contention amongst the gathered saints, and I shall try by a simple appeal to the *Word* to combat his wiles, without any reference to what has already been said on this subject. It is one of the rules of the safe interpretation of Scripture, to first find out that portion of the inspired Word where the Spirit of God is dealing specially with the subject on hand.

In following this rule, all will agree that 1 Cor. xi. 17 to the end has an exclusive application to the feast of the Lord's Supper. I am aware some have a difficulty as to chap. x. 16, 17; but no one can have any as to chap. xi., from verse 17. Let us therefore carefully look at "what is written" there.

Will the reader take his or her Bible, and carefully read the whole passage over and over again, looking up to the Lord the Spirit for light on His own truth? A knowledge of Greek is very helpful in many difficulties, but it is not enough here; we are on too "holy ground" for scholarship to keep us right. In our study together let us mark carefully the prominence given to the words, *Eat* and *Drink*. It will be very helpful to the willing learner to *underline* these words in every form in which they are found in this passage, noticing especially the importance given to them in verses 26, 28, 33—"For as often as ye *eat* this bread, and *drink* this cup"; "And so let him *eat* of that bread, and *drink* of that cup"; "Wherefore, my brethren, when ye come together to *eat*." Does it not strike the reader that the one *essentiality* of the

Lord's Supper lies in all *eating* the one bread (or loaf), and all *drinking* of the one cup, showing our joint participation in the virtues of the "one sacrifice"? Is it not striking that while the *fact* of their all "eating" the one bread and all "drinking" the one cup is kept so prominent, not a word is said here as to the *manner* they either gave thanks or broke the bread? We have the same marked silence in the Old Testament. In Ex. xii., where the LORD gives such minute directions as to the eating of the Passover, not a word is said as to whether one "carved" for all, or whether all "helped" themselves; but everywhere there are the most imperative commands as to those who were to eat of the Passover being ceremonially "clean." Again, as to the showbread (Lev. xxiv. 5-9), there is not a word as to whether the high priest "helped" the rest, or each priest "helped" himself. It is simply said, "And they shall eat it in the holy place" (verse 9). The principle is uniformly the same regarding all that fell to the priests. There was the most solemn instruction as to their being "clean," but not a word as to the *manner* of eating.

Surely any spiritual mind can discern the subtilty of the serpent in getting the saints of God to dispute about a matter on which the Spirit maintains such a marked silence in both Old and New Testaments; while, it is to be feared, the consciences of many are in a deplorable condition before God.

Perhaps some sincere soul may ask here, How, then, are we to do in breaking of the bread? Well, I have no hesitation in replying, if the bread (or loaf) is divided or broken by one, before the saints break it for themselves, it ought to be done simply *with a view to the eating*. If all can conveniently *eat* without the bread being previously broken, there is no need to do so. Where the assembly is large, the bread is broken into two, or more parts, on the same principle as there is more than one cup on the table; but this is simply with a view to the same convenient eating and drinking by all present. With all deference to some esteemed brethren, I firmly believe that, to make the one person breaking the bread, as the *Lord Himself did*, an *essential part of the feast*, is a departure from the simplicity of the Scriptures.

It is painful to the godly soul to see how hurriedly the bread is passed round; some hastily taking the merest particle, as if they were going through a farce that had no meaning to their own souls. Did we but apprehend, in a little measure, that when we are gathered around the Lord's table we are the guests of the Lord of Glory, called around Himself to eat bread and drink wine in commemoration of that wondrous and awful scene from which the sun in the heavens hid his face when His Creator was suffering the judgment due to *our sins*; were we affected, as we ought to be, by what it cost the Lord of Glory ere we could thus be gathered around Himself on "redemption ground," we would have little difficulty in seeing eye to eye regarding the particular manner of breaking the bread. I am not undervaluing the importance of keeping strictly to Scripture; but, let us beware lest, in our zeal for the truth, we go beyond Scripture, and wither our own souls and the souls of others by "splitting hairs" about matters on which the Spirit of God is silent.

Now, just a word as to giving of thanks. The careful reader will observe that, in the passage we have been looking at, there is no word of any one giving thanks, or of one breaking the bread. We are simply told what the Lord Himself did (verse 24).

As I have already noticed, the *essence* of the feast lies in all present "eating the one bread and drinking the one cup" in "remembrance" of the Lord who redeemed us. But if we go on to chap. xiv. 16 (which primarily applies to the same meeting) we find "it is written"—"Else, when thou shalt bless with the spirit, how shall he that occupieth the room of the unlearned say Amen (*the Amen*, R.V.) at *thy* giving of thanks, seeing he understandeth not what thou sayest?" Does it not seem clear, that we give thanks when we eat the Lord's Supper, as we do when we eat our own supper?

Take, for instance, the refreshment-room at our conference meetings. It would be unseemly, not to say ungodly, for a company of saints to partake of God's bounties without giving thanks. But we do not all need to speak audibly. One brother "lifts up his voice," and the rest say, or ought to say,

Amen at his giving of thanks. In Acts iv. 24 we read, "They lifted up their voice to God with one accord." There may have been some thousands present (see verse 4), but no one would understand that they all spoke audibly, using exactly the same words. No doubt it was on the principle laid down in 1 Cor. xiv. 16. One expressing the hearts of all, and the rest adding their Amen; and the Spirit of God calls that "*with one accord.*"

If we compare, carefully, chap. xi. with chap. xiv. of 1 Cor., we cannot help seeing that they both refer to the same meeting. In chap. xi. 18 we read, "For first of all, when ye come together in the church." In chap. xiv. 23 we read, "If therefore the *whole Church* be come together into one place." Also the words, "given thanks," in chap. xi. 24, are the same as "givist thanks" in chap. xiv. 17. Also, if we view chap. x. 16 (which appears to me to refer to the Lord's Supper) in the light of chap. xiv. 16, there is no difficulty in the expression, "*we* bless." One brother gives thanks, and the rest say Amen. Neither is there any difficulty in the words, "*We break.*" Supposing one brother divides or breaks the bread before it passes round, in the *eating* of it all break it for themselves individually.

All this cavilling about the breaking of the bread is simply one of the wiles of the Devil, seeking by his subtilty to get us, when we are thus gathered as the guests of the Son of God, to be occupied with ourselves and what we are doing instead of being occupied with Him and what He has done for us; and also to lead us to neglect that self-examination which is essentially necessary before we can eat and drink to the pleasing of the Lord, or to our own blessing.

The Lord was judging the saints at Corinth, not because of the particular way in which they were giving thanks, or breaking the bread, but because of their *unclean condition* in His sight.

May the Lord awaken His people to be on our guard against our wily adversary in these things, and lead us to lie low in the dust before Him on account of allowing the enemy to get such an advantage over us!

G. A.

H O M E.

I LONG for home, I long for rest,
My weary feet are sore oppress;
A pilgrim lone, a stranger here,
I sigh for home—my heart is there.

An exile will, on foreign soil,
Seem strange and lone, and feel the toil—
And restless be—while on he goes
Through lands unknown and hostile foes.

A captive too, when girt by sea,
Will sigh for home and liberty;
A prisoner bound by iron chain
May hope for liberty again.

And I, a captive circled round
By nature's ties, and fetter bound—
A prisoner chained by mortal breath
And life, which only speaks of death—

I've watched the bark on ocean's breast
Struggling to reach the harbour's rest,
When nigh to port did backward glide
To sea, by adverse wind and tide.

And, I remember, once I thought
I saw the harbour lights and port;
But soon my bark was turned again
To plough life's sea and troubled main.

But earth is not my native clime;
My home is Heaven, my birth Divine;
A purer, holier sphere than this
Awaits me—Christ, and cloudless bliss.

S. B.

Correspondence.

THE BREAKING OF THE BREAD.

It is truly deplorable to hear of the spirit in which this controversy has been developed in not a few gatherings. Surely if there ever existed among saints a diversity of judgment that required to be approached in a spirit of lowliness and reverence, of love and tenderness, it is this! Yet we hear of wrath and bitterness of strife and division being the element in which it has been discussed. Was there ever a more heart-sickening exposure of the ungodly condition of some whom we fain would own as fellow-believers? Was there ever greater cause for humiliation before God?

Oh, the brazen-faced impudence of "the flesh"—it can turn to bite and devour about the last dying commands of love that came from the lips of our adorable Lord. "Take heed that ye be not CONSUMED one of another" (Gal. v. 15).

May the number be increased of "the men that sigh

and that cry for all the abominations that be done in the midst" of the gathered people of God!

A word or two as to the letter of our brother, J. R. S., in our last number. Whilst we deprecate the needless allusion to the original, and believe that the "backing of Greek" is much more resorted to than is needful or edifying to most, we, nevertheless, welcome with all our heart and soul, and give thanks to God for any true light that is shed upon any difficulty by means of a more perfect understanding of the original "God-breathed" words.

When any subject becomes matter of controversy, and especially when it is "taken up" by the inexperienced, there seems to be no extreme of folly to which it may not be pushed. The letter of J. R. S., therefore, is in one sense not surprising.

With all respect to the objections raised by J. R. S., we do not see any inconsistency between handing the "bread" or "loaf," in a small assembly, unbroken, to the first who is to partake of it—each one being a breaker of it in order to his *eating* of it; and, in a large assembly, first breaking it and handing the portions to several, in order to expedite and facilitate the *eating*.

That which is contended for is not that the bread be presented unbroken, but that the breaking of it be only in order to the eating, and that it be not made an official act performed by one for all, without which the Lord's instructions are said to be disregarded.

We commend to our readers the letter of our esteemed correspondent, G. A., as in our judgment it gives the truth, according to the Scriptures, on most points involved.—Ed.

ADAM'S INTERCOURSE WITH GOD.

To the Editor of *The Witness*.

DEAR SIR,—I notice in your July number of *The Witness* a long letter written with the intention of proving that Adam had no fellowship or communion with God before the fall, which idea you seem to corroborate in your note, while at the same time you contend that there was "uninterrupted intercourse between God and man." Some of us, who are your constant readers, would be glad if you would, in your September issue, give us a definition and an explanation of the difference between the terms "communion with God" and "intercourse with God."—Yours truly in our risen Lord,
H. B.

Ivybridge, Devon.

[The word we used was "*unhindered* intercourse." A master has intercourse with his servant, but it is of a nature befitting that relationship. He gives his servant his orders, and the servant may freely inquire as to any point on which he desires fuller instruction, or may fitly tell his master of unforeseen difficulties, &c. All this is intercourse, and it may be quite "*unhindered*," but it never rises above the character of the relationship that it pertains to.

So God might have intercourse with Adam as His creature, and as His servant; but the New Testament idea of "communion" is vastly more exalted, and implies friendship of the most intimate kind (see John xv. 15). It is intercourse with God of such a nature, that as creatures or servants we are incapable of entering into

it, for only by the indwelling Spirit of God can any man know the things that are freely given to us of God. See I Cor. ii. 12].

NOTE.—An interesting letter from Henry Dyer, in Australia, is crushed out of this Number. Will (D.V.) appear next month.

Questions and Answers.

We desire to express our thanks to all who have sent answers. We particularly request that each writer will give his name and address in full, not for publication, but that we may know who it is that seeks to help, and, if desirable, that we may communicate privately.

When more than one question is replied to, let the answer to each question be upon a separate piece of paper.

Replies to appear in the next number require to be sent in not later than 15th of present month, and so on; the 15th of the month being always the latest to which we can defer making up for press.

We again urge the importance of replies being *short*; it is essential, in this particular line of things, to be *concise*.

We shall greatly value remembrance in prayer that special wisdom and grace may be given for this service. THE EDITOR.

Replies are invited to the following questions:—

Does Heb. xi. 40 mean that God has provided some better thing for us, the saints of this dispensation, or that the Old Testament saints are waiting for us, both being perfected together and to share the same blessings?

Has God ordained some to be saved and some to be lost, when He has so clearly said in His Word, "Whosoever believeth on Me hath everlasting life"?

1 Peter ii. 12.—Does, "the day of visitation," refer to any future day, or to the present day of grace and privilege?

Spae forbids our replying this month to more than two questions. Others that remain unanswered we hope to take up next month.

THE MARRIAGE OF BELIEVERS.

QUESTION 296.—Is it according to Scripture and conformable to British law for believers to be married in the place of meeting by an evangelist or any Christian?

Ans. A.—The meeting-room must be licensed for marriages; the particulars of which can be obtained from the registrar of the district. The obtaining of the license will occupy some weeks. It will cost about £3 3s.; that for the hall where the writer meets, costs £3 2s. 6d.

Then persons may be married in the meeting-room by any Christian brother. He must use the legal form of words as part of the ceremony, and the registrar must be present as the legal witness to the marriage. It is well to encourage the performance of marriages in our meeting-rooms. There is a simple book published by John Snow & Co., Ivy Lane, London, of which the legal part only may be used with advantage, and the meeting may be an open one. Upon such occasions all are usually desirous of a short service.

A. J. C.

Ans. B.—The difference between English and Scottish law necessarily complicates this question, and any reply, to be of any real value, must recognise this distinction.

Much difficulty arises from the very general habit of confounding things that essentially differ, viz., the legalising of a marriage conformably to the law of the land, and the devotional or religious service that is a fitting accompaniment of so important a transaction.

He should deprecate strongly any attempt at secularising a marriage. We believe that the fellowship of saints in prayer and thanksgiving, as well as exhortation, should invariably be sought in connection with so important a step in the life of two Christians. This we strongly contend for; at the same time leaving it quite an open question, whether for such exercises the opportunity be before or after, or in immediate connection with, the legal form. And we believe it is this same time-honoured and godly conviction in all Christian minds that originally led to the legal form being transacted by a religious functionary—priest, clergyman, or minister.

In England (as stated in **Ans. A**) it is a simple matter to have any hall licensed for the celebration of marriages. That being done, and the registrar being present to attend to the legal requirements, religious exercises can be conducted of a becoming character in immediate connection with the necessary legal steps; or, failing the licensing of a building for the purpose, the couple to be married, and the witnesses to the same, may appear by appointment before the registrar at his office. The legal process can there be gone through, and afterward they may assemble, with others, in the accustomed place of meeting, and seek the blessing of God.

Other minor points of detail will vary according to circumstances; difficulties will doubtless arise; relations will perhaps oppose, and the cross may have to be borne; but, at all costs, a "good conscience" must be maintained; and those who have, for conscience' sake, and for the Word of God, gone forth from humanly-devised religious systems, and renounced an unscriptural order of ministry, known as the clerical order, should on no account whatever be found recognising or upholding that from which the truth has separated them once for all.

In Scotland there is no such thing as the licensing of places for the celebration of marriages; but a marriage requires to be legalised by being registered according to the form prescribed by law. According to Scottish law there are two classes of marriages, called regular and irregular (or clandestine). A regular marriage is one in which the necessary proclamation has been made, and the usual legal form gone through in the presence of and certified by a *minister*. An irregular (or clandestine) marriage is one in which the legal form has been gone through before a justice of the peace, or a Notary Public, and afterwards certified by the Sheriff, and upon his certificate entered by the registrar. This latter course separates completely the legal form from all religious elements. It is a right and orderly way of conforming to the requirements of the law, but it has this one disadvantage, that it is scheduled as an "irregular" marriage; and, therefore, in the eyes of the uninstructed, a measure of reproach attaches to it. As in the case of a marriage in England at the registrar's office, the meeting for prayer, &c., could be held after the obtaining of the Sheriff's certificate.

But the question naturally arises—Are there none in scripturally-constituted assemblies whose position and ministrations are such that they come within the scope and intent of the law's definition of "a minister"? It runs as follows (the authority being the Registrar-General for Scotland):—"Any person who is truly recognised by

a religious community as their minister, and who performs ministerial functions with their consent and in good faith, is in the sense of the Act 4 and 5 William IV., c. 28, and of the Registration Act, a minister not of the Established Church; and, as such, may lawfully perform the marriage ceremony. Accordingly, marriages after proclamation or publication of banns, celebrated in the forms of the Christian brethren, are recognised and registered as regular marriages."

Now, we ask—Is there anything in this definition that necessitates an unscriptural qualification? Are there not many godly brethren who ought to be, and are heartily recognised and prayed for as "pastors" and "teachers," who are "guides" and "rulers," who minister "in good faith" and "with the consent" and entire fellowship of the assemblies of which they form a part? Suppose that the question were ever raised as a point of law, could not witnesses by the dozen be brought to give evidence that all this is really true of many brethren? That although they have gone through no ordination service, although they accept neither title nor emolument, yet, in the fullest, truest sense of the word, they stand before the assemblies as ministers of the Word of God, as pastors, or overseers, in the flock of God, and as such are entitled to be recognised by the law which has made such liberal provision for the orderly celebration of marriage, with a view to meeting the requirements of every shade of religious belief. Why should not any elderly overseeing brother sign his name in the schedule, and write after his name, "A minister of the Word of God," or "A pastor" in the assembly of Christians stately meeting in—hall?

We believe that there is a serious lack in our midst of those who in heart and before God have given themselves to these ministries, and who are not ashamed to own that they have done so. This may also partly arise from the fear of appearing to assume a clerical position. On the other hand, there is also a widespread democratic element that would fain ignore the fact, so plain in Scripture, that in the Church there are some who are set in responsibility *over* others, as a shepherd is *over* the flock, and as a teacher is *over* those he instructs—as a ruler is *over* those he rules.

We conclude this reply with the following interesting correspondence, the *terms* of which are not in all respects such as *we* would use, but the *scope* and bearing of which is very plain:—

"From the Registrar at—to the Registrar-General,—I have been applied to for a form (Schedule C) in order to the celebration of a marriage between two members of a sect of Baptists, calling themselves "Christian Brethren," or "Plymouth Brethren," who have no regularly-ordained minister (such not being in accordance with their creed). The ordinances are administered, and the worship conducted by one or more of their own number. They have a congregation here of about 200 members, and are about (for the first time) to celebrate marriages according to their own forms, the ceremony to be performed by one of their own number. The parties about to contract the marriage are regularly proclaimed. Shall I give them the schedule, and enter it in the duplicate registers in the usual form?"

"Reply. To the Registrar at—from the Registrar-

General. Sir,—In reply to your letter of yesterday's date, I beg to inform you that, upon production of a certificate of proclamation of banns between the parties to whom you refer, it will be your duty to furnish them with a copy of Schedule (C), and on its being returned to you, duly filled up and signed, you will transcribe its contents into your duplicate registers in the ordinary way."

The only other point is the filling up of that column in the schedule which demands, "How married." Usually, the terms are, "According to the forms of the Established Church," or other denomination, as the case may be. But in this also there is ample liberty; one formula, which *has been accepted*, being "according to the forms of the Christian Church assembling at" (here stating name or address of usual meeting-place).

We fail to see that there is anything in the conditions required by law, either in England or Scotland, that may not be fully complied with by those who desire wholly, and without compromise, to follow the Scriptures.—Ed.

RESISTING THE HOLY SPIRIT.

QUESTION 297.—Have we any authority from Scripture to say that the unconverted have power to resist the Spirit of God?

Ans. A.—In Gen. vi. 3 it is written—"My Spirit shall not always *strive* with man." Resistance on the part of man is here plainly inferred. In Isa. lxiii. 10 and Eph. iv. 30 we read of *grieving* the Holy Spirit. In Acts viii. it is written—"Ye stiff-necked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do *always resist* the Holy Spirit: as your fathers did so do ye." In 1 Thess. v. 19 we read—"Quench not the Spirit." Again, Heb. x. 29, we have—"And hath done despite unto the Spirit of Grace." All these passages plainly imply resistance. The passages, Gen. vi. 3 and Acts viii. 51, appear to prove that the unconverted *have power* to resist the Spirit of God. "The Spirit of God still moves upon the face of the waters"; and the Lord Jesus said to the Jews, John vi. 44, 45—"No man can come to Me, except the Father which hath sent Me draw him." From these passages it is evident that the Spirit of God does *strive* with man in his unconverted state, and that man not only has power but does resist the Spirit of God.

W. D. B.

[Editor's Note.—The foregoing reply is conclusive as to the power that exists in the unregenerate man of resisting the Spirit of God. But such a passage may occur to the mind of some as Rom. ix. 19—"Why doth He yet find fault: for who hath resisted His will?" This passage clearly shows that when God chooses to assert His will in opposition to the will of man, God being the Omnipotent One, His will must prevail. But God is pleased in His wisdom to allow the will of the creature to assert itself, though not invariably, and thus is made manifest the inveterate opposition of the will of man to God. The scriptural teaching seems to be that the natural man, in the energy of the spirit of Satan, resists and opposes the strivings of the Spirit of God. The regenerate man is called upon, in the energy of the Spirit of God, to "resist the Devil."]

PROPHETIC PAPERS. No. 10.

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES—(Continued).

BY F. C. BLAND.

THE end of chap. vii. might perhaps have been a more suitable division for his lectures on the book of the Acts, as marking a definite change in the testimony, but want of space prevented our putting so much into one lecture, so we begin this lecture with chap. vii., in which Stephen rehearses Israel's whole history from the call of Abraham to the moment when he stood before them. He is one of those to whom the Lord refers in Luke xi., where He charges them with having killed the prophets, adding, "Behold, I also will send you prophets and wise men, and some of them ye shall slay and persecute," showing that the hatred of God on their part was at all times the same, and that the blood of all should be required of that generation. Stephen's words, "Ye do always resist the Holy Ghost: as your fathers did, so do ye," confirm the Lord's words above referred to.

They "stopped their ears (surely a typical action) and ran upon him with one accord"; and in slaying him they fulfil another parable, which says that his citizens hated the lord of the vineyard, and sent a messenger after him, saying, "We will not have this man to reign over us." Here we get the Spirit of Glory and of God resting on the one who suffered for Christ's sake (1 Peter iii.). The glory of God appeared in the cloud when Israel spake of stoning Moses and Aaron. But this is something more, for the glory rests on the face of the Lord's first martyr, and Stephen, who begins his address with the God of Glory, ends by seeing Jesus and the glory of God.

And I would stop for a moment to note how Stephen addresses Him! We are told that "he saw Jesus standing at the right hand of God"; and when telling his murderers who he sees, he says, "I see the Son of Man," Christ's special title as the One to whom judgment is committed; but when he addresses Him he does not call Him Jesus, but "Lord Jesus," a prefix which should never be omitted when addressing our Lord; a title which His disciples always used when doing so, and

which He stamped with His approval when He said, "Ye call Me Master and Lord, and ye say well, for so I am."

He is seen STANDING in heaven, which I think intimates that He is waiting to receive the last answer from the nation as to whether they will receive Him or reject Him; and which gives particular point and significance to the exhortation to the nation, "Strive to enter in at the strait gate, for many will strive to enter in and shall not be able when once the Master of the house has *risen and shut the door*." And while the exhortations to receive the One whom God had exalted to be a Prince and a Saviour still continue, the question was *virtually* settled when they sent Stephen after Him to heaven.

The Lord asks forgiveness for them on the ground that they knew not what they did. Stephen's prayer is not made on the ground of ignorance; he only says, "Lord, lay not this sin to their charge."

In chap. viii. the disciples are scattered and went everywhere preaching the Word, *except the apostles*. This exception is of great importance to note; and is some help to the understanding of the Epistle of James, which was written to the twelve tribes while James was still at Jerusalem, and the believing remnant was not yet separated from the nation. Philip goes down to Samaria, the next place which is spoken of after Judea in the order of chap. i. 8, where the disciples are told that they shall be witnesses to the Lord in Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and the uttermost parts of the earth.

The Ethiopian eunuch becomes converted, and is one of the first-fruits of the Gentiles to God. And now, in chap. ix., God arrests the persecutor, who is to be made a chosen vessel to bear His Name before *Gentiles and kings and the children of Israel*. In chap. iii. it is "*Unto you first*," in chap. ix., where Paul is called out, the children of Israel are named last.

In chap. x., Peter, who was the minister to the circumcision, gets his instructions that God is no respecter of persons; and that in every nation he that fears Him and worketh righteousness is accepted of Him; and he is taught by the vision of the sheet that his mind must be in accord with the new order of things

which was setting in ; and in the end of chap. x. he says, "Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptised which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we ?"

In chap. xi. we read that the Holy Ghost fell on the Gentiles who believed, in the house of Cornelius; and the testimony of the apostles that to the Gentiles *also* was granted repentance unto life is important. Now in verse 19 we read, that those who were scattered abroad went as far as Antioch, preaching the Word to *Jews only*; but here they spake the Word to the Gentiles also, preaching Jesus Christ; and when they had come and seen the grace of God were glad.

Here we read that they *assembled themselves with the Church*, giving a definiteness to the recognition of the assembly which we have not had before. But looking across the page to chap. xii. 3, we read of "the days of unleavened bread"; showing that Jewish ordinances had still a place, Jerusalem having still a historical existence; or, as we might say, "whilst the first tabernacle was yet standing."

In the same, chap. xii., we have also mention of the disciples preaching in the synagogue on two occasions; and "the Sabbath day" is mentioned, and not "the first day of the week"; and in verse 15 we have *the reading of the law*.

I think, too, there may be some significance in the statement in verse 23, "That God has raised up to Israel a Saviour, Jesus," as contrasted with chap. ii. 30, where it is said that God raised up Christ to *sit upon David's throne*; this purpose being postponed for the present in view of Israel's continued rejection of Him. In verse 31 the twelve apostles are still called "His witnesses unto *the people*"; while in verse 41 the Jews are warned, lest the prophecy of Hab. i. 5 be fulfilled in them, "Behold, ye despisers, and wonder, and perish, for I work a work in your days, which ye shall in no wise believe, though a man declare it unto you."

Again, in verse 42, they preach in *the synagogue*, and when the Gentiles desire that the same words should be preached to them on the next Sabbath, we are reminded of John xii. 20, where the Greeks come up and desire to see Jesus. There it seems to be the turning point as to His rejection, for He speaks of the

Son of Man being glorified; and here, also, the desire of the Gentiles to hear Him, and the enmity of the Jews, lead to the first definite threat on the part of the apostles, verse 46, "Lo, we turn to the Gentiles"; a warning which is repeated again with even more definiteness in chaps. xviii. 6 and xxvi. 17, and finally is declared, chap. xxviii. 28, as being the absolute fulfilment of Isaiah vi. 9, 10.

But we must not pass without noticing the significant fact in the last verses of chap. xiii., where the disciples, acting on the command of our Lord in the Gospels, shake off the dust of their feet against the Jews who reject their testimony concerning Himself.

In chap. xiv. we find them still going into the synagogue, while in verse 27 there is the recognition again that the door of faith is opened to the Gentiles.

Chap. xv. is remarkable for the counsel at Jerusalem, which settled the question of any obligation on the Gentiles to observe Jewish ordinances, whilst a concession is at the same time made to the consciences of the Jews, in every city *where Moses is read*, to abstain from things strangled, and from blood, and from fornication.

In chap. xi. 18 it is stated that the Gentiles are to be *saved as the Jews*. In verse 11 the apostles declare that "we (the Jews) shall be *saved even as they*"; a statement that shows most significantly the reversal of God's original order, which was to make the Jews the channel of blessing to the world. In the chapter that follows we find the synagogue mentioned six times, showing that it was still recognised as a place which the apostles could frequent, while at the same time the disciples are being separated from it, and the school of Tyrannus becomes the place chosen by Paul to dispute with the Jews.

In chap. xx. the days of *unleavened bread* are again spoken of, while a few verses lower down we read of Paul at Ephesus calling together the elders of the Church. It has been remarked that the address to the Church in the twentieth chapter is the only address to the Church, as such, in the Acts, all the other addresses are to the Jews as believers; and the only apostolic succession we read of in the Bible is stated by Paul here to be that of grievous wolves, not sparing the flock; and

hence the need for his commending them *only* to God and to the word of His grace.

I would like, before closing, to refer to an expression in chap. xxii. 16, which has presented some difficulty to ordinary readers, as it would appear as if it were meant that baptism was the means by which sins were to be washed away. But the expression is one of the strongest proofs of the light in which we must read this book, namely, with the thought of the kingdom being carried on through it, more or less, to the very end.

Peter tells us in his first epistle, chap. iii. 21, that baptism *does not put away* the filth of the flesh, and therefore the passage cannot mean the pardon of sins in view of receiving eternal life.

Now if we go back to John the Baptist's testimony to the Kingdom of Heaven being at hand, we find that the first act required from those who were desirous of entering the kingdom was the confession of their sins in his baptism. It was the first *ceremonial rite* required of those who desired that they might be *allowed to stand before the King in His kingdom*. While ever the offer of the kingdom stood, this rite could not be ignored. So here the thought of the kingdom is still present, for be it remembered that this took place in chap. ix., as a word from Ananias to Paul, and is only related here. And Ananias had nothing before him but the offer of the kingdom on the acceptance by the Jews of their Messiah. It is still, then, the kingdom in its *outward or governmental form* which is here contemplated, and not "the kingdom of God *within you*," or, in other words, Divine life implanted. The expression therefore involves a governmental pardon, referring to the expected kingdom, adding that on calling on the name of the Lord, he should have a title to stand before the King in His kingdom. The expression, "Calling on the name of the Lord," used here, is the same as the words used in Joel ii., which contemplates men being spared from the judgments that are to attend Christ's coming, in the great and terrible day of the Lord, when they acknowledge Christ as Lord by calling on His name.

We must now close our lecture on this most instructive book, referring to one more most interesting thought in connection with the shipwreck in chap. xxvii., namely, that it

is a remarkable illustration of the Gentile Church in all its vicissitudes from its start to its close: the elect being saved out of it.*

We need only refer in closing to the definite statement that the prophecy of Isaiah vi. has come to its complete fulfilment. We have the warnings of chaps. xviii. 6, xiii. 46, and xxvi. 17, but here the fulfilment is announced. And here we take leave of Paul in this connection, still preaching the Kingdom of God, and the things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ.

CHRIST IN THE HOUSE.

"For I know him, that he will command his children and his household," &c. (Gen. xviii. 19).

ONE result of the conscious peace and joy that flow from having "Christ in the *heart*," will be an earnest desire that the same blessed peace and joy may pervade our *house*; that the "Son of Peace" may dwell there. Surely we cannot be seeking aright to have fellowship with the Lord in our own hearts, if His presence in the house be neglected; and one very manifest result of Christ's presence within, will be a constant endeavour on our parts so to order our children and households, that He may be honoured, and His presence may cheer our dwellings.

The word of God is very specific in the Epistles as to its directions respecting our conduct in what may be called household relationships. Thus we have ample instruction for the husband and wife, the parents and children, the master and servants. (See Eph. v. and vi.; Col. iii. and iv.; and 1 Peter iii.)

These several earthly ties are but shadows of our heavenly and enduring relationships. If the husband would truly love the wife, and if the wife would after a godly manner submit to, and reverence her husband, they must contemplate Christ and the Church. The Beloved and His Bride must be much before the soul, if we desire to conduct ourselves, in this first and closest of all human ties, to the glory of God. So also the cry of the child, "Abba, Father," must often be uttered from the heart to God, if the parent would train up his children well, or if the children would honour their parents. The Master in heaven

* "Structure of the Book of the Acts" (Elliott & Stock).

must be loved and served, if either the earthly master would rule well his household, or if the servants would serve well their masters. Thus the house on earth should be ordered according to heavenly principles, and should be a little transcript or shadow of the heavenly family. Surely were this so, Christ would often resort thither, and His presence would be realised in the family, and would shed a sweet savour of peace and rest, which, like the fragrant odour of the ointment poured forth by Mary, would fill the house.

But, alas! how often does the child of God seek to serve the Lord elsewhere rather than in his own house: and this very attempt results from another form of self-pleasing, rather than from a pure desire to please the Lord. It is, however, useless for us to attempt to set God's house in order, if we have not regulated our own; and we shall be unable to rule our own houses well, if we have not first learnt to gain the mastery over ourselves. The heart, the house, the church, is the order, in endeavouring to keep which we shall assuredly find help from God, and shall prosper.

If we turn to the many examples and warnings which the word of God presents, we shall find how a little self-indulgence, cherished by the saints of God, either in their own personal habits or in their families, eventually led to abundant sorrow and evil, which spread into a wide circle around, and was not confined to themselves. Isaac's fleshly preference for Esau, fed as it was by Esau's ministering to his love for venison, led the way to the sorrowful scenes of deception that followed, in the case of Rebecca and Jacob. Jacob's subsequent love for Joseph was chiefly a mere natural feeling; and the way in which he showed his preference for that his favourite child, stirred up or increased the feeling of hatred, that ended in his other sons selling Joseph into Egypt. Samuel seems not to have profited by the solemn history of Eli and his sons; for his neglect of his own children, which probably arose from his occupation in judging Israel, contributed greatly to the final demand of the people for a king. David's deepest sorrows sprung from acts of self-indulgence, and from neglecting to train up rightly his own sons; the whole nation of Israel suffered in consequence.

Instances might be multiplied of the same kind, all tending to show that we can scarcely estimate the vast extent of evil that may result from a neglect either of right discipline as regards ourselves, or as regards our household; nor can we calculate the blessings that would flow from a well-ordered heart, and a well-ordered house.

In the book of Proverbs, which is especially a book of the father's instruction to his son, we shall find very full and blessed directions for the ordering of our families, as well as for self-government. The Word of God must indeed be our guide in everything, even the most minute; Christ's presence should thus be sought in all our ways. Let us, then, earnestly desire companionship with Him in all we undertake; He is wisdom—let us walk and converse with Him; He is strength—let us consult Him and rely upon Him. Then shall we have peace unbroken, flowing like a river; then will the Son of Peace be the master as well as guest in our houses. He is our Lord, for He has purchased us with His own blood; He is the Beloved, and the Church is His Bride, for He has loved it and given Himself for it; we are children of His Father, and He is not ashamed to call us brethren; for He has died and risen that we might have life eternal in Him—thus our relationships here below may lead us to contemplate our relationships above; and thereby we shall be better fitted to occupy these various stations in life to the praise and glory of His name, who has bought us with a price, “even the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot.” S.

THE FIRST EPISTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS.

CHAP. xiv. 23.

FROM NOTES OF AN ADDRESS BY J. R. C.

FROM verses 23 and 24 we learn that the assembly is not intended by God to be a secret conclave, but a place into which the ignorant and the unbelieving may come, as

observers, to witness the Divine order and to hear what is spoken.

It ought, to some extent, to be of the nature of a public testimony, a "showing" or declaring of "the Lord's death" until He comes.

But whether those present as observers be strangers, or the sons and daughters yet unsaved of believers, all that is transacted and spoken should be of such a nature as to lay hold of the understanding and the conscience, and cause those, who, it may be, were present merely from curiosity, to realise the fact of a present God.

If all spoke in unknown tongues, the strangers present would very reasonably conclude that they were mad. It is true that a Christian, zealous for the salvation of others, may be looked on by the carnal as "beside himself" (see 2 Cor. v. 13, and Acts xxvi. 24, 25); but that is very different. True ministry of the Word of God, whether by the gift of prophecy, as at that time, or by the teacher or exhorter of the present day, ought ever to be of such a nature as to secure a response in the conscience of the hearer.

And not only so; it is evident that were the assemblies such as God would have them be, the presence and power of God would be so manifest, that even the unbeliever present would fall down as a worshipper and acknowledge that God was in the midst of His saints.

But how little we know of such experiences now! How little of the ministry that is current really ever reaches the heart and the conscience as a message sent by God.

And the worst of it is, that instead of being ashamed of the weakness, and coldness, and powerlessness of our assemblies, the many are contented to drag along without confession of the utter failure and without a real cry to God for better things.

In verse 26, there is a state of things bordering upon confusion. But the tendency to disorder is met by one Divine precept—"Let all things be done unto edifying."

This is not the method of putting things right that man would have suggested. Man's way is, instead of regulating, to repress. Man says, in effect, this system of allowing one to have a psalm and another a word of exhortation, and so on, is a mistake; it is impracticable;

it has been often tried, but it won't work; therefore, abolish it, and adopt the simple plan of appointing one to have the responsibility of conducting the service. Then all exercise of soul as to our responsibility in the matter is at an end; we can fold our hands, and all goes on without us so long as the funds are forthcoming to meet the necessary expense.

But this is not God's way, and we do not believe that God is unrighteous to forget those, who, amid disrepute, and weakness, and failure, have sought to cleave to the principles of the Word of God. The Divine instructions for the maintenance of order are very simple. 1st, Whatever is done must be with the object of "edification." 2nd, Speak one after another; not two at a time. 3rd, If no interpreter be present, no one must speak in an unknown tongue, for such could not edify. 4th, Speak "two or three." How often this Divine regulation is neglected, and the speakers being too many and too long, edification has been hindered, and the spirit grieved! There is evidently a recognised limit to the amount of ministry, which, on ordinary occasions, may be to profit. 5th, "The spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets." That is, all are in loving subjection one to another; each esteeming other better than himself; each in honour preferring the other; each willing to be guided to some extent by those who are most spiritual and most experienced as to whether his ministry is found to be to edification.

Then comes the special command as to women.—"Let your women keep silence in the churches: for it is not permitted unto them to speak; but to be under obedience, as also saith the law." This instruction is so plain and definite that those who contend for the public ministry of women in assembly and elsewhere are obliged to resort to a very extraordinary theory to escape its force; they say that the word here rendered "to speak," signifies "to chatter" or "babble." This we can only meet with an emphatic denial. It is the word usually signifying, all through the New Testament, "to speak." The same as in the passage, "Well spake the Holy Ghost" (Acts xxviii. 25); "God . . . who spake in time past," &c. (Heb. i. 1, 2); "These words spake Jesus" (John xvii. 1).

The weakness of the position is surely proved by the necessity to resort to such a device. Moreover, would it not be as unseemly for men to "chatter" in the assembly as women? Why, then, should such a command be restricted to "the women"?*

Verse 36.—"What! came the Word of God out from you? or came it unto you only?" The evident answer is—No; the Word of God came not *out from* the Church, but only *unto* the Church. It came out from Christ the Head unto the members.

In like manner, the ministry of the Word in the assembly is ordained by God to come from the man, he being the head of the woman. The man with uncovered head representing Christ, the Head of the Church, is the speaker; the woman, with covered head in the subject place, such as befits the relationship of the Church to Christ, is to be the listener, the learner, in silence.

But this limitation put upon the woman does not apply to the *home* sphere. There she may "ask her husband," if she desires information, or instruct an Apollos, as did Priscilla and Aquila. And who will deny that not unfrequently in the sphere which is so specially the woman's the conversation of the wife has proved to be even more intelligent and more edifying than that of the husband?

Verse 37—"If any man think himself to be a prophet, or spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things that I write unto you are the commandments of the Lord." Here is a test as to who are "spiritual." It is a practical test. The spiritual man, according to God's estimate, is the man who bows to the apostolic teaching, and recognises the apostolic commands as being the commands of the Lord. And this practical test becomes even more intensely practical from its occurring in an epistle that treats mainly of the order and discipline of the House of God. No line of truth has been more persistently opposed by Satan, no part of the Scripture more completely ignored by Christendom, than this part of this epistle. Even this very chapter has been voted "out of date," in-

*On this subject, wise and moderate words are needed. We therefore gladly reprint, from September Number of "Echoes of Service," a valuable paper on "Women's Ministry."

applicable to the present time, of no practical value now-a-days to the Church of God.

The spiritual man is he who not only drinks deep into the Spirit of Christ, but also obeys in all things the word of Christ and the word given by His apostles. The "spiritual man" will not only seek to obey the apostolic word as to his inner life, and, in his family life, setting before him the precepts found in the epistles to guide the believer in each earthly relationship; but, also, in his church life, as one who, with others, has been gathered into a divinely-ordered fellowship, where one will is to control—the will of the Lord, one Spirit to energise, and one *word* of truth the final appeal.

"But if any man be ignorant, let him be ignorant." There is an ignorance that pertains to the babe, which in one of riper years would be culpable. The ignorance of the child in the infant class is one thing; the ignorance of the boy of sixteen who has always been lazy and a dunce, and who would not learn, is quite another.

This passage does not warrant the giving up as hopeless a young one who knows little, or a learner, be it ever so slow. It only applies when the ignorance is wilful; the real hindrance to learning the will of God being an unwillingness to obey, and not a feeble capacity to learn.

Nevertheless, we must be slow to judge. The carnal mind will readily ascribe to wilfulness that ignorance and slowness to learn which may be largely due to our own inconsistencies, and our imperfect manifestation of the truth.

WOMEN'S MINISTRY IN HEATHEN AND OTHER LANDS.

IN all work for God we have to be careful that we are guided by His Word. The *desire* for a certain work is not a sufficient warrant for undertaking it, however praiseworthy the work may be. God may commend our desire, but the "nevertheless" of a Divine command, as in David's case, may stand in the way of its accomplishment. "Thou didst *well* that it was in thy heart; *nevertheless* thou shalt not build the house" (1 Kings viii. 18, 19). The willingness of the heart is fully

accepted, but it may not be in accordance with the will of God. Many a sister in the Lord looks around and sees the deep need of souls, and longs to meet that need, but fails to consider the Divine line of woman's service. For the sake of such we seek help of God to pen these few words.

In examining Scripture on this subject, as on all others, it will be seen that the precepts and the examples recorded in the Bible are strikingly in harmony. A comprehensive view enables us better to understand details. We would therefore call attention to the relative position of the woman and the man in the *creation*, in the *fall*, in the *family*, and in the *church*; and we shall find principles that will clearly indicate what God's lines for his handmaidens are, and as these can never be violated without loss, they will serve as landmarks to guide obedient hearts, constraining them to leave in the Lord's hands many things that love to Him might lead them to undertake; for "to obey" is ever "better than sacrifice." But, before going further, we would impress this point, that woman's service is in nowise of a lower character than man's; nay, rather, it is higher, and more personal in reference to the Lord. Woman nursed the infant Saviour; she washed His feet; she anointed His person; she spread the table and ministered to His need. In such things woman stands alone, not only in reference to the Lord Himself, but in regard to the Church and the world, and man makes sorry work of it when he intrudes on the line marked out for the woman.

Let us, then, very briefly consider woman's position:—

(1.) *In Creation*.—Paul's words in 1 Cor. xi. 2-16 call for special attention. He there says that "woman was made *for* the man," as a helper; not as one to go before, but to follow; not to rule, but to obey; for the man is the head, and the woman dishonours her head (*i.e.*, the man) when she steps into his place. The woman's veil or covering is the token of this; not *her* head, but that of the man is seen. So, again, in 1 Timothy ii. 13, we are told that "Adam was *first* formed, then Eve"; and the moral significance of this priority in creation is pointed out by the apostle, *viz.*, that the woman is not to occupy the place of authority either as a ruler or teacher.

(2.) *In the Fall*.—Here we see the woman taking a sorrowful lead, for it was she who was deceived by Satan and fell into the transgression. Satan's assailing Eve was doubtless because he knew she might be more easily deceived than Adam, and that from her creation she was more liable to be influenced from without than the man; she was to be dependent on him, and hence her unfitness to occupy man's place. The tender feelings and emotions are more deeply implanted in the woman, and by them she is, speaking generally, apt to be influenced; the man more by his judgment; and though through the fall *both* are liable to err, woman is the more easily beguiled, and is therefore not fitted to govern.

(3.) *In the Family*.—The woman's sphere is specially the house. In 1 Timothy v. 14 she is called to "guide the house," or to "rule the household" (R.V.), and there is a special commendation of women as "keepers at home," or, as the R.V. beautifully gives it, "workers at home." It is also well to ponder the characteristics given of the aged Christian women who are "well reported of for good works"—caring for children, lodging strangers, washing the saints' feet, relieving the afflicted. Again, if we turn to the family life in the Old Testament, Proverbs xxxi. 10-31 gives us a beautiful picture of woman's home industry, virtue, and benevolence; and the result is that her husband is known in the gates. He sits there, not she; but she helps him to be there. May Christian wives ponder this in its bearing on the Church of God.

(4.) *In the Church*.—God's principles in creation and in redemption are in harmony, and that which is out of place in the one is out of place in the other; for God rules in both. Nature teaches what is becoming in the Church. It is true that in Christ there is "neither male nor female, neither bond nor free"; and in resurrection there will be neither one nor other. But as long as distinctions by creation continue, and as long as social distinctions exist, so long have we to remember them and to act accordingly. In 1 Cor. xi. xiv. the will of God as to woman's place in the Church is very marked. Silence is enjoined upon her in the Church, for it would be a shame for her to speak, as it would be a shame to be shorn or shaven; she is not even to ask questions.

The general conclusions, then, from the foregoing scriptures with reference to woman's ministry are—

That God has not assigned to her the place of prominence; that her position is not that of a leader, but of a helper; that her sphere of service is in the house and not in the assembly; that her work is private in character rather than public.

Yet, as we have said, woman's service, though more hidden than man's, is a very honoured one, and affords scope for all her energies, and its importance and influence cannot well be over-estimated. We would remind our readers, in reference to 1 Cor. xi., that it is from verse 17 the apostle begins to speak of the *assembly*—"when ye come together," or, as in the next verse, "when ye come together in assembly." This shows that the earlier verses in chap. xi. refer, not to the assembly, but to that more private sphere which we have sought to indicate as legitimately belonging to Christian women. Within that sphere there is very much to be done, both in these lands and in far-off ones. Greatly do brethren labouring among the heathen feel the need of sisters' help, as they have necessarily to leave work among women untouched.

Sometimes it falls to Christian women to begin a work among the heathen, or even here, and they soon feel the need of brethren's help. If they do not patiently wait till God supplies this, they are tempted to overstep the line that He has assigned to them, and virtually, though not nominally, to assume responsibilities which make simple obedience to God's Word impossible. If once the line is overstepped, the temptation to occupy the man's place increases; they become unfitted for their blessed service among their own sex, and their example misleads others. Confusion and sorrow must necessarily result.

May we all lay to heart God's truth in this matter, and may He give us understanding in all things.—From *Echoes of Service*.

THE STRUCTURE OF THE TEMPLE.

EXPOSITORY LECTURES ON THE TEMPLES OF SOLOMON and EZEKIEL. By THOMAS NEWBERRY, Editor of "The Englishman's Bible." Notes by W. K.

THERE are two particulars connected with the House of Jehovah; the exterior courts and the interior buildings. In the Greek of the New Testament two words are employed by the Holy Spirit which set forth this distinction. The whole of the surrounding buildings, with the inner sanctuary, is called *The Hieron*, from *hieros*, sacred, or priestly. So that when our Lord and His disciples are said to have gone up to the temple, it is the word *Hieron* which is employed. Our Lord and His disciples not being priests or Levites, had only access to the external courts of the temple. But when the temple proper, or central building, is spoken of, another term is used, *Naos*, from *naio*, to dwell. Into this inner sanctuary Christ, when on earth, never entered. As we read, "For Christ did not enter into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us" (Heb. ix. 24).

The temple is divided into three sections—the porch in the front, the holy place in the centre, and the holiest of all to the west. One of the abominations shown to Ezekiel was that of certain men with their backs toward the temple of Jehovah, with their faces toward the east, worshipping the sun towards the east (Ezek. viii. 15, 16).

The internal measurement of the porch in the front is 20 cubits long by 10 cubits broad, and the height, 20 cubits. The statement that the height was 120 cubits (2 Chr. iii. 4) is acknowledged by most critics to be a mistake of some transcribers leaving out the word (*amoth*) "cubit," and substituting (*meah vau*) "a hundred and."

The holy place was 40 cubits long (internal measurement), 20 cubits in breadth, and 30 cubits in height. If we take the cubit to be about two feet, this would represent the sanctuary as 80 feet in length, 40 feet in breadth, and, up to the top of the wall, 60 feet in height, with the vaulted roof over.

CHRIST OUR EXAMPLE.	{	Look to Him, - - - Heb. xii. 2.
		Consider Him, - - - ,, iii. 1.
		Follow Him, - - - 1 Pet. ii. 21.
		Imitate Him, - - - Eph. v. 1. (R.V.)
		Have His mind, - - - Phil. ii. 5.
		Become like to Him, - - - 2 Cor. iii. 18.

There were windows of narrow lights; that is, broad within and narrow without.

The veil and folding-doors separated between the holy and the most holy place, which was to the west. There were folding-doors also leading from the porch into the sanctuary.

The floor was covered with gold. On the walls and ceiling were carved work of cedar, covered with solid gold, fitted upon the carved work, glittering with precious stones.

There were ten lampstands; five on each side. Each lampstand had seven golden lamps. So that the whole was illuminated by seventy lamps shining upon the gold beneath and above, and the precious stones around; thus forming a scene of surpassing beauty and glory.

There were also ten tables of gold; five on either side. And in front of the veil there was the golden altar of incense.

We are not to suppose that the temple was the place of assembly for the people of Israel. The temple was only entered by the priests in their regular course for the discharge of their various services. The lamps had to be trimmed and supplied with oil in the morning, and lit in the evening; at which times incense was burnt on the golden altar. Every week preceding the Sabbath the showbread (or the bread of the presence, or the setting forth of the bread in the presence of God) was placed upon the ten tables, and taken off once a week for the priestly family.

Beyond the veil was the holiest of all, 20 cubits in length, breadth, and height; with walls encased in cedar, carved with knobs and open flowers, and covered with gold, and glittering with precious stones.

In 1 Kings vi. 5, 6, we read of the floors and the side chambers. The walls of the house on either side were 6 cubits, or 12 feet broad, at the foundation below the surface. The beams forming the first floor took 1 cubit from the thickness of the wall on each side, leaving the wall on the lowest floor 5 cubits thick; and taking another cubit on the second floor left the thickness of the wall 4 cubits; and the third floor reduced the wall to 3 cubits. Thus the chambers enlarged; those on the lowest floor were 5 cubits broad; the second, 6; and the third, 7 cubits. There were thirty side chambers on each

floor, fifteen on either side of the temple; thirty on the first floor, thirty on the second, and thirty on the third; ninety in all. Thus there were forty-five chambers on the north, and forty-five side chambers on the south; ninety in all. These side chambers were entered by one door, north and south. The cedar beams, which formed the floors of the second and third storeys, were continued 10 cubits beyond; thus forming the galleries on either side.

So we have mentioned five distinct particulars connected with the temple structure:— First, the porch; second, the holy place; third, the holiest of all; fourth, the side chambers; fifth, the galleries beyond; the whole external length being 90 cubits, or 180 feet; and the whole external breadth, 70 cubits, or 140 feet. The internal height, up to the side walls, was 30 cubits, or 60 feet, with the vaulted roof, and then the dome, together raising it to 60 cubits in height, or 120 feet; according to Ezra vi. 3.

“So he built the house, and finished it; and covered (ceiled) the house with beams and boards of cedar” (1 Kings vi. 9). The marginal reading for beams is “vaulted beams,” which implies the vaulted ceiling of the holy place, and the dome surmounting the whole.

THE TYPICAL TEACHING.

The tabernacle in the wilderness suggests thoughts of heaven and the holiest of all. As we read in Heb. ix. 23, 24, it was not only necessary that the patterns of things in the heavens should be purified by ceremonial sacrifices, “but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these. For Christ is not entered into the holy places made *with hands*, the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us.”

So, by the structure of the temple we have similar thoughts presented. When God formed the earth at first, as recorded in Genesis i., we find that He made a division between the waters above the firmament and the waters beneath; and He called the firmament (or expanse) heaven. In Eph. vi. 12 we read of “heavenly places.” “For we wrestle not with flesh and blood, but against spiritual wickedness in high places” (or wicked spirits in the heavenly places). From these heavenlies Satan and his hosts will be cast out by-and-by.

I take the porch to be a representation of the heavens, or the firmament surrounding the earth we live in. The sanctuary, with its ninety side chambers and galleries, to my mind suggest the starry heavens around, concerning which God has said, "Lift up your eyes on high, and behold who hath created these things, that bringeth forth their hosts by number: He calleth them all by names by the greatness of His might, for that He is strong in power; not one faileth" (Isa. xl. 26). Also in Psalm cxlvii. 4, 5, "He telleth the number of the stars; He calleth them all by their names. Great is our Lord, and of great power: His understanding is infinite." We read also in that beautiful prayer of our Lord, in Matt. vi. 9, "Our Father which art in the heavens, Hallowed be Thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done, also on the earth as it is in heaven." What do we learn from this? That God's will is perfectly done in the heavens above. For in our Father's house are many mansions; and God is He "of whom every family in the heavens and upon the earth is named" (Eph. iii. 15). One law causes all the heavenly orbs to move in perfect harmony and undeviating regularity. So the one will of God keeps everything in harmony in the universe around. This earth is the only revolted province of God's vast empire that is clamouring for "Home Rule."

We may take, then, the temple, with its surrounding side chambers and galleries beyond, as an emblem of the universe of God. The most holy place, the oracle, or speaking place, may represent what we read of in the New Testament as the "third heavens," the holiest of all, into which "the High Priest of our profession" has for us now entered.

"If a man love Me, he will keep My words; and My Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him." Few hearts give Jesus a resting-place.

CONFIDENCE in God proves itself in time of trial; it grows in the day of battle. David, in the valley of Elah, was most bold when the giant cursed him and drew nigh to slay him.

"He shall be called a Nazarene."

MATTHEW, relating the arrival and residence of Joseph and Mary in Nazareth, adds (chap. ii. 23)—"That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophets, He shall be called a Nazarene."

Now, not only is there no record of any such prophecy relating to our Lord, but Nazareth itself is nowhere mentioned in the Old Testament. How can this fact be reconciled with the quotation by Matthew?

In the margin of Rilliet's (French) translation of the New Testament I find a reference to Is. xi. 1.—"And there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a Branch (Heb. *netser*) shall grow out of his roots." Evidently this editor supposes a play upon the Hebrew word *netser* ("branch"), but the explanation seems far-fetched, and it is hard to see any connection between *netser* and the sojourn of Jesus at Nazareth.

The following considerations seem to me to lead us to the real solution of the difficulty:—

No mention is made of any one prophet and what he said or wrote, but the statement is presented as that "which was spoken through *the prophets*." Note the difference between this expression and the language of the same writer when he refers to a definite written prophecy. In verse 5 he says, "thus it is written by the prophet," and in verse 15, "that which was spoken by the Lord through the prophet," while in verse 23 he uses the plural. As the prophets do not generally repeat themselves, we are warranted rather in looking for the substance of our text in the words of several prophets, than in looking for the words of our text in any one prophetic book. In other words, we may believe that Matthew recapitulates in a current phrase of his own day the subject matter of various ancient prophecies.

Any one who studies carefully the Gospel according to Matthew must notice the influence of Hebrew idiom on the construction of many passages and phrases. This can be detected even in our English translations. For instance, "He shall be called" is a common Hebrew idiom, meaning "He shall be known as," or "He shall have the reputation of." It occurs very strikingly in Is. vii. 14, "And shall call His

name Immanuel (God with us)"; in Is. ix. 6, "His name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father (Father of Eternity), Prince of Peace"; and in Jer. xxiii. 6, "This is His name whereby He shall be called, Jehovah Tsidkenu (Jehovah our righteousness)." The Lord Jesus has not borne these as His names, but He has borne them as His characteristics. "He shall be called a Nazarene" means, therefore, "He shall be esteemed as a Nazarene."

Now the Nazarenes, in our Lord's day, were held in contempt, not only by the inhabitants of Jerusalem, but even by their own near neighbours, as a worthless people. Look at the conversation of Philip of Bethsaida and Nathanael of Cana in John i. 45, 46. The full force of these two verses is not seen unless we read them in the original, where we see that Philip felt beforehand the effect he was likely to produce on his friend's mind, by mentioning the name of his new-found Master in connection with the much-despised village. His words are, literally, "Whom Moses wrote of in the law, also the prophets, we have found, — Jesus, Joseph's Son, — Him of Nazareth!" He places Moses and the prophets in the foreground, and only brings in Nazareth, in a hesitating way, at the end. Nathanael, passing over every other consideration, at once fastens on the obnoxious name: "Out of *Nazareth* can any good thing be?" To say that He who claimed to be the Messiah came from Nazareth seemed, in the eyes of Nathanael, to reduce His claims to an absurdity.

Regarded in this light, the fulfilment of the prophecy is perfectly clear. In several prophecies it had been foretold that the Messiah should be reproached and despised (Ps. xxii. 6, lxix. 7-12; Is. xlix. 7, liii. 2, 3, &c.). Now, had our Lord lived in His own city, Bethlehem, or even in Judea, He might have been known and acknowledged as of the lineage of David. But He was brought up at Nazareth, in "Galilee of the Gentiles," that is to say, "Galilee of the foreign nations," or "heathen Galilee." This circumstance greatly contributed to the scorn which was poured out upon Him during His public ministry. Even in the hour of His death, men reminded one another of His supposed ignoble origin, for (according to John, who probably gives the

Hebrew inscription, as Luke gives the Greek— Luke xxiii. 38, and John xix. 20), the title on the Cross was: "JESUS THE NAZARENE THE KING OF THE JEWS."

If the question be raised why the sojourn of Nazareth, which covered so great a part of the Lord's life on earth and which had such an influence on the reception recorded to His testimony, is not announced in the prophetic word, I would hazard the following suggestion:—

The fact that the Lord Jesus passed His youth at Nazareth—thus making it possible for the Jews to forget or ignore His birthplace—was the result of the first rejection of His person by Herod. If the rulers and people had been attentive to the voice of their prophets, instead of being plunged in the grossest indifference, the parents of Jesus need never have been obliged to reside at Nazareth, and their Son would never have been "called a Nazarene." Now, it is to be remarked that, while the Spirit testified beforehand "the sufferings of Christ, and the glories that should follow," He did *not* bind down Israel beforehand to the rejection of Christ. "It behoved the Christ to suffer," but His rejection by His own people, while it was a foregone *certainty*, was *not a necessity*. Thus the prophecies which leave the possibility of the Messiah being received and welcomed, are written in clear, unmistakable language; but those which take for granted His rejection are veiled. Contrast the quotation from Micah v. 2 in verses 5, 6 of our chapter, and that from Hosea xi. 1 in verse 15. The terms of the first prophecy, relating to the Lord's birthplace, are quite precise.

The second prophecy, quoted by Matthew as a reference to the flight into Egypt, applies, in the Old Testament, to the nation of Israel in its entirety. The flight into Egypt, like the residence at Nazareth, was the consequence of the hatred of Herod and the apathy of the people. After the events it was impossible for either "Herod or Pontius Pilate, the Gentiles or the people of Israel," to bring forward the prophetic Scriptures as an excuse for their conduct; nevertheless, these Scriptures are clear enough to be quoted by the evangelists and apostles as having a bearing upon the details of the life of Jesus. A. P. M.

LOYALTY TO THE LORD.

[We are glad to find that what we have advanced in the *Witness* for so long is now being put forward by others, as the following extract from a "Convention" notice will show.]

WHETHER it be that in the preaching of the Gospel the truth of deliverance from condemnation has been exalted at the expense of the corresponding truth of the call to service, or that the privileges of salvation have been more readily apprehended than its obligations, it must be confessed with shame that the lawlessness which characterised the professing people of God of old, and which called forth the solemn denunciations of the prophets, is a prominent feature of the present day; and that He who has redeemed us to Himself to be His "obedient children" has still to say "Ye have been partial in the law," and to add with grieved spirit to those whom He has consecrated to serve Him as priests, "If I be a Master, where is My fear?"

It has been forgotten that one of the least "commandments" is as Divine in its authority as "the first and great commandment," and believers in Christ have yielded to the temptation to think themselves exonerated from obedience to a law they disliked by acceptance of another of easier obligation.

Has it not been largely forgotten that "to this end Christ both died, and rose, and revived, that He might be Lord both of the dead and living," and that if He be joyfully accepted as Saviour, it is that He may be loyally acknowledged as Lord?

HOW TO READ THE SCRIPTURES.

Luke xxiv. 13-35.

THERE is a striking contrast here; while they talked together and reasoned they were sad, so much so that Jesus noticed their sadness and asked the reason. "What is it that you are reasoning about as ye walk, and are sad?" But, O how different after the Lord Himself had drawn nigh, and opened to them the Scriptures, and showed unto them in *all* the Scriptures the things concerning Himself! How changed were their countenances! Was it not their own language? "Did not our heart burn within us, while He talked

with us by the way, and opened to us the Scriptures?" It is so with us when we talk together and reason. When we read even the Scriptures out of the presence of Jesus, it is sad work at the best; difficulties, doubts, and fears creep upon the mind. And even to this present day, as with Israel, so with the Gentiles; when Moses is read, a veil lies upon the heart. What is wanted is to read the Scriptures in the presence of God as His testimony to Christ, brought home, interpreted, and revealed by the present Spirit of God; the living words of the living God brought home to the heart, explained to the mind, realised in the soul by the living, present Spirit. When we read the Scriptures in fellowship with Christ, it is to us as a mirror. But if we stand before the Word of God alone, we shall only see our own selves in the glass, and it is a sad sight; but with Jesus standing by our side, then, when we look into the mirror of His Word, what do we see? We behold, as in a glass, the glory of God. Let us seek, then, to read the Scriptures in companionship with Christ, and by the light of the Spirit of God. T. N.

LETTER FROM Mr. HENRY DYER.

BRISBANE, QUEENSLAND, June 25, 1888.

DEAR BROTHER—My last to beloved readers of the *Witness* was from Penang, in November last, and it is time that I again assured them of their and our God and Father's goodness to us, outwardly by sea and land, and inwardly in keeping us mindful of His love and mindful also of fellow-saints—especially of British Isles, whom we long again to see and to meet with for praise, even here on earth—and for prayer, and for God's Word. I ought the more to do this because I feel sure 'not a few of our mercies have reached us in answer to their prayers for us. We have not had such loneliness to bear, or such toils and perils to life, as our brother F. S. Arnot's letters tell of; on the contrary, fellowship with fellow-saints more or less in each place of our sojourn, but as of old a *single day's manna* of the ordinary wilderness life was worthy to be laid up before the Lord to His glory and for their thanksgiving to Him, so now whether it be manna tasted in Great Britain, or Africa, or Australia.

Our profitable time with Eurasian and Chinese fellow-saints in Penang Island ended with a five days' visit to Laroot on the mainland, in which our dear brother Hocquard was our efficient guide and helper, as he also was afterwards in our voyage to Singapore and our week's stay there. How greatly labourers in Chinese language are needed both for Singapore and for the Laroot mainland! For Chinese tin miners, &c., are swarming into the whole Malay Peninsula, and are much more accessible with the Gospel perhaps outside their own country and when under British rule. At present

also those in authority, both in Laroot and in Singapore, seem to put no obstacles in the way of Gospel effort—a thing that, alas! cannot be said of some parts of vast India. In Singapore, town and island, with its over 140,000 people—the majority Chinese—what solemn need there is of simple Gospel labour, such as was the Master's preaching to crowds at the Galilee seaside, or in Jerusalem streets; and such, too, as His talk with the woman at the well. O that God would "thrust forth" many more such labourers from their earthly homes and occupations to sound out "Jesus and the resurrection" amidst heathendom's awful lack of these "good tidings," even as He did His fishermen and His other apostles at the first! Our dear brother Alex. Grant's three years' invalid absence from Singapore has not been remedied by the raising up of any similar labourer. Here also we had the privilege of worship and Gospel testimony (this last by interpretation) with English and Chinese fellow-saints; but, as Australia's dry and sunny climate was prescribed for my throat, we left Singapore for Adelaide (South Australia), reaching it, Dec. 29, after twenty-two days' voyage. Although not knowing anyone, as we thought, in that city of 50,000 people, we ere long found fellow-saints meeting simply to the Name of the Lord, both in Adelaide itself and at Port Adelaide, two miles distant. We remained with them seven weeks, having addresses or Bible readings almost nightly (for the summer heat was great), by which affection and fellowship grew until it was not easy to leave them. Fifteen hours by rail took us thence to Ballarat, formerly the place of *so much* finding of gold, and still a gold-mining district. Here our elderly brother, John Hambleton, labours in the Gospel, both by preaching and by the sale of Bible and Gospel books, by means of Bible carriages. Australian climate has much improved his health (as it often does with elderly people), and God's grace keeps his soul still bringing forth fruit in old age. Our nearly three weeks' stay with him and his wife we much enjoyed; some eighty in fellowship there, among whom our brother S. J. Carter and wife also labour. Two hours thence to Geelong (on the sea shore) made us guests of our brother Harrison Ord and wife (himself just then away for special meetings in Tasmania). Here there is a most suitable new-built meeting-house and some fifty in fellowship, among whom our brother T. S. Manders usually labours, albeit moving in other parts also, and just now at Cooktown in the extreme north of Australia. Very happy were our few days at Geelong. At length we moved on to Melbourne, the capital of Victoria colony, and the largest and busiest city of all Australasia, already numbering over 350,000, and rapidly increasing. It is in Melbourne, therefore, that especial grace, and lowliness, and prayerfulness are needed for our fellow-saints, both as individuals and as assemblies; and we had hoped to share all this with them, as well as God's Word to all our souls. Ere long we had personal greetings, more or less, with the elder brethren of *all* the Melbourne assemblies gathering to the Name of the Lord, albeit they have not found it easy to be of "the same mind and the same judgment." But "God is faithful" remains as true now as then, and may be trusted to help in these sorrows. "Sanctify them through Thy truth: *Thy Word* is truth" is still God's way to "keep" His saints "from the evil"; and gladly would I have remained much longer at Melbourne to

share with them that same sanctifying word; but Melbourne winter, then approaching, brought back my cough, &c., and reluctantly we had to leave, by doctor's advice, for this warmer latitude of Brisbane. Stopping *en route* at Sydney for rest, its softer and more equable air, under God, relieved me, and we remained there four weeks. At Sydney I was again more able for meetings, and both in some of the assemblies there and from house to house God's Word was a joy to us; yet here also the Spirit's teaching is needed with the Word, for those meetings simply to the "Name" are not of "one mind." But a warmer climate was needed, and, on the 5th inst., a forty-eight hours' voyage brought us to Brisbane. Here some seventy meet in Brisbane itself, also about twenty in South Brisbane, and a similar number at Toonong, three miles off. Any godly ministry of God's Word is welcomed in these meetings. Our brother Mark Kerr, formerly of Ayr; our brother Hynd, of Troon; A. J. Irvine, of north of Ireland; C. Payne, late of Nottingham; and our brother Jones, of North Devon, are among those who labour in these assemblies, and they aim to "be strong in the GRACE that is in Christ Jesus." There are other assemblies in the Queensland colony, some of which we hope to visit before returning to Melbourne early in October, when their warmer weather shall have begun.

In all these Australian colonies the visit of any known ministering brethren of the British Isles assemblies is all the more cheering and useful, because of the *many* in them who so well remember the faces and voices that helped them in the old country. Here in Brisbane especially this has been the case.

Also, I greatly hope for increased interest in these Australian, Tasmanian, and New Zealand assemblies on behalf of heathendom, Gospel labourers in Africa, India, Burmah, &c.

Already brethren here have asked me to devote one evening to news of those whom we have seen in India, &c.

Farewell, beloved fellow-saints! May we all so live and labour "till HE come," as to have an abundant entrance "ministered" to us into His everlasting kingdom at that day.

Yours, in the Master's love,

HENRY DYER.

Correspondence.

WHAT DOES "SEPARATION" MEAN?

To the Editor of *The Witness*.

DEAR SIR,—About ten or eleven years ago I was what is called a Baptist, but several Christian friends pointed out to me the sin of being in *any way* mixed up with any sect, and that it was wrong for a Christian to attend *any* sectarian meeting for any purpose whatever, or in fact any meeting except those of believers gathered out to "the Name." I then turned my back on sects once and for all and broke bread with those who professed to be obedient believers, thinking that all those who met on the first day of the week around the Lord really were gathered-out ones. Gradually I was undeceived, and, to my horror, found out that a large majority of those I met with went in and out

among the sects, and that they denied the truth of separation, and were angry at same being mentioned. In the town where I live we have a small meeting, and, (would you believe it?) those in fellowship go to the following meetings, and in some cases take part in same:—(1) The (so-called) Church of England; (2) Congregational Chapel, where the minister holds the doctrine of non-eternity of punishment; (3) The Baptist Chapels, at one of which theatre-going is advocated; (4) Wesleyan Chapel; (5) Wesleyan Mission, where recitations, readings from novels and plays, and worldly songs are part of the attractions; (6) a so-called unsectarian Mission, where every sect is represented; (7) the Young Men and Women's Christian Association Rooms—two of those in fellowship take part in the Bible classes at these places; (8) the Salvation Army; (9) a Mission held by a nobleman, where, at the Gospel meetings (men being present), women are encouraged and do take part in the meetings. On Lord's-day evening brethren from various gatherings preach the Gospel at the Hall here, and speak a word to the saints, but never mention the truth of separation. The elder brethren in the gathering not only do not mention the truth, but go to some of the above-named meetings themselves. If any brother in the gathering does mention this truth (and only two profess to hold it in sincerity) it is always received with manifest tokens of disapproval, and the elders encourage the young saints to shut their ears to it. I have found an almost similar state of things in many gatherings, and that same is rapidly increasing. Can we wonder that but little blessing is visible in such meetings?

A GATHERED-OUT ONE.

INSURANCE.

I HAVE been much interested in this subject and in your note upon it contained in the April number of the *Witness*. The importance of it must be my apology for asking permission to add a few lines to what has already been said. The letter signed "R. G.," in your May issue, appears especially to call for some remarks. There is a point that I have not seen touched upon, and which perhaps is the most important one in this matter. I will seek to illustrate it by my own case. Whose faith is it that is to decide the question of provision by means of insurance or otherwise? Surely the faith of the party or parties to be benefited in the event of death, and not the faith of the party that is to make the provision. Whilst I was fully persuaded (and am so now) that my wife and children could be safely and confidently left to the tender and loving care of my God and Father if He should be pleased to call me home, my dear wife did not see with me, and felt that not making provision in the only way that was open to us, namely, by life insurance, would be neglecting a plain and obvious responsibility, as taught in 1 Tim. v. 8 and 2 Cor. xii. 14. Whatever *my* faith might be was of no comfort to her, as she could walk only in the faith that *she* had, and not in mine. And here I would solemnly urge again the scripture already quoted in Rom. xiv. 22. How many persuade themselves that they can trust the Lord fully, while circumstances are easy, but who break down the moment all things appear to be against them, and when their supposed faith is put to the test. I am speaking as an old believer, whose whole Christian life has well-nigh been a constant

trial of faith. Let us beware of mere sentiment or feeling, which is not faith. I have ever found that those who have had their faith most deeply tried would be the last to press upon others their own measure of faith. It is one thing to encourage our fellow-saints by the promises and unchanging faithfulness of our God and Father, but quite another to class with unbelief a faith that may not reach up to our standard, though perhaps it may be stronger than our own in another direction—according as He has divided to every man severally as He will (1 Cor. xii. 9-11). C. A. J.
Auckland, N.Z., July, 1888.

[Two correspondents, who are insurance agents, ask us, in justice to the principle of insurance, to mention that the statement in letter by R. G., in May number of *Witness* (p. 77)—"A man may pay his shilling a-week for perhaps ten years; and then, if through accident or loss of employment he is no longer able to continue his payments, he would lose not only his assurance but also all the money he paid in"—is not applicable to every insurance company. There is, it seems, one company, at least, which under such circumstances would grant a free policy for the amount of premiums paid in.—Ed.]

Questions and Answers.

We desire to express our thanks to all who have sent answers.

We particularly request that each writer will give his name and address in full, not for publication, but that we may know who it is that seeks to help, and, if desirable, that we may communicate privately.

When more than one question is replied to, let the answer to each question be upon a separate piece of paper.

Replies to appear in the next number require to be sent in not later than 15th of present month, and so on; the 15th of the month being always the latest to which we can defer making up for press.

We again urge the importance of replies being *short*; it is essential, in this particular line of things, to be *concise*.

We shall greatly value remembrance in prayer that special wisdom and grace may be given for this service. THE EDITOR.

Replies are invited to the following questions:—

To whom did the following Scriptures refer? Matt. xvi. 28, Mark ix. 1, Luke ix. 27.

Who are "These My brethren"? (Matt. xxv. 40).

Is Luke vii. 29, 30, a continuance of our Lord's teaching concerning John? or, is it the Spirit of God, through Luke, telling the result of our Lord's teaching (concerning John, verses 24-28) on the people to whom He spake, when the messengers of John were departed? The ground of their hearts being either prepared or otherwise by the previous reception *or* rejection of John's teaching concerning Christ as witnessed in their *baptism*.

What are we to understand by Gal. iii. 20?—"Now a mediator is not a mediator of one; but God is one."

Is it right for an assembly of Christians, gathered to the Name of the Lord Jesus, to appoint certain brethren to look after the tem-

poral need of those in fellowship, as did the disciples in Acts vi. 1-6?

Luke xvi. 9.—Who is it the Lord exhorts to make to themselves friends of the mammon of unrighteousness, and will someone explain latter clause of the verse?

Could any reader of *The Witness* help us by precepts or examples from Scripture as to the true meaning of the term railer? If what is said be *true*, can it in any way be called railing?

Is it right for a Christian to be in a friendly society, such as Free Gardeners, Foresters, Oddfellows, or to be in a funeral society, making a bargain for a coffin?

ELECTION.

QUESTION 298.—Has God ordained some to be saved and some to be lost, when He has so clearly said in His Word, "Whosoever believeth in Me hath everlasting life"?

Ans. A.—That God has ordained that many shall be saved is clearly taught in Scripture, and this without in any wise taking from the individual responsibility of man. That any should be saved is due to sovereign grace alone, and the judgment at the great white throne shall be on account of misdeeds wilfully persisted in (Heb. ix. 27, 28, and Rev. xx. 12).

The value of the work of Christ is such that God can be consistent with the requirements of His holiness and at the same time be infinitely gracious. Accordingly it is written, "I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy"; and faith rests in the assurance that the judgment of God shall be strictly in accord with His perfect righteousness.

From Rom. i. 18-20 we learn that all are without excuse. Compare also Acts xiv. 17 and Acts xvii. 27, because there ever has been sufficient light whereby God might have been known and feared, but men loved darkness rather than light because their deeds are evil. And if because of the wilful turning from the light of revelation in nature man is held responsible, how much greater is the responsibility of those who now refuse to submit themselves to the Gospel of His grace? Well may we conclude that their condemnation shall be proportionate to their guiltiness, which God alone can truly estimate.

R. S.

Ans. B.—That God has ordained some to be saved is most blessedly true, as the following scriptures clearly show:—John vi. 37, x. 27-29, xvii. 2; Acts xiii. 48; Rom. viii. 28-30, ix. 23; Eph. i. 4-12. We have only to recognise that all mankind are "lost" (Luke xix. 10), that all are "dead in trespasses and sins, . . . children of wrath" (Eph. ii. 1-3), to see that apart from that "great love wherewith He loved us, even when we were dead in sins," there could have been no salvation for any. It has been well said that *outside* the house is written, "Whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely," but that *inside* it is written, in equally unmistakable language, "Chosen in Him before the foundation of the world."

On the other hand, it is equally certain that the doctrine of reprobation, or of God's ordaining any to be lost, has no foundation in the Word of God, the following scriptures being witness:—1 Tim. ii. 3-7, "For this is good and acceptable before our Saviour God, *who desires that all men should be saved*, and come to the knowledge of the truth. . . . The man Christ Jesus, *who gave Himself a ransom for all*, the testimony to be rendered in its own times." 2 Cor. v. 14, 15, "For the love of the Christ constrains us, having judged this, that *if one died for all*, then all have died; and *He died for all*, that they who live should no longer live to themselves," &c. Rom. ix. 22, taken with verse 23, proves the very contrary of that which is sought to be proved by it: "Vessels of wrath fitted for destruction Vessels of mercy, which *He* afore prepared for glory." There is GOD's preparing had the vessels of mercy for glory; but the vessels of wrath are already fitted for destruction, and God "endures them *with much long-suffering*."

Only let our hearts bow to the fact that, apart from faith in Christ, we are already lost and condemned (see John iii. 18), and all is simple enough. G. A. S.

[Editor's Note.—The foregoing replies demonstrate from Scripture that God has ordained some to eternal life. Their names have been in the book of life "from the foundation of the world" (Rev. xvii. 8, and xiii. 8). They are chosen in Christ "before the foundation of the world" (Eph. i. 4).

But we fail to find any such predestination of individuals to destruction.

Certain scriptures may be adduced as apparently giving countenance to such a doctrine, but rightly understood they teach nothing of the kind.

It is evident that not only are all men lost, dead in sins by nature, but also that every man's "free will" would decide for sin and against God. "The carnal mind is enmity against God." The "free will" that is directed by such a mind and motive must be directed against God, against Christ, against the truth, against even the Gospel, seeing the Gospel reveals the righteousness of God as well as the grace of God, and can only be received by such as become subject to that righteousness (Rom. x. 3) and confess themselves guilty before God (Rom. iii. 19).

In such a scene, where there is "none that understandeth," "none that seeketh after God," what does God do? He retires into His own sovereignty, and looking from that infinite majesty upon a world in which all were guilty, lost sinners, He says in His heart, "I will have mercy upon whom I will have mercy; and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion" (Rom. ix. 15).

What about the rest? They are "endured with much long-suffering" (Rom. ix. 22). They are *invited* (Luke xiv. 17), they are *besought* (2 Cor. v. 20), they are *commanded* (Rom. xvi. 26) to believe the Gospel, to accept salvation, to receive Christ, and in Him pardon and life. If, after all, they reject the gift of love, the responsibility is with them. God has abundantly proved that the obstacle lies not with Him, or in any doctrine of reprobation, but in the rebel will of man. The appointing to destruction, in Prov. xxxi. 8, has nothing to do with eternal damnation. Compare Ps. lxxix. 11, cii. 20.

I Peter ii. 8 does not refer to the appointment of certain individuals to judgment, but to a *certain class* of persons—those who wilfully rejected the light, resisted the Spirit, cavilled at the truth, refused the witness of Christ's miracles, and, though they professed to believe that John the Baptist was a prophet, yet refused to believe in Him of whom John bore witness. See John xii. 37-41.

So also in the case of Pharaoh, referred to in Rom. ix. 17. What evidence of the existence and power of Jehovah was given to him! what warnings he despised! with what long-suffering did God deal with him before the final judgment fell upon him!

But although such considerations may help to clear away the difficulty, we must ever bear in mind that the Christian's true place is that of the "little child." Many problems there are that we are not, in our present infant state, capable of comprehending. It is ours to believe what God has said, whether we can reconcile the apparent discrepancies or not. Faith can rest in the assurance that God can and will cause to harmonise all apparent discrepancies and paradoxes in His own time. Many things that we know not, and cannot know now, we shall know hereafter.]

OLD AND NEW TESTAMENT SAINTS.

QUESTION 299.—Does Heb. xi. 40 mean that God has provided some better thing for us, the saints of this dispensation, or that the Old Testament saints are waiting for us, both being perfected together and to share the same blessings?

Ans. A.—Those mentioned before, who obtained a good report through their faith, all died before the promise made to Abraham—viz., that Christ should come—was fulfilled, but they lived by faith in anticipation of it. For it pleased God so to time the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ as the Lamb of God to take away the sin of the world, that there should be groups of believers both before and after His coming, who should signally exhibit in their lives that they lived by faith in God. We may therefore thus read the verse—"God having foreseen some better thing for us (who live subsequent to His coming) to exhibit as a new creation in Christ (and a consequent holy life of faith), that they and we together should give a full illustration to men of faith in Him." A. O. M.

Ans. B.—The better thing in this verse is, I think, that the Lord has promised to come and take us to be with Himself. They knew that they would have to die; but it is our privilege to wait for Him. Now God assigns a reason for giving us this better thing; that is, that they without us should not be made perfect. It was impossible that they should have this hope, because He who is the Resurrection and the Life had not yet been manifested. Read in connection with this, Heb. ix. 15. R. R.

Ans. C.—That the "better thing" which God has provided is peculiar to the saints of the present dispensation, is evidently the truth taught. "The mystery of the Christ (Eph. iii.) in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed by the Spirit; that the Gentiles should be fellow-heirs, and of the same body, and partakers of His promise in Christ by the Gospel . . . that now unto the principalities and powers might be known through the

Church the manifold wisdom of God." This clearly gives to the Church a unique place and character, both in this present time and in the ages to come, as is further borne out by the apostle's closing ascription (same chapter)—"Unto Him be glory in the Church in Christ Jesus unto all the generations of the age of the ages (R. V. margin).

The word "provided" (occurring only here) is divinely chosen and instructive; its Greek representative being derived from *pro*, "before," and *blepo*, "to see"; just as, again, the word "provide" is an exact transcription of the Latin root, *pro-videre*, "to foresee"; foreseen being inserted in the margin of our A. V. Thus the Church, while not the subject of clear prophetic testimony, was "foreseen" by God. "Chosen in Christ Jesus before the foundation of the world," "His grace given us in Christ Jesus before the world began," we are blessed in Him in the heavenlies, and anticipate "an inheritance reserved in heaven," where our "hope is laid up for us." This "better thing" of the heavenly places, revealed in connection with the present parenthesis, must surely, by those called to share it, first be entered on, and the suspended "week" (at least) of Daniel ix. fulfilled, before those who "all died in faith not having received the promises" concerning blessing in earthly places, are perfected in resurrection, and together with the (then) living ones take full possession of the land of Canaan. Of "the Church of the first-born ones" (plural) alone is it said—"which are written in heaven" (Heb. xii. 23), "the spirits of just men" in this panoramic scene coming after "made perfect" in the sense already expressed, as having by that time got their resurrection bodies. Both the Church and these perfected Old Testament saints are saved and blessed on the same ground, namely, "Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant, and the blood of sprinkling" (atonement); but, seeing that they are respectively a heavenly and an earthly people, they are, by no means, destined to share "the same blessings." D. R.

THE DAY OF VISITATION.

QUESTION 300.—Does "the day of visitation" (1 Pet. ii. 12), refer to any future day or to the present day of grace and privilege?

Ans.—By comparing this passage with other occurrences of the same expression, viz., Luke i. 68, 78, Acts xv. 14, Luke xix. 44, it seems reasonable to conclude that "the day of visitation" is some occasion granted graciously to persons, communities, and even to nations on which God draws specially near, either by His awakening judgment or by the gracious operations of His Holy Spirit, and at which times men involuntarily acknowledge the truth and reality of things which at other times they deny or scoff at.

Who has not known such a time, where death had invaded a household and every heart seemed softened and subdued and ready to listen to the truth, which under other circumstances they would not tolerate.

Indeed it is matter of very general experience and observation that the blessing of God seems thus to come in seasons—like showers and sunshine, like winter and spring. A long period of wintry deadness and indifference often being succeeded by a period of gracious reviving given in the sovereign grace of God—a "time of visitation."—Ed.

LOVE TO ALL SAINTS.

A MID our responsibilities toward those with whom we are immediately associated, we are prone to forget that we have responsibilities in a larger sphere, from which we cannot escape if we would, even toward every child of God, every member of the body of Christ.

It is wholesome to be reminded of this, and of the truth so plainly taught in the New Testament, that all believers, however scattered or divided they may be on earth, are absolutely ONE in Christ, and "members one of another."

It is treason against THE HEAD, wittingly to disown a single member of the body. It is an insult to the Father, wittingly to disown a single child in the family.

Language often betrays deeper currents of thought and feeling than it is intended to convey. The application of such a term as "the body" to a denomination, such as "the Independent body," or "the Baptist body," indicates how completely the truth of the oneness of the body of Christ has passed out of sight and out of mind. Equally so does the application of the term, "the brethren," to any smaller fraternity than all who by regeneration of the Holy Spirit are born into the family and made sons of God.

There are what may be called "*counter truths*" in Scripture. That is, truths that may, to a superficial glance, *appear* antagonistic or conflicting, but which in reality are like the two sides of an arch, designed to form, from their very opposition, mutual support, each to the other.

It is most sorrowful and disastrous when such "counter truths" are set forth in such a way as to weaken or neutralise each other. And yet so foolish are we, so one-sided in our tendencies, that nothing is more common.

For example, who has not heard the responsibility of each believer toward all saints so taught as to leave the impression that there is something essentially incompatible between love to all saints and faithfulness to the entire truth of God? Or, again, how often has the truth as to the condition of the individual heart and conscience before God been urged in such a way as to leave the impression that there was something essentially antagonistic to this in that line of truth which pertains to the

house of God, to the saints as gathered together unto the name of the Lord!

Our object is to show the Divine harmony that exists between all the truths of the Scripture, and that the glory of God is concerned in our holding and practising, not one-sided truth, but each and every truth in its own place and proportion.

There are two passages which touch upon our responsibilities toward "all saints." One in Eph. i. 15, "love unto all the saints"; the other, Eph. vi. 18, "prayer . . . for all saints."

It is an impossibility to love all saints unless we see them as they are in the purpose of God and on the heart of Christ. No other love is Divine. Much that passes for love is like honey in the offering; it is essentially *natural*, not *spiritual*. It is largely the outcome of similarity of disposition and of mind, and it lasts only until circumstances arise which bring out dissimilarity of mind and disposition.

On the other hand there is much that passes for love which lacks that element so forcibly expressed in Eph. vi. 24, "all that love our Lord Jesus Christ in *incorruption*." There is a spurious love that is maintained only at the surrender of truth. It is remarkable how in the two latter epistles of John, which doubtless have special bearing upon "the last days," the two are so closely intertwined. No opposing of truth to love or love to truth is here. As in the perfect Example, "grace and truth" were perfectly combined, so in the mind and teaching which is of the Spirit of God it is "whom I love in the truth"; and He who presses the command "that we love one another" has "*no greater joy*" than to hear that His children "walk in truth." To "walk in the truth" is to "walk in the light," and in this path alone can fellowship be maintained with the Father and the Son and with fellow-saints.

However narrow the path may appear, and the more evil the day, the narrower it must become, yet there is nothing in the most implicit obedience at all incompatible with the claims of love. "By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God, and keep His commandments" (1 John v. 2).

The love that has "*no greater joy*" than to hear of those dear to it walking in the truth will desire and seek for all saints no lower

blessing than to be brought into and maintained in the same path. Love will seek the deliverance of all saints from the bondage of error.

Darkness and error imply bondage, just as light and truth imply liberty.

The psalmist could cry, "O, send out Thy light and Thy truth," knowing that thus would he be led to the altar of God, to the holy hill of Jehovah's dwelling-place. That was the meeting-place for Jehovah and His people, and there would the godly meet with each other as all together went up to the Lord to worship.

Even so now, love, as in the case of Epaphras, will labour fervently in prayer for all saints, desiring for them all that they may "stand perfect and complete in all the will of God" (Col. iv. 12).

Love will stand aloof from all that is not of God, bearing testimony for the truth, just in order that the consciences of saints who are entangled in human devices may be exercised. It is thus that love seeks their deliverance.

In the days of David, captains, leaders, priests, and people all rejoiced as the ark was being brought back again after its long absence. Any Israelite acquainted with the law might have known, what David afterwards discovered, that "none ought to carry the ark of God but the Levites."

Suppose that such an one had been there, how could he have joined in the singing and the dance? how could he have had fellowship in the pageantry of that day? Surely truth and love alike would have held him apart in the place of intercession rather than in the place of fellowship.

And is it not the same still? If eyes are opened to the truth as to gathering to the name of the Lord, will love be found in association with that which practically opposes the truth, enslaves the saints, and separates by denominational barriers those who ought to be manifestly, as they are in the counsels of God, ONE?

If the truth is apprehended as to ministry in the Spirit, will love be found recognising, associating with, or upholding by its presence or its gifts a system which ignores all that God has taught on the subject in His Word?

If the truth as to gathering on the first day of the week to show the Lord's death in the

breaking of bread has been learned, will love associate with a system that forbids it, such as "the (so called) Salvation Army," or that substitutes for the Divine order a human device such as a sacrament once in six months, once in three months, or *once a month*, which latter is as utterly without Divine precept or precedent as the rest?

If truth has taught the baptising of believers, will love consent to witness without protest such a perversion as the sprinkling of an infant?

Surely love will ever seek to lead into the truth those who are ignorant of it, and be jealous lest by word or act the claims of truth upon the conscience should be neutralised or diminished.

Nothing will go further as a quietus to an uneasy conscience than to see one who has learned and acted upon any truth consenting to waive it for a time, as though it were a matter of mere *opinion* or convenience.

Sometimes the grace and power, the love and unity of saints fifty years ago, who had emerged from sectarian thralldom, is descanted upon. Great must have been the influence on the consciences of others of their heavenly-minded conversation and their unworldly ways, and doubtless the lack of power now is largely due to the lack of personal grace and godliness.

But if it is supposed that the grace and love of those days meant a quiet acquiescence in what they saw to be not of God, the mistake may be easily discovered by reference to the tracts and pamphlets then published and circulated. The writings of those days were largely for the individual heart and conscience, but they were also largely for the exposing of existing errors—for the pulling down and the rooting up that *must* precede a planting or a building that God can bless.

Now-a-days there is a tendency to sow without breaking up the fallow ground, to plant without rooting out the error—to build without pulling down the structure that is not of God.

Every kind of ministry is needed. There is need for the ploughing, the rooting up, the pulling down, as well as for the sowing, the watering, the building. There is need for the "son of thunder" as well as "the son of consolation"; and need, above all, for the heavenly grace and wisdom that makes room for all, instead of setting the one to neutralise or oppose the other.

The truth in practice will never be dissociated from the Cross in experience. And no small part of the offence of the Cross is to be misunderstood and separated from the company of those whose blessing alone is the object in view. There was One who uttered the sorrowful complaint, "For My love they are Mine enemies." If love had not borne an unflinching testimony to the truth, grace alone would have engendered no such open enmity. But truth and grace combined must either be yielded to or resisted. If yielded to, how sweet, how beautiful! If resisted, how bitter, how sad!

But whilst "love in the truth" will never countenance or condone that which is not of God, it will always seek to maintain intercourse with those who are the Lord's, with a view to serving them in their highest interests.

There is a Pharisaic separation that totally ignores those who, being mixed up with the world in the various denominations of Christendom, are nevertheless one in life eternal, one in the anointing of the Spirit, one as members of the body of Christ, and sons in the family of God.

To have no eye or heart for those who "follow not with us," albeit, we as the disciples of old may indeed be following the Lord, is a sure indication that fellowship with the thoughts of God has been giving place to the sectarian spirit of the world.

Needless barriers may be raised by unwise, hard and bitter speech. "Let your speech be always with grace, seasoned with salt"—"speaking the truth in love."

A dread of defilement and contamination, almost amounting to superstition, sometimes hinders intercourse that might be blessed.

Much more might be done than is done in the way of inviting Christians to Bible readings, or to addresses calculated to help them on in the truth, and by circulating suitable books or tracts.

All this may be done without compromise of any truth, and without becoming identified in any way with associations or societies which are not after the Divine pattern.

If Divine love were in lively exercise there would be more holy ingenuity displayed in reaching both saints and sinners with the Word of Life.

J. R. C.

LECTURES ON THE BOOK OF THE REVELATION.

BY F. C. BLAND.

"THE REVELATION OF JESUS CHRIST."

SUCH are the opening words of this book. It is the doctrine of the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. The revelation of His coming as spoken of, in 2 Thess. ii., taking vengeance on them that know not God and obey not the doctrine of our Lord Jesus Christ.

It is a book of judgment. Chapters ii. and iii. show us judgment, beginning at the house of God; and the chapters from vi. to the end of xx. show where the ungodly and the sinner appear.

It is the bursting of the thunder-clouds which have been gathering and lowering since the Lord left the earth, the clearing of the air before the dawning of the morning without clouds, the clear shining after rain.

I may, as a preface to our lectures, quote a few sentences from a deeply interesting and instructive volume,* as explanatory of what I say, which gives a very clear conception of the necessity of the Book of the Revelation, as a vindication of God's character and ways in relation to this world. It will be the time when the Mighty God will have spoken (Ps. 1.), as contrasted with the time when He is, as at present, "keeping silence"; and man thinks, because of His silence, that God is altogether such an one as himself. But God is seen in the Book of the Revelation reproving man, and setting things in order before him.

"Who does not feel, on reading the latter Epistles, that some sense of disappointment grows upon him, and that dark shadows are gathering upon the scene? And when present things disappoint us we turn more eagerly to the brighter future, and look beyond the darkened foreground to the light which glows in the horizon.

"I know not how any man, in closing the Epistles, could expect to find the subsequent history of the Church essentially different from what it is. In those writings we seem, as it were, not to witness some passing storms which clear the air, but to feel the whole

* "The Progress of Doctrine." The Bampton Lectures of 1864, by CANON T. D. BERNARD.

atmosphere charged with the elements of future tempest and death.

“Every moment the forces of evil show themselves more plainly. They are encountered, not dissipated. Or, to change the figure, we see battles fought by the leaders of the band, but no security is promised by their victories. New assaults are being made; new tactics tried; new enemies press on. The distant hills are black with gathering multitudes, and the last exhortations of those who fall at their posts call on their successors ‘to endure hardness as good soldiers of Jesus Christ,’ and earnestly to contend for the faith once delivered to the saints.

“The fact which I observe is, not merely that these indications of the future are in the epistles, but that they increase as we approach the close. Thus we arrive at this book with wants which it is meant to supply. What is the meaning of this wild scene; what is to be its issue, and what prospect is there of the realisation of that which we desire? To such a state of things as this, and to the wants which it involves, this last part of the teaching of God is addressed.”

I make no apology for this lengthened quotation. Its value as an introduction to the Book of the Revelation will be at once perceived.

The revelation is given by God to Jesus Christ for a certain purpose, namely, “to show unto His servants things which must shortly come to pass,” and an angel is sent to be the communicator of it to His servant John, that he might bear record of it to God’s servants. We have thus three agencies of communication between God and His servants. What a claim, then, this gives this book and its wondrous communications on our attention, and with what reverence and expectancy we should take up the study of it, remembering that God has pronounced a special blessing on the reading of it and the keeping (in one’s memory and affections) the things which are written therein.

John might as well have turned away with indifference from the angel which showed him these things, as a Christian might now put aside, as something not interesting him, this account which God in His grace has given us of the “things which must shortly come to

pass.” “Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein: *for the time is at hand.*”

What can this last expression mean? Eighteen hundred years have nearly run their course since John wrote the words, “the time is at hand”; but we must remember that it is the Eternal One who speaks, and He speaks in a language of His own; and, as it has been truly remarked, “We know nothing of relative nearness or distance in point of time; but when the day of the Lord shall have opened our eyes to the true measure, we shall see how near it always was.”

The first thing we have to notice is the salutation, which is declaring grace and peace from the three Persons of the Trinity. First—from the Eternal God—the One who is, was, and is to come; or, I suppose, we might read the words, “is to come as” is future. The expression, “is to come,” seems rather to refer to God’s eternal existence than to the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, because the Lord is spoken of as the third Person of the Trinity in the same verse; while the Spirit, under the expression, “the seven Spirits which are before the throne,” is also spoken of, the Lord’s coming being spoken of in verse 7. And we would note how appropriate is the name given to Him here, “The Faithful Witness,” when we are just about to read of the unfaithfulness of that which should have been His witness on earth, and the ruin and apostasy of everything under the sun.

“First Begotten from the dead” would proclaim His pre-eminence over all who are to be raised from the dead; and the title, “The Prince of the kings of the earth,” would proclaim His supremacy over all that is below, “that in all things He might be the pre-eminent One.” The hearing of this announcement of His dignities and glories draws forth the burst of praise in verse 7, thereby adding the glory of redemption to His other glories; as in Heb. i. 2, His glory as the Purger of our sins is added to the category of glories as Creator, Upholder, and Heir of the worlds. “Every eye shall see Him.” The scope of this cannot be limited. Not only shall the redeemed see the King in His beauty, but the blasphemer’s eye, the sceptic’s eye, and the religious pro-

fessor's eye. "They also who pierced Him," has been thought to indicate the Gentiles generally, as it was under the Roman power that He was crucified. But the expression in Zech. xii. would seem to make this doubtful; and it would seem there to refer to the Jews who were instrumental in His crucifixion, and the "tribes of the land," the ten tribes, or rather those representatives from among them who may be in the land at the time when He comes.

The Alpha and Omega interprets itself, as embracing all that the Lord Jesus ever was, is, and will be. "Of Him, and to Him, and through Him, are all things."

The expression, "the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ," we dwelt on fully in our lectures on Matthew, and the expression means that while all power is given to Christ, His long-suffering has not yet reached its limit.

The vision which John sees of the Son of Man is symbolic, and each thing described in it is intended to shadow forth some attribute of the Son of Man as Judge. Each of those are referred to in the addresses to the churches, and there seems to be a suitability to the state of each of the churches addressed in the special character in which He is revealed to it. When John sees Him, he falls at His feet as dead, an attitude which man naturally assumes when brought into the presence of God. Moses, Isaiah, Ezekiel, Daniel, felt the solemnity of that presence, and prostrated themselves before it, waiting until they heard the voice bidding them to stand on their feet. John, who once leaned on Jesus' breast, falls at His feet as dead, and awaits the touch of the Lord's hand to raise him up, saying to him, "I am the First and the Last."

In verse 19, John gets instructions as to what he is to write, in the words, "The things which thou hast seen, the things which are, and the things which shall be after* these things." The first refers to the vision of the first chapter, just described; the second, to things which had then an existence—the seven churches spoken of in chapters ii. and iii.; and the third—"the things which shall be after these things"—to what is comprised in the rest of the book.

It was remarked in the lectures on the Acts of the Apostles, that the vision of the

Lord in these chapters judging the churches, and taking His place finally outside them, settles once and for all the question of Divine government as acting directly in the Church, and there can be no corporate action in power where there is no Divine government.

We do not pretend to teach church truth from the Book of the Revelation, where we get symbolic teaching rather than dogma or doctrine; but we have abundant evidence in the latter epistles that confusion had taken the place of order; that oppositions of science, falsely so called, should take the place of sound doctrine; and that the flock had to be warned against grievous wolves; and we are told that many would depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits and doctrines of demons. How, then, could they be entrusted with the administration of Divine government, or the powers of binding and loosing? But, while this is so, I see no reason for rejecting the thought that has been often suggested, that we get in the state of each of these churches the buddings of the evils that have blossomed and ripened into the seed-pods and hard-wood in the professing Church. They are not necessarily successive stages of evil, the one succeeding the other, but germs of evil which all existed in the beginning, and have gone on spreading and corrupting till the whole becomes leavened with them.

THE GOLDEN CENSER.

"AND after the second veil, the tabernacle which is called the Holiest of all; which had the golden censer, and the ark of the covenant overlaid round about with gold, wherein was the golden pot that had manna, and Aaron's rod that budded, and the tables of the covenant" (Heb. ix. 3, 4). "And thou shalt hang up the veil under the taches, and shalt bring in thither within the veil the ark of the testimony" (Exod. xxvi. 33; *c.f.*, ch. xl. 20, 21).

The difficulty in the former passage (Heb. ix. 4) consists in the mention of the golden censer as part of the furniture of the Holy of Holies, together with the omission (v. 2) of any reference to the altar of incense in the holy place. This difficulty is again aggravated by an alternative rendering which appears in

the margin of the Revised Version, and which is even proposed for the text by the American Committee—namely, “altar of incense” (v. 4) instead of “golden censer.” If the old version be correct, we have to account for an apparent omission in v. 2; while the new version involves a flagrant contradiction between v. 4 (as it is now proposed to be read) and the statement of Ex. xl. 26, that “he (Moses) put the golden altar in the tent of the congregation *before the veil.*”

The words in dispute are χρυσου ἕξουσα θυμιατήριον, which the Authorised Version, Alford, the Revisers’ text, and the American Committee’s margin translate by—“having a golden censer”; while the R.V. margin and American Committee text read—“having a golden altar of incense.”

Notwithstanding the different renderings, I think there can be no reasonable doubt that the object in question was indeed the censer, and not the golden altar. The Greek word for “altar” is θυσιαστήριον, and is employed expressly (Luke i. 11) to designate the altar of incense. It occurs twenty-four times in the New Testament, two examples of its use being in the Epistle to the Hebrews (vii. 13 and xiii. 10). It is found in the LXX of Exod. xxvii. 1; xxx. 1, &c. We may, therefore, safely conclude that, had the writer of Heb. ix. intended to refer to the altar of incense, he would have employed this word.

θυμιατήριον is, on the contrary, a censer. In the LXX of 2 Chron. xxvi. 19, King Uzziah has the θυμιατήριον (*censer*) in his hand, and is smitten with leprosy beside the incense altar (θυμιατήριον, the two words being thus contrasted. The only example of its use by a New Testament writer is in the verse before us; the “censer” of Rev. viii. 3 and 5 being called λιβανωτὸν. The verb from which it is derived (θυμιαω, to burn incense), in like manner, occurs only once in the New Testament—namely, in Luke i. 9.

It remains to us, then, to explain the presence of the golden censer inside the second veil. A reference to Lev. xvi. 12 will supply us with the solution of the enigma. In the law concerning the day of atonement it is written:—“Aaron shall bring the bullock of the sin offering which is for himself, and shall make an atonement for himself, and for

his house . . . and he shall take the *censer* full of burning coals of fire from off the altar from before Jehovah, and his hands full of sweet incense beaten small, and bring it **WITHIN THE VEIL.**”

In the fifth chapter of the Epistle to the Hebrews the Holy Spirit presents the tabernacle on atonement-day as the type of the Divine realities into which we are introduced in the present dispensation.

He speaks of the tabernacle in the wilderness, and not of the temple in the land, inasmuch as “the golden pot” having the manna, and “Aaron’s rod that budded,” are to be found in the ark of the covenant. This was no longer the case at the date of the inauguration of the temple—1 Kings viii. 9; 2 Chron. v. 10.

He also alludes to the entry of Aaron into the inner sanctuary on the tenth day of the seventh month. We know this just because He does *not* mention the incense altar, while He *does* declare the golden censer to be in the Holy of Holies, beyond the second veil. For it was only on the day of atonement—once in the year that is—that it was carried in before the mercy-seat, for the time being replacing, so to speak, the altar of incense, which does not figure in the ceremonies of the day.

The whole teaching of ch. ix. flows from these symbols and shadows of the law. God accompanies His pilgrim people during their march across the desert: behold the tabernacle! Christ in resurrection is the hidden food of the overcomers, and the token against the rebels: behold the pot of manna and the rod that budded! The High Priest has entered into the Holiest of all, by His own blood: it is the great day of atonement! He has not yet appeared to those that await Him, apart from sin, unto salvation: it is because the whole of the dispensation we live in is represented by the interval throughout which the sons of Israel waited for the return of the one who had gone in before the face of God to make propitiation for their sins! Probably the high Priest was only hidden from the eyes of the congregation for a very few minutes, yet those weighty moments represent, typically, an age that has lasted already nearly two thousand years.

The whole people of Israel looked expectantly

for the exit of the high priest from the sanctuary. In this they were distinguished from the surrounding nations, who had no interest in the solemnities of the day. It is even so in regard to the second coming of Christ. The phrase, "them that look for Him" (v. 28), is descriptive of the Church as a whole, and not of a faithful remnant in the Church. If we are Christians at all, we are "begotten again unto a living hope, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from among the dead" (1 Peter iii. 4). In this we are, all of us, in sovereign mercy distinguished from the Gentiles, who are "without Christ," "without God," and "WITHOUT HOPE" (Eph. ii. 12).

The American Committee needed not to endorse a false translation in order to shield the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews from the reproach of ignorance concerning the tabernacle furniture. "Some one has blundered," it is true; but it is the modern reviser, and not the inspired apostle. Hebrews ix. 1-5 manifests neither forgetfulness nor inexactitude, but the marvellous fidelity and truth of the written Word of God.

A. P. M.

THE MATERIALS OF THE TEMPLE.

EXPOSITORY LECTURES on the TEMPLES of SOLOMON and EZEKIEL. By THOMAS NEWBERRY, Editor of "The Englishman's Bible." Notes by W. K.

THE STONES OF THE TEMPLE.

WE read in 1 Chronicles xxix. 2 that David provided "marble stones in abundance" for the house of God. The Hebrew word indicates that these were white. White marble stones were probably used in the building of the temple. We also read in 1 Kings vi. 7 that these stones were all prepared, or made ready, before they were brought thither. "So that there was neither hammer nor axe nor any tool of iron heard in the house while it was in building." Stone placed on stone, each fitted for its appointed place. These white marble stones were polished after the similitude of a palace, made perfect, sawn with saws, accurately adapted for the place designed for them.

THE SPIRITUAL IMPORT OF THESE STONES.

As diamond only can cut diamond, so I believe Scripture only can interpret Scripture. What then, is the Scriptural interpretation as to the spiritual import of these white marble stones? 1 Peter ii. 5 will supply the answer. "Ye also, as living stones, are built up a spiritual house." Each of these stones, taken from the quarry, shaped, polished, and perfected, beautifully represents individual souls chosen of God in Christ before the foundation of the world; hewn from nature's quarry by God's quarrymen, the Evangelists, squared and brought into due proportion by the work of the Pastor; then chiselled, polished, and perfected by the labour of the Teacher. And as these stones were prepared in Solomon's work-yard, even so the Lord Jesus has His vast army of workmen — some in the distant quarry, and some in His work-yard. So it is now, living stones are being prepared for God's spiritual house, in time, and for God's temple of glory in eternity. When stone shall be laid on stone of that heavenly temple, no sound of axe or hammer will be heard in the building. The preparatory work is going on now. The mountain is ringing with the sound of the hammer, the blasting of the rock, the falling crash of stones detached. The workshop of the true Solomon is full of labour; "all things working," but "all things working together for good." The saw is cutting, the chisel is chiselling, the hammer is ringing; the filing, the polishing, and the smoothing is going forward. "Our light affliction, which is but for a moment, is working for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory" (2 Cor. iv. 17). The preparation is in progress now. The building will be noiselessly erected, and no sound heard but the sound of triumph and of praise when the top stone is added to the whole.

OVERLAYING OF THE WALLS WITH SILVER.

We read in 1 Chr. xxix. 3-5, that David, over and above what he had provided for the house of God, which was a thousand thousand talents of silver (xxii. 14), "gave seven thousand talents of refined silver to overlay (or plaster) the walls of the house." A talent is about 114 lbs. of our weight. The amount of silver in weight contributed was ten times

more than that of gold. Why this enormous contribution of silver? These tons of solid, massive silver, we are told, were to cover (literally to plaster) the walls of the house of God. The white marble stones were so accurately fitted, so exquisitely polished, that they were put together without cement. But the plastering is of silver. A solid layer of silver on each side kept each stone steady, as in a vice.

WHAT IS THE SILVER THE EMBLEM OF?

The Holy Spirit, speaking by Peter, says, "Ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver or gold, but with the precious blood of Christ" (1 Peter i. 18, 19). Do not these white marble stones plastered with silver remind us of that white-robed multitude who had washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb? Souls chosen of God in eternity, quickened by the Divine eternal Spirit in time, redeemed to God by the blood of the Lamb, seen as accepted in God's beloved Son, and sanctified by His Spirit.

THE WALLS COVERED WITH CEDAR.

We find that the walls within and without were covered with cedar wood; "all was cedar, there was no stone seen." There is one remarkable peculiarity about the cedar; it is known as the incorruptible wood. I have been told that a piece of real genuine cedar was never seen worm-eaten, and the reason stated was that there was a principle in the cedar which was death to the worm; so that instead of the worm destroying the cedar, the cedar destroyed the worm.

TYPICAL TEACHING OF THE CEDAR-COVERED WALLS.

The white marble stones plastered with silver and covered with cedar are a type of ransomed souls in resurrection incorruptibility; clothed upon with their house which is from heaven. This mortal putting on immortality; and this corruptible putting on incorruption.

THE CARVING OF THE WOOD.

"He carved all the walls of the house round about with carved figures of cherubim and palm trees and open flowers, within and without" (1 Kings vi. 29). These carvings on the walls corresponded with the carvings on the

doors of the temple. And if we take the doors to be emblematic of Christ, who says, "I am the Way," "I am the Door," the cedar carved in conformity with the carvings of the door remind us that the resurrection bodies of the redeemed will be conformed to the glorified body of the Redeemer. "Now are we the sons of God; and it doth not yet appear what we shall be, but we know that, when He shall appear, we shall be like Him; for we shall see Him as He is" (1 John iii. 2). "He shall change our body of humiliation, that it may be fashioned like unto the body of His glory" (Phil. iii. 21). So that, "As we have born the image of the earthly, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly" (1 Cor. xv. 49). O, what a thought, that the resurrection bodies of the redeemed shall be conformed to the glorified body of the Redeemer! Just as the melted wax takes the impress of the seal, so these bodies in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the sight of the glorified Redeemer, shall take the impression and bear that impression throughout eternity.

ALL OVERLAID WITH GOLD.

There is something more yet. The margin of "The Englishman's Bible" will give the computation of the enormous amount in value and weight of the gold contributed by David and the princes. For what purpose was it used? The whole house was overlaid with gold within and without—the floors, the ceiling, the walls, the dome; every part. Not merely gilded, but covered with plates of gold fitted upon the carved work. So that the exquisite carving was not obliterated but brought out in surpassing splendour.

GOLD IN SCRIPTURE IS AN EMBLEM OF DIVINE GLORY.

What was the prayer of the Redeemer ere he quitted this world to return to the Father from whence He came? "Father . . . glorify Thy Son, that Thy Son also may glorify Thee. Glorify Thou Me (the obedient Son of Man) with Thine Own Self with the glory I had with Thee before the world was" (John xvii. 1-5). Then after praying for those who then believed on Him, and those who should believe in Him through the apostles' word—for you and for me, fellow-believers in the Lord Jesus—He says, after praying that they may be one as the

Father and the Son were one by the one indwelling Spirit (the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are one by reason of the one Spirit; the Spirit of the Father and the Son), so He prayed that His Body, the Church, may be one by the one indwelling Spirit of the Father and the Son. That prayer was accomplished at Pentecost; and that prayer is fulfilled in every believer. For "if any man have not the Spirit of Christ he is none of His." But "by one Spirit we are all baptised into one body" (1 Cor. xii. 13). Then He says, "And the glory which Thou hast given Me (in answer to My prayer) I have given them . . . that they may be made perfect in one: and that the world may know that Thou hast sent Me" (John xvii. 22, 23). For, "when Christ who is our life shall appear," when He comes in the glory of His Father, we also shall appear in the same glory; partakers of the glory; having the glory of God. Thus the whole temple is overlaid with gold, within and without.

GARNISHING WITH PRECIOUS STONES.

There is another particular: the house was garnished with precious stones, "glistening stones, and of divers colours" (1 Chr. xxix. 2). These gems are emblematical of the perfections, the excellencies, and fruits of the Divine eternal Spirit.

TYPICAL TEACHING.

The *tabernacle* was a type of the Church in the wilderness in the present dispensation; "builded together for a habitation of God through the spirit." But in Christ "the whole or every building, fitly framed together, groweth unto a holy *temple* in the Lord" (Eph. ii. 21).

I take the temple of Solomon to represent the whole of the redeemed in resurrection glory. All that were chosen of God in eternity, quickened by the Spirit, redeemed to God by the blood of the Lamb; all, who as sharers in the first resurrection, will be conformed to the glorified body of Christ; all will be partakers of the Divine glory; all will receive of the fulness of the Spirit in resurrection perfectness, composing one vast monument erected to the praise of redeeming grace; to be a memorial in eternity, of God's grace in time.

CHRISTIAN BAPTISM.

A PERSONAL REMINISCENCE.

SOME years ago I was led to inquire into the teaching of Scripture on this subject. I attended a series of evangelistic meetings, which were held in a village situated near the Ochil hills. There I heard the Gospel proclaimed; I was brought under deep conviction of sin, and afterwards was led to trust in Christ as my Redeemer and Saviour.

My desire was to grow in grace, and in the knowledge of Him who redeemed me from death at the price of His own precious blood. It was about this time our first daughter was born, and I then began to search the Scriptures regarding the ordinance of baptism, as I desired to fulfil the obligations of a Christian parent. I had been instructed both from the "Catechism" and "Confession of Faith," and, of course, believed it to be my duty to have the child baptised.

I looked over the Concordance to find out all the scriptures that had reference to this subject, and was overwhelmed with perplexity and amazement, because I could neither find precept nor example for children being baptised.

First, I read Matthew's testimony (see chap. xxviii. 19), "Go ye and teach all nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." Secondly, Mark's testimony (see chap. xvi. 15, 16), "Go ye into all the world and preach the Gospel unto every creature. He that believeth and is baptised shall be saved; and he that believeth not shall be damned."

In both scriptures the meaning is clear. They are commanded (1) "to preach the Gospel"; (2) "to baptise those who believe"; (3) "to teach them all things whatsoever Christ commanded."

I turned to the Acts of the Apostles to see what they understood and what they practised, and found this to be precisely what they did. First, they proclaimed the gospel message; then, "they that gladly received the word were baptised" (Acts ii. 42); "the Samaritans believed and were baptised" (Acts viii. 12); the eunuch believed and was baptised" (Acts viii. 32); "the Gentiles believed and were baptised" (Acts x. 44); "Lydia's heart the Lord

opened, and she was baptised" (Acts xvi. 14); "the jailor rejoiced in God with all his house and they were baptised" (Acts xvi. 34). I saw then, as a believer in Christ, I ought to do likewise.

Now, while I began to think of the propriety of submitting to this ordinance, I found it to be a hard step thus to take up the Cross and follow Jesus. I was most anxious to get over the difficulty, and wished to regard it as a matter of little importance, because I could name so many eminent Christians who had not submitted to baptism after professing faith in Christ.

I read the testimony of Albert Barnes, Dr. Campbell, Dr. Kirk, John Wesley, Luther, Calvin, Chalmers, and others, from whom I received instruction. And although I could not explain then any more than I can do now, why they neglected to be baptised after conversion, yet I was troubled with an accusing conscience which nothing would satisfy but a full surrender of obedience to Christ.

I remembered the words of Jesus when coming to John to be baptised, "Suffer it to be so now, for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness." And, again, I felt the power of the words of inspiration by Peter, when referring to this subject, "The like figure whereunto baptism doth also now save us (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God,) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead" (see 1 Peter iii. 21).

I saw, while looking to Christ for the redemption of my soul and to the efficacy of His precious Blood to purify and make me clean, I could only maintain a good conscience and unbroken fellowship with Him, and prove my fidelity, by submitting to whatsoever He has commanded. There is no promised blessing either in the Old or New Testament but the way is made plain how it may be enjoyed.

For example, Naaman the leper was told to go down to Jordan and dip himself seven times, and his flesh would be clean. He obeyed, and enjoyed the blessing promised.

Next, "The Lord anointed the eyes of a blind man and told him to go and wash in the pool of Siloam, and he would receive sight. He obeyed, and his eyes were opened, and he saw the light."

Again, the inquiring Jews were commanded by Peter to "Repent, and be baptised in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and they would receive the gift of the Holy Ghost." The same gospel he proclaimed to the Gentiles (see Acts x. 47): the only difference was in the administration. "To Him (Christ) gave all the prophets witness, that whosoever believeth in Him shall receive remission of sins." And the moment they gave evidence of their reception of the truth, "He commanded them to be baptised."

Here is an example of how the Gospel was proclaimed at the beginning, and I apprehend the same ministration of the truth is required by those who are called to preach Christ to-day.

Baptism is explained by Paul to the Romans to be a significant ordinance, shadowing forth our union with Christ, "in death," "burial," and "resurrection." See Romans vi. 3, "They were baptised into His death"; Romans vi. 4, "Buried, and raised to walk in the new life"; Galatians iii. 27, "The children of God 'were baptised,' and put on Christ"; Colossians ii. 12, "They were buried with Christ in baptism, and are risen with Him, quickened with Him, and forgiven all trespasses." As Christ died and was buried, and was raised again by the glory of the Father, we also pass through the same (in figure), and rise to walk in the new life.

Now, if we have been planted together with Him in the likeness of His death, so shall we be also in the likeness of His resurrection.

J. C.

THE GOSPEL OF JOHN.

CHAPTER XVIII.—(CONTINUED.)

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

ANOTHER contrast we have in the provision of Peter for the safety of the Lord, and the provision of Christ for Peter's safety. "Then Simon Peter having a sword drew it, and smote the high priest's servant, and cut off his right ear. The servant's name was Malchus." Such was Peter's provision, forgetting the word of his Master, "I say unto you, resist not evil." But, you say, had not the Lord told them that he who had not a sword was to sell his garment and buy

one? The meaning of that is this, Before you were under my miraculous protection, and though you knew it not I guarded you; now you are to the front, while I shall be in the glory. But, conversely, look at Christ's provision for the safety of Peter and the rest. "Jesus answered, I have told you that I am He. If therefore ye seek Me, let these go their way: that the saying might be fulfilled which He spake, Of them which thou gavest Me have I lost none." He was thinking of them even in that moment, when you would have thought that He had enough to think of about Himself; how much more now will He be careful and solicitous for us, when His work in atonement is done and He is upon the throne.

But a difficulty may arise over that last verse quoted. In chapter xvii. what the Lord said had reference to *eternal* salvation; here it is simply salvation from being apprehended. Is not this, then, a misapplication? The answer is, that there are times and crises in our life here when, were we allowed to go but a little further, we cannot tell where we might be; where we need the sustaining power of the Divine, though unseen, hand to keep us from getting quite away from God. Our temporal salvation is, we may afterwards see, connected with our eternal salvation. Thus do we read in Corinthians, "God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it."

Then look again at **verse 19**—"The high priest then asked Jesus of His disciples, and of His doctrine." Observe that in the answer of the Lord there is not a word as to His disciples; He passes it over. Look at the wisdom and prudence of the Lord in that, sheltering the disciples with His wing; so lovely a way and so perfect. Observe also, here, one or two tests of a true teacher. First, He dares to speak openly, and not in a corner. Secondly, He dares to say things over and over again, because He is firmly convinced in His soul. If a man has learned of God He is *sure* about what he has learned. "If any man *think* that He knoweth anything, he knoweth nothing yet as he ought to know." There is something singular too in the names

of the smiter and of the smitten. The person smitten was Malchus, and the meaning of that is "a kingdom." And the smiter was Peter, "a stone." The stone smiting the kingdom before God's time; an anticipation of Daniel ii. It is just the way with the children of God who will not wait patiently; they are not content to suffer and be despised, and would fain control the politics of this world, so profound is their ignorance of the principles of the dispensation under which they live. I am very much awe-struck in thinking of the Lord Jesus taking the kingdom in the way He does in Revelation v., when God puts the title deeds of the earth into His hand. And then, as He opens the seals He produces nothing but chaos here, upsets as it were the whole concern, to put things right in God's way. Then where is the right place for the sword? has it none yet? Certainly it has. Look at Zechariah xiii. 7, "Awake, O sword, against my Shepherd." It is to be bathed in the heart's blood of God's own Son, that cherubim sword that guarded paradise. Then if you look at Hebrews xiii. 20 you will see that the way to become a great shepherd is not to be admired and caressed, but by suffering and shame, as the Great Shepherd, through blood.

Observe, again, the boldness of Peter contrasted with the moral courage of Christ. For Peter's boldness was fleshly; he had vaunted himself and did not dare to go back. There was for a time the outward following on the part of Peter, but without any real strength, because he had boasted of himself. The flesh may stand the trial for a while, up to a certain point; but the fire of the altar soon detects the honey in the sacrifice. But Christ's calm repose in God carried Him right on to die. Another contrast we have in verse 12, "Then the band and the captain and officers of the Jews took Jesus, and bound Him." Oh, the infatuation of men to bind hands so used in blessing! If they had bound some other's they might have done well; but those hands were always giving nothing but blessing. How the world is under the power of the enemy! Yet when those hands were bound they did but bless the more. For when they nailed them to the Cross did not a greater blessing come. And, as He was taken away from His disciples, we are told that He lifted up His hands and

blessed them; and the action is unfinished still. They bound His hands once and lifted them up upon the Cross; now is there blessing flowing still from these uplifted hands. And notice that they did not bind Him so long as He went on speaking. "Suffer ye thus far," said He; and then He healed the man's ear. And then they took these hands and bound them tight.

Another that we notice is the tightening of the net round Peter in one way, and round Christ in another. Read **verses 27 and 28** together. "Peter then denied again: and immediately the cock crew. Then led they Jesus from Caiaphas unto the hall of judgment." The tightening of the net by Satan for Peter in one way, and for Christ in another; to get Peter further into sin, and Christ into further suffering. He was sent from Annas to Caiaphas, and thus the high priest on earth had the heavenly High Priest before him. So thoroughly antagonistic is the religion of the world to religion according to God, that even what God had set up was so wrested that the high priest and the priests altogether concur in His condemnation. One more contrast. He asks at the end of the chapter whether they would have Barabbas or Christ. The word "Barabbas" means "son of the father," and it is believed by many that Barabbas' name was Jesus too. So the question was whether they would have that Jesus, son of the father, or Jesus the Christ, the Son of the living God. The point I press is, do not be afraid how little you may be valued or prized here, be very concerned to have His approbation there. He, the real Jesus, Son of the Father, was confounded with a vile robber.

DIVINE LOVE.

DIVINE love, then perfect! When the camp in the wilderness sinned, God judged it. Because of the evil report of the spies, Israel had to travel forty years in the desert. This was judgment—the present judgment of righteousness. But it was also faithful, unchanged love. The Lord turned round, and for forty years travelled with them. The cloud retraced the road to Horeb, and with them it continued, till they crossed the Jordan. This was Divine love—faithful, but unchanged.

Correspondence.

[We expected that the letter in our last, "What is Separation?" would have elicited some helpful correspondence. We have received two or three letters in the same strain from other parts, but the one already published gives the gist of the matter plainly enough.

We have also received a letter containing little else than vituperation against the writer of the letter and those who are responsible for printing it, but not a word that could be helpful in any way; therefore, we do not publish it.—Ed.]

JAPAN.

ABOUT 170 miles north of Tokyo, the capital of Japan, there rises from beside a lake a great mountain called Bandai-san, which 1100 years ago was an active volcano, but which for 1000 years gave no sign of disturbance, and forests of trees and villages full of people lived on peacefully for centuries at its base. But on the morning of Sunday, July 15, there was a roar, described as being like the discharge of 100,000 cannon; the mountain burst open, a dense cloud of smoke and bright tongues of flame rose high in the air, and the terrified inhabitants, who fled from their houses as an earthquake shook the ground, were overwhelmed by rivers of mud and showers of ashes, 600 being destroyed in this way. As those villagers went peacefully to rest on the previous night, little did they think that the quiet of ten centuries was to be disturbed in so terrible a manner. We can well imagine them saying, in the words of those spoken of in 2 Peter—"From the day that the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation." The destructive possibilities lying hidden within that mountain formed one of those *unseen realities* of which this world is so full, but which we neglect because they do not force themselves upon us. Another *unseen reality*, so far as most Christians are concerned, is the fact that in this thickly-populated empire of Japan, with an area equal to that of Great Britain and Ireland, only about one person in each 20,000 can be claimed as a nominal convert from heathenism to Protestant Christianity. Even this number of professed converts is most encouraging, for the author of one of the best books on Japan states that in the year 1870 there were not ten Protestant Christians in the empire. But he also states, "There is scarcely a form of sin known to Sodom, Greece, Rome, or India, but has been, or is, practised in Japan." Let believers in our assemblies ponder this latter statement in connection with a few remarks regarding the readiness of the people to listen to the Gospel.

The Japanese are an intelligent and courteous people, with a very ancient civilisation, and an idolatrous religion which is a mixture of Buddhism and Shintoism. In some districts the people are so ignorant and bigoted that they look upon all foreigners as wizards, and first attempts to preach Christ or to otherwise confess Him in such places are met by persecution. Native colporteurs have been refused admission to the inns; I have heard of a mob stoning a chapel and wounding its native pastor; and the people of one village combined to prevent the only Christian in the place from using

the common well ; but in this last case the Christians from a neighbouring town came over and dug a special well for their brother. Such cases, however, appear to be exceptional, and a friend, who has travelled a good deal in the country, tells me that the people crowded into the simple hotels at which he rested, in order to question him and to hear what he had to say about Christianity or any other subject. Some large Bible pictures proved such a source of attraction, that long after he had retired to bed he heard Japanese, who had had the pictures explained to them, explaining them to others. Three years ago the men of a village sixty miles from Tokyo put up a notice, stating that any Christian who dared to pass beyond a board set up in their river should be put to death. A Japanese Christian having been appointed by the Government to a post in this village, lived there very quietly for a time, and the people, finding that their children were not carried off by pestilence, nor their crops damaged, began to be curious about Christianity. A message was sent to a missionary who was a fluent Japanese scholar, desiring him to come at once and preach to them for one week. Over 1000 persons assembled and waited all day long for the missionary who was to address them, and this continued for several days, for they had acted with such haste as not to allow of the missionary sending back word that he could not possibly come at the time named. Later on, however, he came and held some very large meetings, and now there are at least twelve or fifteen converts in the place.

The people are very fond of reading, and they have a good deal of respect both for books and teachers. When giving away illustrated Gospel leaflets in the streets of a suburban part of Tokyo, I have been besieged by a crowd of men, women, and children, all eager to secure a paper ; and I have heard of a very poor man who had been given a leaflet by some worker, refusing to sell it for what was to him no small sum of money. There is a great work to be done here through the printing-press. The converts have at present hardly anything to read in the way of religious literature, and I greatly desire to see a good series of *illustrated* Gospel leaflets published, together with tracts on such subjects as *Atonement, The New Birth, Baptism, &c.* Such papers would have either to be adapted from some already printed, or would have to be written specially, as Japanese customs and modes of thought are different from our own ; then a thoroughly competent native translator would be needed to render them into the language of the people. On the part of the upper and educated classes there is great eagerness to adopt European customs and ideas, as well as to learn the English language ; which latter is now taught in an elementary fashion in many schools by native teachers, as well as in various schools and colleges by Englishmen and Americans. Those who have turned with contempt from the vain superstitions of their fathers, are only too ready to adopt the materialistic ideas that Satan has brought into the country through foreign influence. The Government may yet carry into execution a former plan of proclaiming Christianity as the nominal religion of the empire ; and even now a form of nominal Christianity, *with the supernatural excluded*, is pressed upon the public by the leading English newspaper in Japan. A good and zealous missionary

recently made the mistake of appealing to this newspaper to support his proposal to build in Tokyo a central hall, "where the vital moral questions of the day may be considered in a popular manner in the light of evangelical and scientific teaching." The paper commended the scheme, but in terms that were an insult to Christianity.

We ourselves have been taught how vain and how misleading is the common idea that "the Gospel will *leaven* the world until Christ has set up a spiritual reign upon earth." But should not *our* love and zeal for Japan be as great as that of those who thus labour on under this mistaken idea, seeing that God has here suddenly set open such a wide entrance for the Gospel? The miserable excuse for indifference, that, whatever may be the neglect of God's people, God will in some way save His elect ones in every land, comes not from above but from below, and the yielding to such an excuse would stop all work at home as well as abroad. It is owing to the patient, faithful toil of servants of God, who unobtrusively made known the truth and translated the Scriptures, at a time when it was death for a Japanese to declare himself a Christian or to possess a copy of the Word of God, that there is now so much liberty for the Gospel. We who have not yet borne any portion of the burden and heat of the day have now the opportunity of entering into other men's labours. What are we going to do?

There are many American and some English missionaries and teachers in Japan ; many of the missionaries being employed in teaching various subjects in schools rather than in direct evangelising work. These represent very many varieties of sectarianism, though most of the workers represent some form of Presbyterianism, Methodism, or Congregationalism. There are Quaker and Unitarian missionaries here, and the Romish and Greek systems each claim a large number of adherents. The Baptists have published a special version of the New Testament, as in the version generally in use the words *baptise* and *baptism* are rendered in phraseology which implies not immersion, but that water is poured upon the person baptised. I see, more clearly than ever, the enormous advantage Satan has gained by practically getting believers' baptism taken out of the way, and so hiding the necessity for a new birth. Death, burial, and resurrection with Christ are so clearly set forth thereby, that servants of Christ little know how they are playing into the hands of the adversary by holding that "the actual mode of baptism is of little moment."

In this great city of Tokyo alone, with its 1,100,000 inhabitants, there is abundance of work to be done without laying one's self open to the charge of building upon another man's foundation. The greatest difficulty connected with work in Japan is the language, which it requires very long and patient study to acquire some mastery of. There is a spoken and a written language, each differing considerably from the other ; and there are also different styles of language for preaching, praying, conversing, letter-writing, &c. The construction of sentences is most peculiar, and many words have a variety of entirely different meanings. Thus : *go*, may mean *word, behind, noon, washed beans, five, &c.* In speaking, the meaning of a word that has several significations can only be judged of by the context ; but

in writing and printing the Japanese use a separate character for each different word or meaning, so that a great number of signs or characters have to be learned, as in Chinese, before one can read a book in the native character. The New Testament has been published in Roman letters, the Japanese words being spelt according to their sound, so that a person might read aloud correctly from such a book although ignorant of the words that he was pronouncing. It is expected that the whole Bible will be published in this Romanised form before long. A good hymn-book, containing many translations of English hymns, and sung to the same tunes, is largely used.

I have had the privilege of preaching in the open air, and of addressing meetings,—generally meetings held in a private house,—of course through a Christian interpreter; and for a few Sundays I have had the care of a Sunday-school, during the absence from Tokyo of the gentleman who commenced it, and who has carried it on by himself, he having a good knowledge of Japanese. There are difficulties and peculiarities of position here which would hardly be thought of by persons at a distance; but the Lord has proved Himself to be sufficient for all such things, and He has abundantly proved Himself to be faithful. So far as I have yet learnt, there is little opening in Japan for “self-supporting” work for the Lord, apart from teaching in a school, and the denominational workers here are getting over numbers of men from America to fill up such vacancies as occur for teachers. Medical missionaries are not needed, I am told, as each large town has its hospital, and there is now a large supply of Japanese doctors who have gone through a medical course similar to that required in Europe. The climate, generally speaking, appears to suit healthy foreigners who take proper care of themselves, and who are careful not to bring on nervous diseases by over-work or worry. Beef, poultry, fish, and the best kinds of English vegetables are inexpensive; but rice and barley, with occasional salted fish and vegetables, form the staple food of the people, and it must be remembered that Japan is a poor country. Chairs, tables, and bedsteads are not used, the people sitting and sleeping on the floor, which is usually covered with straw mats, and the garments are of the oriental kind, while wooden clogs or straw sandals are worn on the feet. The Japanese are a very interesting race, and women of the working-class appear in the streets and attend meetings as freely as they do at home.

WM. G. SMITH.

Tokyo, Japan, 17th August, 1888.

THE HEART.

UGHT we not often to meditate on such Scriptures as the following, and seek to make them of personal application? My son, give me thine *heart*. I the Lord search the *heart*. Learn of me, for I am meek and lowly in *heart*. The Lord pondereth the *heart*. The Lord looketh not at the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh at the *heart*. Every one proud in *heart* is an abomination to the Lord. The Lord is nigh unto them that are of a broken *heart*. Keep thy *heart* with all diligence. God left him (Hezekiah) to try him, that he might know all that was in his *heart*.

Questions and Answers.

We desire to express our thanks to all who have sent answers.

We particularly request that each writer will give his name and address in full, not for publication, but that we may know who it is that seeks to help, and, if desirable, that we may communicate privately.

When more than one question is replied to, let the answer to each question be upon a separate piece of paper.

Replies to appear in the next number require to be sent in not later than 15th of present month, and so on; the 15th of the month being always the latest to which we can defer making up for press.

We again urge the importance of replies being *short*; it is essential, in this particular line of things, to be *concise*.

We shall greatly value remembrance in prayer that special wisdom and grace may be given for this service. THE EDITOR.

Replies are invited to the following questions:—

To whom did the following Scriptures refer? Matt. xvi. 28, Mark ix. 1, Luke ix. 27.

Is Luke vii. 29, 30, a continuance of our Lord's teaching concerning John? or, is it the Spirit of God, through Luke, telling the result of our Lord's teaching (concerning John, verses 24-28) on the people to whom He spake, when the messengers of John were departed? The ground of their hearts being either prepared or otherwise by the previous reception or rejection of John's teaching concerning Christ as witnessed in their *baptism*.

What are we to understand by Gal. iii. 20?—“Now a mediator is not a mediator of one; but God is one.”

Could any reader of *The Witness* help us by precepts or examples from Scripture as to the true meaning of the term *railer*? If what is said be *true*, can it in any way be called *railing*?

Is it right for a Christian to be in a friendly society, such as Free Gardeners, Foresters, Oddfellows, or to be in a funeral society, making a bargain for a coffin?

“THESE MY BRETHREN.”

QUESTION 301.—Who are “These My brethren”? (Matt. xxv. 40).

Ans. A.—This is an expression, the meaning of which has been sadly obscured by traditional teaching; events, entirely distinct from that in which it occurs, having been imported into and confounded with it.

“These My brethren,” are manifestly a distinct class from either the sheep or the goats; and this, of itself, ought to be sufficient to dispel the notion of a so-called general judgment in which all mankind are to receive their final sentence of eternal life or eternal punishment.

Moreover, the fact that there is here no question of resurrection, either of the just or the unjust, clearly shows that this is not the judgment of the “great white throne,” when “the dead (*i.e.*, the wicked dead), small and great, stand before God” (Rev. xx). Nor is it the Lord Jesus being “revealed from heaven

with His mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance" (2 Thess. i.).

The scene in Matt. xxv. 31-45 takes place "When the *Son of Man* shall come (or, shall have come) in His glory, . . . and when He shall sit upon the throne of His glory; and before Him shall be gathered all the nations"—the living nations; it is the judgment of the quick, not of the dead. We must also distinguish between the nations who are judged and the messengers (probably Jews) who will then have been sent out to proclaim the "Gospel of the Kingdom," who (after the present testimony to the efficacy of the death and resurrection and exaltation of the Lord Jesus, the coming down of the Holy Ghost to form the Body of Christ, the unity of that Body, and the joint-heirship of all its members with their glorious Head in heaven, shall have been closed by the coming of the Lord Himself to take the saints to the Father's house) will resume the testimony as to the kingdom which the apostles began, being sent forth by the Lord, when on earth. "These My brethren," then, are evidently the messengers who will then have gone out proclaiming the "Gospel of the Kingdom," announcing the coming of the King, the Son of Man; and the judgment proceeds on the ground of the reception or rejection by the nations of the messengers and their message (compare Matt. x. 1-23, with Matt. xxiv. 14). We must not confound "this Gospel of the Kingdom," which "shall be preached in all the world as a witness," with "the Gospel of the grace of God"; nor "the Son of Man, sitting on the throne of His glory," to judge the living nations, with Him "from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away," sitting on "a great white throne," to judge "the dead, small and great."

G. A. S.

Ans. B.—"My brethren," evidently means any and all of those who have done the will of His Father in heaven. They form a class to whom He can refer as known to those who are before His tribunal; and if this scene be the judgment of the nations (verse 32) then living, it must refer to those who had lived amongst them, having the "testimony of Jesus" (Rev. xii. 17; xiii. 15-17).

A. O. M.

Ans. C.—After the translation of the Church, which is the Body of Christ, God having called out a company of witnesses from the Jewish remnant, will send them forth to preach "the Gospel of the Kingdom" in "all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come" (Matt. xxiv. 14). This is in fulfilment of such a prophetic word as that found in Isa. lxvi. 19. They go forth on the principle of the "seventy" in Luke x. "He that heareth you heareth Me; and he that despiseth you despiseth Me; and He that despiseth Me despiseth Him that sent Me." The judgment of Matt. xxv. is the winding up of this time of Jewish testimony, and the witnesses referred to are owned as "brethren" by "the King," who, Himself, was "of the seed of David according to the flesh" (Rom. 1. 3). The nations are divided into the two classes, compared to "sheep" and "goats," which, with the "brethren," give us three distinct classes in connection with that solemn scene. It is worthy of note that the kingdom which "the righteous" are

there called to inherit is one "prepared from the foundation of the world"; whereas, the portion of the Church is to be "caught up to meet the Lord in the air," and to be conducted by Him to the place which *He has gone*, meanwhile, to prepare (John xiv.). The one is earthly, the other heavenly. D. R.

Ans. D.—"These My brethren," in Matt. xxv. 40, are, doubtless, the Lord's kindred after the flesh, "who are Israelites, and of whom, concerning the flesh, Christ came" (Rom. ix. 4, 5). The Jews will, according to various Old Testament prophecies, become God's missionary people in a later day; and the whole scene in Matt. xxv. 31-46 is with reference to the treatment such will receive at the hands of the nations. Some will take hold of their skirt, saying, "We will go with you; for we have heard that God is with you" (Zech. viii. 23); while others will persecute and imprison them.

THE TEMPORAL NEED OF ASSEMBLIES.

QUESTION 302.—Is it right for an assembly of Christians, gathered to the name of the Lord Jesus to appoint certain brethren to look after the temporal need of those in fellowship, as did the disciples in Acts vi. 1 to 6?

Ans. A.—There can be no doubt but that what "the multitude of the disciples," under the instructions of the twelve, did in reference to the "daily ministration" was of God; it not only "pleased the whole multitude," but God signally put His stamp of approval on the act, especially in the cases of Philip and Stephen (see 1 Tim. iii. 13). There surely can be no objection if the same need exists to-day to the same course being pursued. Choosing deacons to dispense the gifts of the saints is a very different matter from choosing pastors and teachers, who are Christ's gifts to the Church, and He alone has the right to dispense them. The authority of the saints in dealing with *their* funds is only fitting and appropriate, whilst to exercise that authority in regard to gifts for the edification of the Body of Christ is to usurp that which belongs exclusively to the ascended Lord. Our place as regards the latter is thankfully to own them as the manifestations of His tender love and care for His Church. G. A. S.

Ans. B.—Experience has taught us that, generally speaking, "what is everybody's business is nobody's business"; and unless there are those who, with the common consent of the Church, are over *this* business of looking after the temporal need of those in fellowship, there will be the danger again of widows and others being "neglected in the daily ministration." There are many brethren who count it a joy to attend to such service, and thereby set others free who may be more distinctly gifted for "the ministry of the Word." But in the distribution of the gifts of the assembly the fellowship of all should be cultivated, as others may from time to time know of cases of special need which might not otherwise come to the knowledge of those entrusted with this ministry. A periodical account of stewardship is also desirable. If it should be objected that, as it required the apostles to "appoint," and that in their absence no one is delegated to act for them, another difficulty has to be faced, viz., that serving

tables previously devolved upon "the twelve," and, therefore, if this service is not to be done now apart from apostolic appointment, which is unobtainable, it must remain undone. "God and the Word of His grace" remain to us, and "the meek will *He* guide in judgment, the meek will *He* teach His way." D. R.

Ans. C.—Acts vi. 1-6 seems to teach that it devolves on every Christian assembly to choose out suitable *men* whom they can trust, to take charge of and distribute the gifts and moneys of the assembly. The photograph of these men is to be found in 1 Tim. and Titus.

A. O. M.

[**Editor's Note.**—In the administration of the gifts of the saints, the principle is fully shown in Scripture to be that trustworthy persons be chosen (see 2 Cor. viii. 4-19, 1 Cor. xvi. 3). It is not Scriptural or reasonable that such a stewardship of the collective gifts of saints should be taken up without the *fully expressed confidence of the assembly*. Moreover, it seems Scriptural that *more than one* should in each case have joint charge. The fact that certain "who have first been proved" are chosen for such a service does not relieve the assembly from responsibility towards the poor, the sick, or the Lord's servants. But it is helpful to all to know that what is contributed is being taken care of, and that it is being appropriated to such objects as the assembly can have hearty fellowship in. To this end it is most desirable that those who become acquainted with cases of need should make the same known to those who are in charge of the church's contributions, and also that the church should have opportunity to express themselves freely as to the disposal of contributions for the Lord's work and servants. Thus fellowship will be maintained and liberality promoted.]

THE MAMMON OF UNRIGHTEOUSNESS.

QUESTION 303.—**Luke xvi. 9.**—**Who is it the Lord exhorts to make to themselves friends of the mammon of unrighteousness, and will someone explain the latter clause of the verse?**

Ans. A.—When the Lord says, in the 9th verse, "And I say unto you," it is clear that He is speaking to His disciples, as in verse 1.

In the parable of the unjust steward, his wisdom in making use of that which was entrusted to him so as to secure his well-being in the future, is commended by his lord. Then the Lord Jesus addresses His disciples in the language of verse 9. He exhorts them to make such a use "of the mammon of unrighteousness," that when they have to leave it "they may be received into everlasting habitations"; in other words, present good, the riches of this world, not being our proper heritage as Christians (they are another's, *i.e.*, they belong to the men of this world), we are to use them as in the light of eternity, and so secure His approval who will "give unto every man according as his work shall be." 1 Timothy vi. 17-19 is an admirable comment on this passage.

The difficulty as to the latter clause of the verse vanishes, if, instead of "they may receive you," we read "ye may be received," which is a perfectly legitimate rendering, the former being an instance of the peculiar style of the evangelist Luke. See chap. vi., verse 38. "Shall men give into your bosom," *i.e.*,

"shall be given into your bosom"; vi. 44, "For of thorns men do not gather figs," *i.e.*, "Figs are not gathered from thorns"; xii. 20 is an instance of the latter rendering in the text, whilst the margin is according to the former—"This night thy soul shall be required of thee"; margin, "This night do they require thy soul."

If we are not faithful in the use of the *unrighteous mammon*, we must not expect to be entrusted with much of the true riches. There will be but little room for Christ if our hearts are set upon the riches of this world. We make friends of the mammon of unrighteousness when we so use it that we may give an account with joy and not with grief (see 1 Peter iv. 9, 10). G. A. S.

Ans. B.—The Lord had been, in the previous chapter, addressing the Pharisees and scribes; probably His disciples, as well as "the publicans and sinners" being present, for chapter xvi. opens thus:—"And He said also unto His disciples," &c. Hence the exhortation, "Make for yourselves friends out of (by means of) the mammon of unrighteousness, in order that, whensoever it may fail, they may welcome you into the everlasting tents" (Rotherham and R. V.), was addressed to the disciples, though in the *hearing* of others, for at verse 14 we read, "And the Pharisees also, who were covetous, heard all these things, and they derided Him."

The lord of the steward commends him for his *prudence*, Having "foreseen the evil" of the loss of his stewardship, he proceeds to make the most of the remnant of his term of office, by purchasing, at his master's expense, the friendship of his debtors, saying, "That when I am put out of the stewardship they may receive me into their houses." Thus "the sons of this age are more prudent than the sons of light—respecting their own generation." This is quoted also from Rotherham, who gives the following foot-note on verse 9:—"And I TO YOU say." This emphasis is valuable, as serving to mark a broad distinction between the "lord" of the parable and our Lord Jesus Himself, whose holy and earnest lips never "complimented" the low prudence of dishonest trickery, now, alas! too common among those who call Him "Lord," and pervert His sayings. *He*, too, no doubt, recommended prudence—a lofty and far-reaching prudence, elevated to the service of heavenly wisdom, by which His disciples should be prompted to make such "friends," by their righteous and compassionate use of the mammon usually prostituted to the service of "unrighteousness," as might go before them into a better land, and *there* be ready to welcome them to "its shining shore." Let the Christian merchant ever remember that as fast as he turns all into gold, he should turn the gold into "friends" who may "welcome him into EVERLASTING tents." This is the "prudence" which our Master enjoins." D. R.

Ans. C.—In Luke xvi. 9 the Lord exhorts His disciples so to use their earthly means (which, misused, are termed the mammon of unrighteousness), that hereafter when they fail, *i.e.*, die, they may be met in the world to come by the blessed results of their ministry in this respect. A. O. M.

PROPHETIC PAPERS. No. 12.

THE REVELATION OF JESUS CHRIST—(Continued).
CHAPTERS II. AND III.

BY F. C. BLAND.

THESE addresses to the churches do not, properly speaking, come under the head of unfulfilled prophecy, at least so far as I have any definite light about them at present, and therefore I feel free to pass them over as subjects for prophetic interpretation in these lectures. But I cannot leave them without seeking to point out what solemn practical instruction they contain for us as individuals, surrounded as we are with abounding evils of the very same character as those spoken of here. I would first note that many of the things which man has lost by his unfaithfulness and apostasy are given as promises here to the faith of the overcomer; and I would remark, in passing, that whenever the individual is addressed, as here and in Matt. xiii. for instance, in the words, "He that hath an ear to hear," it is an evidence that the corporate thing is set aside,—whether it be the Jewish nation, as in Matt. xiii., or the professing church, as here in Rev. ii., and iii.,—and the call is to the individual saint, "He that hath ears to hear let him hear."

EPHESUS.

The first thing we notice in Ephesus is departure from first love; and yet here the Lord can bear witness to their "works," their "labour" and "patience," and their "last" works as being more than their "first." They had judged those who "said they were apostles, and were not, and had found them liars." But a most solemn thing is seen here, and that is their readiness to judge others, even those who laid claim to being apostles (and their capacity to do so is admitted), long after self-judgment had ceased; and so we often find that amidst much activity of service, and much severity in discipline, there is no looking within.

The first promise given is the restoration of the first thing which man forfeited, namely, the right "to eat of the tree of life which is in the midst of the paradise of God."

SMYRNA.

The promise to the second church, Smyrna, is beautiful, and suitable to those who were persecuted for Christ's sake. They were to

suffer persecution, and might have to be put to death in this world, but they should "not be hurt of the second death."

"Fear not them," says the Lord, "who kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do," and so this is the substance of the promise to Smyrna.

PERGAMOS.

Next comes Pergamos, "where Satan's seat is,"* The first thing Pergamos is charged with is "having there them *who hold* the doctrine of Balaam," an expression which must not be passed over without notice, as it deprecates allowing amongst them those who *held* false doctrine, as Thyatira is rebuked for allowing Jezebel to teach it.

I need hardly say that what is here referred to, are doctrines which might be subversive of foundation truth, or dishonouring to the person of Christ, and not the variety of opinions which may prevail on things which are not clearly defined in the Word of God. The doctrine of Balaam was what would be expressed in 1 Tim. by the words—"making a gain of godliness." Balaam sought to make a gain out of his prophetic gift, and was willing to use it in any way if only he might have the rewards of Balac for doing so. But how many ways are there of making a gain of godliness besides this gross aspect of taking money from Balac to curse God's people! All that is done in the service of God for personal gain, or for self-exaltation, is "making a gain of godliness," and *is in principle* "the way of Balaam."

The promise here is that the overcomer shall "eat of the hidden manna," and that a white stone should be given to him, with a new name written in it, which no man should know but he that received it. The "hidden manna" refers I think to that which was laid up in the ark, the food which man rejected, but which was precious to God, and which is ever before Him. There were two things against which

* It is very evident from this expression that there was some very definite manifestation of Satan's power here. It has been said that when the worship of Babylon was broken up, and the priesthood, with all their idolatrous rites, fled, a portion of them transferred their whole worship to Pergamos, and that from thence they were brought to Rome. It would not do to digress here on this subject, but the matter is exhaustively treated of in a little booklet called "Babylonianism."—Patridge & Co.

Israel rebelled—the food which God gave them, and the authority of the priesthood which God set over them. The manna was the symbol of the true bread which came down from heaven; the rod of Aaron was the symbol of the authority of the Great High Priest who is gone up to heaven. Both were laid up before God, to be kept as a witness against Israel; and I cannot but think that the Lord referred to the first in the sixth of John, when the Jews murmured at Him (because He said, “I am the bread which came down from heaven,”) just as their fathers had murmured against the manna. God had laid up the former before Him as a witness that they murmured against the bread which He gave them in the wilderness, and when “they murmured” (the very same word used in the sixth of John), Christ says, “Ye *also* have seen Me (the true bread) and believe not, what and if ye shall see the Son of Man ascend up where He was before,” as another witness against them that they rejected the living bread. They refused Him as their King, saying, “We will not have this man to reign over us,” and God answers this murmuring against His authority by the declaration of the one hundred and tenth Psalm, “Sit Thou on My right hand until I make Thine enemies Thy footstool.” Thus the manna and the rod symbolised the two aspects in which the Lord was rejected: and they are laid up before God, as His answer or witness against all those who reject His Son. But what is it to feed on the hidden manna? Is it not the promise of fellowship with God about a rejected Christ? But what can be that “white stone” and “the newname written which no man knoweth but he that receiveth it?” It is something not yet told us, but precious to faith even while it is yet a mystery; it is something which none can share with God but the individual overcomer; some joy with which no stranger intermeddleth; something in connection with conflict, and with overcoming in it. Wondrous mystery! which eye hath not seen nor ear heard, but which God reveals to the overcomer by His Spirit, and is worth giving up all to gain.

THYATIRA.

In His manifestation to the church at Thyatira the Lord appears “with eyes as a flame of fire,” for the apostasy is great, and

“He that searcheth the hearts” is there. His complaint is against indifference to false teaching, “Thou sufferest,” or, thou lettest alone “that woman Jezebel, who calleth herself a prophetess, to teach and to seduce My servants”; and, as remarked before, we have here the complaint of allowing false doctrine to be taught, as we had in Pergamos against those being amongst them who held it. Indifference to the one easily and rapidly leads to the other, and cannot be for a moment permitted.

The promise to the overcomer here is that which Israel as a nation would have had if they had been faithful, but is referred here not to the nation but to the individual overcomer; and He adds, “I will give unto him the morning star,” the herald of the day, when all these promises will be fulfilled, and every pledge made “to him that overcometh” will be redeemed. And we must not forget that the morning star does not awake a sleeping church or world, whilst it is the delight of those who watch.

SARDIS.

Sardis comes next—“a name whereby it lives, while it is dead.” “He that hath the seven Spirits of God” is the character in which the Lord is presented here. He can breathe on His poor prostrate creature, and say, “Live; yea, I say, unto thee, live.” “I am He that hath the seven stars in my right hand”; the ministries by which spiritually dead saints may be revived.

The promise to Sardis is “white raiment,” the priestly robes again which Israel might have been clothed in as a nation of priests, but which they forfeited by their idolatry in Mount Horeb. To this is added, “I will not blot his name out of the Book of Life, but I will confess his name before My Father, and before His angels.” The name being in the Book of Life seems to be a claim made to life like that one—“We have eaten and drunk in Thy presence, and Thou hast taught in our streets”—a claim which will be confessed or repudiated in the day of Christ, according to the truth or falsehood of the claimant, or according to the aspect of it here, whether he was an overcomer and a keeper of Christ’s word to the end, or whether he had been overcome. God does not at once brand each professor of His name as true or false, but

the end will declare it. The claim to the Book of Life will be established or disallowed in the day of Christ. You will note that a profession to something is made in every church. In one they *say* they are apostles, and are not; in another they *say* they are Jews, but do lie; Jezebel *calleth* herself a prophetess; Sardis *has a name* to live, while it is dead; those in Philadelphia *lay claim* again to being Jews, though they are not; and in Laodicea they *lay claim* to riches, gold, and good works, but all must be tried by the fire. How blessed, then, is it to hear that there were a few names even in Sardis who had not defiled their garments, and that they should walk with Him in white, being accounted worthy.

PHILADELPHIA.

Philadelphia has "a little strength," and had not denied His name. The hope of the Lord's coming appears to have been held. It is like a little rift in the dark lowering clouds, after which Sardis, with its name to live, passes into Laodicea. Some take the place of being now in a Philadelphian condition, a solemn boast to make, for, as it has been remarked, it is the next thing to Laodicea. Boasting of being in a Philadelphian *position* is only a preparation for a Laodicean *condition*, just as "a haughty spirit goes before a fall." The holding of high truths, or the taking a position of ecclesiastical separation, will not insure us against coming under the judgment of Sardis uttered by Him whose eyes are as a flame of fire, nor will the doctrine of the Lord's coming, held *merely as a doctrine*, secure to us the promise of being made "pillars in the Temple of our God, and going no more out." And again I would say, let it not be forgotten that these promises are not made to the church as a corporate witness, but to the individuals who overcome; and though we may not be able to expound literally the meaning of what it will be to be "a pillar in the temple of our God," yet it *has* a meaning or it would not be given as a promise and encouragement here. The temple was in ruins before this was written, and the professing church was in ruins soon after, but the promise means something, and there will be no indefiniteness about it in the day when it shall be fulfilled to him that overcometh.

We read in Nehemiah that the stones were few, and there was much rubbish, and the strength of the bearers of burthens was decayed. But every one of these stones was originally carved to fill and fit a certain place in the temple; and, though still in the midst of the rubbish, each one, if examined, would be found to have retained its form, and the chiselling might have been traced upon it. It might never have emerged from the mass of ruins that covered it, but the carving on it was indelible, and it was a stone ready for the master-builder's hand whenever he was pleased to take it up again. And so in the midst of the tremendous ruins of Christendom, it is still within the power of every living stone to be an overcomer, and to be a vessel meet for the Master's use; and no matter how over-laid with the rubbish of human systems, or, worse still, by the more subtle danger of orthodoxy without the power of the truth, it is still possible for individual saints to bear in their bodies "the marks of Jesus Christ."

"He shall go no more out. I will write upon him the name of *My God*, and the name of the city of *My God*, which is the new Jerusalem, which cometh down from heaven from *My God*; and I will write upon him *My new name*." Whatever all this means in its illustrative grandeur, it is worthy of a hearing ear.

LAODICEA.

In Laodicea, before the last state of apostasy is spoken of, the Lord is introduced to us again as "the faithful witness, the beginning of the creation of God." Here, as in Israel's day of old, religiousness abounded. It reminds us of the trimming of the lamps of the virgins, both foolish and wise. Israel never had so many sacrifices as when God speaks to her in Isaiah i., but they did not know that it was counted as iniquity. Even these solemn meetings of religious activity are again abounding, and men are satisfied with them; but the day that is coming will declare their value, and "the fire must try every man's work of what sort it is."

There was plenty of gold, but it had not been "proved in the fire"; there were "garments," but they were not "white"; and there were "works" in abundance, but they had not been "found perfect before God"; and the eyes needed "eye-salve" that they might "see."

But how gracious is God! He first counsels; then He rebukes; and, finally, He chastises, and calls to Laodicea to "be zealous and repent."

Here He stands at the door and knocks, and a promise is given that is even more individual than that in Matt. xviii. 20, where "two or three gathered in His name" may count on His promise to be "in their midst"; for though in Laodicea two may not be found to meet together, if even one is found to open to Him when He knocks, the Lord says, "I will come in and sup with him, and he with Me."

If some great potentate were to invite some poor man to his table, it would be an act of grace and condescension; but if the potentate knocks at the poor man's door, and comes in and sups with him, it would be a greater condescension still. But oh! how needful is it to be ready to admit Him when He knocks; that He, who is King of Kings and Lord of Lords, be not kept waiting, but that they may "open unto Him *immediately*."

There is such a thing as unreadiness even on the part of many a true Christian. Jacob was not prepared to find himself at the gate of heaven, and felt the reality and solemnity of it to be "dreadful" (Gen. xxviii.); and Peter was not ready when he went with the disciples a-fishing, and when the Lord comes unexpectedly amongst them he has to gird his fisher's coat about him, for he was naked, and cast himself into the sea. His heart was true, and he flew to the feet of his Master when he recognised Him, but he was not ready; but it was the disciple whose habit it was to lean on the Lord's bosom to whom He first discovered Himself, and who told them, "It is the Lord." May His servants be ever ready, for in such an hour as we think not, our Lord may come.

And now we come to the last promise. "To him that overcometh will I give to sit with Me in My throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in His throne." Every promise in these epistles is given to "Him that overcometh," and as one has said, the promise in this last epistle unites the victory of the servant with the victory of the Lord.

CHRIST IN THE CHURCH.

HAVING in two former papers briefly meditated upon those most important points, "Christ in the heart," and "Christ in the house," let us now turn our thoughts for a little to a third subject intimately connected with the other two, namely, "Christ in the Church."

The Church is the glory, crown, joy, and fulness of Christ; over it He is especially LORD; in it He delights to dwell, as in His "own house"; and when any of the living stones that compose this spiritual temple are gathered together in His name, thither He especially resorts—"there am I in the midst of them." But as we may individually walk so as to grieve Him, and thereby lose the sense of His presence in our souls, we may also collectively so dishonour Him, by neglecting His Word, and turning aside from reliance on His Spirit, as to render our assemblies powerless and dead; the living presence of Christ may not be experienced, and fellowship with Him may altogether be lost. We may be assured of this, that if we desire to have the consciousness of the Lord's presence with us when we meet together, we must each cultivate communion with Him in our own hearts and homes; we shall find the best way to ensure a happy meeting with the saints will be to be happy with the Lord Himself in private. When, therefore, we find our assemblies are cold and spiritless, let us ask ourselves if our own hearts have not been previously wandering away from the Lord.

All may, indeed, be apparently correct; no evil doctrine, no outwardly sinful conduct may be allowed; and yet the saints may find no refreshment, no spiritual life or power in their meetings. Christ's presence may not be practically acknowledged. Was it not so at Laodicea? The church at Ephesus also detected the false apostles, and could not endure those who were evil in their lives; their works and labour in the Lord's name also had been abundant—yet they had sadly fallen; the spring of fellowship with Christ was gone; and though still preserving all the outward form, and the order and discipline of a church, that which alone was *living* power was absent. Love, their first love, had failed, and the Lord therefore threatened to disown them altogether

as a body gathered in His name ; He would remove their candlestick out of its place, unless they repented. Of what value to Christ is outward service, if love be wanting? Of what value to the Bridegroom would be the rigid observance of her duties, if the Bride were cold in her heart toward him? A church without heart, is a church without Christ. Beloved, let us see well to this. Let nothing satisfy us short of the living, realised presence of Christ with us. No ministry, however excellent, can supply the lack of this ; neither will truth itself nourish the soul, unless the power of Him who is *the* Truth be present to minister it. We need to exhort one another respecting this, for these are days when the itching ear is more common than the glowing heart, and the teacher is often more sought than the Lord. Thus Christ is, as it were, often supplanted in His own house.

It is not difficult to discern the power of the Lord's presence in our meetings ; the unlettered believer is as competent to ascertain this as the most instructed. The two disciples on their way to Emmaus were very ignorant, but their hearts were occupied with the right object. Christ was the subject of their mutual intercourse as they journeyed on together. They loved Him, they had lost Him, and were sad. Soon He joined Himself to their company, because He knew that they were occupied with Him. His presence was *felt*, though they knew but little ; and their "heart burned within them by the way." So shall we also find it to be the case, if our hearts are occupied with Christ and Him crucified ; the presence of the Lord with us will be realised, and our souls will be filled rather with the blessedness of having been with Him, than with questions as to the ministry we may have heard.

We have also to remember that in one sense we are *always in the Church*. It is not merely when we assemble together in the Lord's name, that we then form a part of the Church of God ; but in private, as well as public, we still belong to that body which the Lord has redeemed, and consequently our whole life should have constant reference to our union with all the saints of God.

A priest of old did not cease to be one when he retired from the public service of the Tabernacle into his own tent ; neither was an

Israelite less one of the people of God when dwelling in his own habitation, than when assembled with the congregation at Jerusalem. Our private actions and ways have a real and important effect on the whole body of Christ on earth, of which we form a part. Achan's individual act of disobedience brought signal dishonour and weakness to the whole camp of Israel. Only, be it remembered, we are bound up in the welfare of the Church far more closely than ever an Israelite was in the prosperity of his nation ; for we are united *in life*, and are "members one of another." As a limb of our natural body cannot be disordered without the whole frame being affected, so we cannot walk in any path of disobedience or carelessness, however small, without materially, though it may be imperceptibly, weakening the Church of God. Whilst we hold the truth of the unity of the body, and esteem in some sense its preciousness, do we *prove* that we believe in its reality, by so ordering our steps with the Lord as to bring a measure of healthfulness and strength, rather than feebleness, to fellow-members?

The apostle Paul had to give his own son in the faith very extensive directions, in order that he might know how to behave himself in the house of God. We need to search the Word of God for ourselves, that we may regulate our conduct both in private and in our social relationships, so that our behaviour in the Church of God may be conducive to its blessing. The great truths enumerated by the apostle, as included in the mystery of godliness, God manifested in the flesh, His death and resurrection, and His glory also as the Risen Man at the right hand of God, are to regulate our lives and to be the subjects of our meditation and the source of our joy and peace. Christ is the Alpha and Omega of everything to the saint ; truth about Him has no power apart from Him. To realise His presence, is to feel His power ; and joy, and peace, and strength, are the results. Let us earnestly seek living intercourse with Him ; let us see that we have prepared a place and a welcome for Him in our hearts, and then shall we be able to invite, as it were, His presence in the church. "Let my Beloved come into His garden, and eat His pleasant fruits."

THE FIRST EPISTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS.

CHAP. XV. I.

FROM NOTES OF AN ADDRESS BY J. R. C.

WE have before remarked that this epistle was to a large extent evoked by questions upon various points of difficulty that were troubling the minds of the believers. The apostle wrote in reply to such questions, and also to correct certain errors which had been creeping into the Corinthian church, and were threatening to undermine the very foundations of their faith.

God has a purpose in permitting errors to crop up among the saints. God is not the author of evil or of error; but it is His prerogative to overrule both for good. Those influences which may have been slowly but surely operating against the spiritual well-being of the assembly are thus brought to the surface, and opportunity afforded to deal with them in such a way that Satan is defeated and God glorified, and the saints rooted more deeply and firmly in the very truth that had been assailed by the adversary.

We ought not, therefore, to be unduly cast down by Satan's efforts to introduce error amongst us, but seek grace from God to bring the truth to bear upon it. The cry was once raised, "There is death in the pot." What was the remedy? "Bring meal" (2 Kings iv. 40, 41). That is how to meet the poison of evil doctrine. Bring to bear upon it the "meal" of the Word of God—the "salt" of the truth. This is the Divine antidote. Thus the curse is turned into blessing.

The truth of the resurrection was being undermined in the Corinthian church. This probably arose from their philosophic mind. That which they could not understand they found it hard to believe. The same evil doctrine is to be found in various forms in our own day. A literal resurrection of the body is declared to be contrary to reason, and therefore dismissed as a doctrine incompatible with the enlightenment of this age.

But this Corinthian heresy was the occasion of this magnificent chapter being written; just as the Galatian error of subverting the Gospel

by legalism was the occasion of the writing of that grand epistle to the churches of Galatia.

In verse 1, the apostle begins with a statement of the Gospel. "I declare unto you the Gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand; by which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain."

Some have stumbled at these words, "believed in vain"; but the argument of the chapter as a whole shows plainly what is the meaning. "If Christ be not risen"—then had they indeed believed in vain. Thus at the outset he shows that the truth of the resurrection is an essential part of the Gospel.

But if that truth was not "kept in memory"—if, instead of being held fast, it was allowed to slip—then might the apostle well stand in doubt of them.

Verse 3, "For I declare unto you first of all that which I also received." That word "received" is of special significance. In chapter xi. 23, he used the same expression, "I have received of the Lord that which I also delivered unto you." Again in Gal. i. 11, 12, "But 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."

We gather from these expressions that the apostle Paul received his instructions not from others who had been apostles before him; he received it neither of man, nor by man, but was taken by the risen Lord into His own immediate discipleship, and was instructed in the Gospel by the Lord Himself as His own pupil. Hence the special character that attaches to Paul's teaching, so much of it being the making known of things that had been kept secret from the foundation of the world.

"How that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures."

Mark these words, "according to the Scriptures." Every detail of the prophetic Scriptures concerning His sufferings and death was literally fulfilled. In John xix. 28, "Jesus knowing that all things were now accomplished, that the scripture might be fulfilled (that is, completely fulfilled), saith, I thirst." Verse

30, "When Jesus therefore had received the vinegar, He said, It is finished: and He bowed His head, and gave up the ghost." The word here rendered "finished" is the same as that in verse 28 rendered "fulfilled." The evident meaning being that the very last detail of the Old Testament Scriptures had received its accomplishment; all things that were written concerning Him in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the Psalms were fulfilled; there was nothing left to be done but to expire. Thus was the seal of His testimony put in life and in death to the authority and inspiration of the Old Testament Scriptures. He received and owned "the Scriptures" just as He found them—showing to His disciples in the days of His resurrection "in *all* the Scriptures the things concerning Himself." How different His reverential subjection to every word that was written—the deep conviction of His soul, "the Scripture cannot be broken"—from the questioning criticising spirit of the present day!

Before we pass on will you turn with me to John xix. 32, "Then came the soldiers . . . But when they came to Jesus, and saw that He was dead already, they brake not His legs: but one of the soldiers with a spear pierced His side, and forthwith came thereout blood and water. And he that saw it bear record, and his record is true: and he knoweth that he saith true, that ye might believe."

You observe what a weighty testimony is here given concerning the death of Christ. So far as we know, the death of Christ was never questioned. If that soldier had not pierced His side, the question might have been raised, "Did He really die upon the cross?" But that spear thrust into His very heart, by which the world *made sure* that He was dead, settles the question *once* for all. *Jesus died*, and he that saw it bear record in order that we might believe.

In creation we behold the eternal power and Godhead of the Creator. But creation with all its wonders and beauties offers no relief to the burdened guilty conscience. It only shows that law is inexorable and that broken laws exact their own retribution. But the giving up of the Beloved Son to the shame, agony, and death of the cross, cost God more than creation cost. Never shall we fully know

what it cost Him to send out this glorious Gospel of His grace to a guilty world.

Nothing but the death of Christ, the shedding of His precious blood, can give the guilty conscience peace. There is God's remedy for sin. "The Gospel is the power of God unto salvation." It is to that, and to that alone, that God has been pleased to attach His mighty saving power. Herein is revealed the righteousness of God, the wrath of God upon sin, and yet the love of God to the sinner. Let us rejoice in the preaching of the Gospel. Never let us lose faith in its power to save. Man in the pride of his wisdom thinks that something else than the Gospel is needed. Hence, pulpits are filled with men of learning and of eloquence; many of whom deny the very foundation truth of atonement by death.

But this is not the whole of the Gospel. It goes on to say, **verse 4, "And that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures."** From the moment that His side was pierced, nothing but love and respect was shown to the Holy One of God. It was not left to the ruthless hands of the ungodly to take Him down from the cross. Loving, gentle hands unloosed His iron fetters, enshrouded His precious body and carried Him to Joseph's memorial sepulchre, hewn out of the rock, where never man had yet been laid.

Isa. liii. 9. tells us the character of His burial and the reason of it. "His grave was appointed with the wicked, but with the rich man was His tomb" (Lowth's translation, which we think evidently gives the sense).

"He had done no violence, neither was deceit in His mouth." Why, then, should He be suffered to lie in the grave that doubtless was dug for Him as well as for the malefactors that suffered at His side? God interposes, and, "according to the Scriptures," He who had done no sin suffers no indignity after His atoning work is fully done.

But more than this—"He was raised again from the dead according to the Scriptures." The Old Testament is full of references to, and foreshadowings of, His resurrection; but it requires opened eyes to see them. Ps. xvi. and Is. liii. plainly teach it; and it is foreshadowed in Lev. xiv.—the two birds for the cleansing of the leper; and such a type as

Jonah, three days and three nights in the belly of the fish, referred to and applied by the Lord Himself. To search into the Old Testament for prophecies and foreshadowings of the resurrection of Christ would be most profitable exercise.

JERUSALEM.

Address by Mr. W. GREENE (slightly corrected and amplified), Birmingham Conference of Christians, 19th September, 1888.

“ALL Scripture is given by inspiration of God” (2 Tim. iii. 16); nothing can be added to it, nothing taken from it. Modern infidelity endeavours to prove that some parts are not inspired, when God says *all Scripture is given by inspiration of God*. The whole canon of Scripture, both Old and New Testament, is written by the Jews, and Paul asks, “What advantage hath the Jew?” He answers, “Much every way:” chiefly, because that unto them were committed the oracles of God” (Rom. iii.).

In 2 Peter we read—“We have a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place.” We are in the last days; the bark of the Church of Christ is about entering the haven of eternal rest. How important, then, to know the soundings, and the quicksands and shoals and dangers on the right hand and on the left. In the second Psalm we read the words—“Yet have I set my King upon my holy hill of Zion.” This is the purpose of God, to place the Lord Jesus as King in Zion; but we read in 2 Thess. of one “who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God.” Owing to the return of so many of God’s ancient people to Jerusalem, and so many remarkable events occurring in the East, we naturally turn to the Holy Land as the place where the last great conflict between the Almighty God and our great adversary the Devil has to be decided.

In Daniel ii. we read of an image whose head was of gold, breast and arms of silver,

belly and thighs of brass, his legs of iron, his feet part of iron and part of clay.

The fine gold symbolises Babylon—supreme sovereignty and power vested in the King; the silver is the Medo Persian empire; the brass, Greece; the iron, Rome; the two legs referring to its duality of eastern and western empire, with a ten-fold division at its end symbolised by ten toes in Daniel and ten horns in the Apocalypse.

In Daniel vii. we find the same kingdom under the symbol of four great beasts—the lion, the bear, the leopard, and the fourth beast, dreadful and terrible, and strong exceedingly—and the interpretation of the vision is given in verse 17. These four beasts are four kings or kingdoms which shall arise out of the earth, whose names we have already mentioned; but in verse 18 we read—“But the saints of the Most High shall take the kingdom, and possess the kingdom for ever, even for ever and ever”; a high position, indeed, reserved for those who follow Christ in His rejection. “To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with Me in My throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with My Father in His Throne” (Rev. iii. 21).

In Daniel vii. 19 it is written—“Then I would know the truth of the fourth beast, which was diverse from all the others, exceeding dreadful, whose teeth were of iron, and his nails of brass; which devoured, brake in pieces, and stamped the residue with his feet.” Remark in this verse the two metals, *iron and brass, Rome and Greece—western and eastern empire*—again before us at the end of the age. Here we see plainly the restoration of *Greece* prophesied. Now Greece was lost in her nationality till the year 1821, when she freed herself from the power of Turkey, and her independence was established. And why did this occur? That the Scripture might be fulfilled—“Heaven and earth shall pass away, but My word shall not pass away.”

In Zech. ix. 13 it is written—“When I have bent Judah for Me, filled the bow with Ephraim, and raised up thy sons, O Zion, against thy sons, O *Greece*, and made thee as the sword of a *mighty man*. And the Lord shall be seen over them.”

In our Bible is given the Divine programme of all the great events to take place in the

earth. In the Book of Psalms we have portrayed with much detail all the sufferings of Christ (Ps. xxii., &c.); in Ps. cix., the full and detailed character of Judas, quoted in Acts i. 20; and in Dan., Thess., and the Apocalypse xiii., the full and detailed description of the last great Antichrist, the man of sin and son of perdition, who shall be made manifest at the end of the age, when "the transgressors are come to the full" (Dan. viii. 23). So alarmed was Daniel with the appearance and description of this awful personage that he "*fainted, and was sick certain days*" (verse 27).

No doubt, dear friends, many of you have been watching the rapid return of the Jews to Jerusalem, who, in spite of the opposition of Turkey to their landing at Jaffa, the nearest harbour to Jerusalem, go up to Haifa and Beirut and come down to the holy city. Upwards of 50,000 are said to be now again gathered there. The head of the house of Rothschild (Paris branch) has recently twice visited the Holy Land; once to investigate the different colonies where the Jews are settled, on one of which, the colony of Semmarin, he has, it is said, expended more than £40,000 in buildings and improvements. This colony is near Mount Carmel, in the valley of Esdraelon. He made a second visit quite recently, and went to Jerusalem, had an interview with the Turkish pasha, and said in a peremptory tone to that high dignitary, "Pray, sir, what do you mean by persecuting my brethren?" "Who are your brethren?" asked the astonished pasha. "The Jews," answered the baron with emphasis, producing a firman from the Sultan at the same moment, the contents of which we have not heard, but which produced an immediate and notable effect on the pasha, who then understood the character of the remarkable man he had to deal with, and who replied, "Had I known, sir, of your arrival at Jaffa, I should have sent a deputation to escort you to Jerusalem."

All these things show which way the wind is blowing, and offer points of deep interest and for deep reflection to those who take heed to the *sure* word of prophecy—the *sure, certain* word, *no ambiguity*.

This important banking house of Rothschild, which has risen to its present amazing position,

supposed to be the wealthiest in the world, was a mere zero in finance at the commencement of the present century, and has lent enormous sums to the Turkish Government, which is thus virtually in its power.

About two years ago a gigantic tower was commenced on the summit of the Mount of Olives. Its dimensions are, I hear, 60 feet square at base and 180 feet high, though still unfinished. Three great bells, cast, as I understand, in Russia, are to be hung in it; two already there, and the third, a *tocsin*, 20 tons weight heavier than the great bell of St. Paul's, London. The whole construction appears to be under the direction of the Archimandrite of the Greek Church and protected by the political power of Russia. Thus we see here what we have endeavoured to prove, the re-appearance of the *Greek* persecuting power, symbolised by the nails of *brass*; the animal being, according to Rev. xiii., the *leopard*, or, if more accurately translated, the *panther*, which is still more cruel and ferocious. The great bell, for which a special waggon was brought, was pulled up the forty miles of road to Jerusalem by 5000 Russian pilgrims, principally women, among whom were many noble ladies of high degree—long ropes being attached to the front of the carriage to facilitate the operation,—and it arrived safely at the brook Kedron, the road having been previously repaired in view of this great undertaking. At the Kedron, however, something gave way; the bell fell, killing seven of the poor pilgrims, and cracking the monster bell, which was to have been inaugurated before this by some of the imperial family of the Czar. When the tower is complete there is to be a telegraphic chamber, connecting with its wires all the convents and monasteries of the Holy Land with this extraordinary centre, one of the peculiarities of the *quasi-religious* establishments being that they are furnished with rifles and munitions of war, as is also the great Russian Convent of Jerusalem, which provides 3000 beds for pilgrims. At the summit of the tower there is to be an electric light, which, like the tower itself, will be seen from an immense distance, and the great bell, being sounded by electric agency, will be heard through the length and breadth of the land. People naturally ask the question, what does

it all mean? The builders reply that it is for the directing the Jews returning from north, south, east, and west to celebrate the evening sacrifice when restored on Mount Zion, which, from all circumstances now apparent, would seem to be an event of the near future; but the student of God's Word is not at a loss to know what this last "Wicked one" will do with that people in the last three and a half years of his idolatrous reign. The Lord Jesus said, I am the Good Shepherd; but in Zech. xi. 16 we read—"Lo, I will raise up a shepherd in the land (of Palestine), which shall not visit those that be cut off, neither shall seek the young one, nor heal that that is broken, nor feed that that standeth still; but he shall eat the flesh of the fat, and tear their claws in pieces," in other words, devour the whole of the carcass. In Rev. xiii. 14, speaking of the second beast, it says, "He deceiveth them that dwell upon the earth by the means of those miracles which he had power to do in the sight of the beast: saying to them that dwell on the earth, that they should *make an image to the beast*, which had the wound by a sword, and did live. And he had power to give breath unto the image of the beast, that the image of the beast should both *speak*, and cause that as many as would not worship the image of the beast should be *killed*."

We ask, then, will this *toxin* be used by the Greek church, as already mentioned? or is it not more likely that when this abomination of desolation—this image of the beast—is erected, it will be tolled for the dwellers in Jerusalem and other lands to bow and worship the beast represented by the image? for is it not written, "All the world shall worship him whose names are not written in the Lamb's Book of Life from the foundation of the world"? In speaking with a Jew, of Russian origin, and well versed in all the movements of the Greek church, about this tower and what it was for, his words were, "I look upon it as the *beginning of the end*." I am of the same opinion. In Isa. viii., speaking of the wicked one, it says—"The stretching out of his wings will fill the breadth of Thy land, O Immanuel!"—shall really take possession of the land, north, south, east, and west! And what shall we say of the blasphemous and daring erection of this tower so near the spot

from which our Lord ascended, and on which His blessed, pierced feet will soon again stand, when that prophecy of Zech. xiv. shall be fulfilled—"And His feet shall stand in that day upon the Mount of Olives, which is before Jerusalem on the east; and the Mount of Olives shall cleave toward the east and toward the west, and there shall be a very great valley; and half of the mountain shall remove toward the north, and half of it toward the south"? What will become of this tower in that day, and of its bells, and the worshippers of that image? Alas for the thought! They shall go down quick into hell. "Thou when Thou awakest shalt *despise their image*"; "But unto you who fear My Name shall the Son of Righteousness arise." Blessed thought, that we are not appointed to wrath, but to be caught up to meet the Lord in the air, and so shall we be ever with the Lord! May all who read this article be warned thereby of the nearness of the end of this dispensation of the Spirit, and prepare for the coming of the Bridegroom.

THE GOSPEL OF JOHN.

CHAPTER XIX.

NOTES OF ADDRESSES BY W. LINCOLN.

(Communicated by J. S. H.)

BEFORE I speak upon this chapter, I would utter one or two prefatory remarks. First, as we enter upon its consideration, may we in spirit take off our shoes from off our feet, for the place is in truth very holy ground. Secondly, I would remind you who He was that was thus treated. Him of whom we read—"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. . . . All things were made by Him; and without Him was not any thing made that was made. . . . And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us. . . . Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world." And, as you read this, remember that it was in love to us that He did it; not that there was anything lovely in us, but because He chose to love. We left off in the previous chapter with the choice of Barabbas instead of Christ, and the

Holy Ghost solemnly causes to be added, "Now Barabbas was a robber." Then in this 19th chapter there is *first* a continuation of the Lord's examination before Pilate; three things more as to that. *Secondly*, we have the accessories of His crucifixion. *Thirdly*, His utterances upon the Cross.

"Then Pilate therefore took Jesus, and scourged Him." Easy to read, but remember who He was. Scourging was effected by stripping the back naked, the hands were tied together, and tied low down to a pole so that the muscles were brought into prominence; then rods of knotted wire were laid upon the back.

"And the soldiers platted a crown of thorns, and put it on His head." You will wear a crown some day; you won't forget the crown He wore for you. It was a crown of thorns. When Adam sinned, God said that thorns and thistles should the ground bring forth; emblems they are, then, of the curse. And we learn from Matthew that when they put the reed or staff into His hand, and He would not grasp it, in anger they took it and smote with it upon that thorny crown. "Pilate therefore went forth again, and said unto them, Behold, I bring Him forth to you, that ye may know that I find no fault in Him. Then came Jesus forth, wearing the crown of thorns, and the purple robe. And Pilate saith unto them, Behold the man!" It is not certain who used the words, "Behold the man!" If it was Pilate, his object apparently was to move their pity; but it had the contrary effect. The Jews, roused by the sight of blood, cried, "Crucify Him." "When the chief priests therefore and officers saw Him, they cried out, saying, Crucify Him, Crucify Him. Pilate saith unto them, Take ye Him, and crucify Him: for I find no fault in Him." Thus you see that, now He was acquitted of one charge, the primary charge they must return to. "The Jews answered him, we have a law, and by our law He ought to die, because He made Himself the Son of God. When Pilate therefore heard that saying, he was the more afraid" (verse 7-8). These words seem to have affected the heathen judge, who had not cast off all fear, as the religious Jews had done; they suggested something mysterious about Him. "And went again into the judgment hall, and saith

unto Jesus, Whence art Thou? But Jesus gave him no answer." Observe that the Lord did not answer him this time. He had answered him, for there was nothing haughty about Him; but His silence was the most expressive answer now. And because we are sons of God, do not let us think as if it were a common title. And Jesus was Son of God in a very different way from that in which we are. He was the eternal, uncreated, embosomed One, the delight of the Father. Pilate nettled by His silence, says, "Speakest Thou not unto me, knowest Thou not that I have power to crucify Thee, and have power to release Thee?" But the Lord replies, "Thou couldest have no power at all against Me, except it were given thee from above: therefore he that delivered Me unto thee hath the greater sin." His eye is upon His God. And, observe further, that He, however low down He may be in the course of humiliation, was still living in the perfect consciousness of Who He really was. He measures out the relative guilt of Pilate and of Caiaphas; at home alike in judgment and in grace. And why had Caiaphas the greater sin? Because he had evidence which was accessible to him, but was not accessible to Pilate. Whence we learn that the measure of light we might have had, if we had not turned away from it, will form an important point in the Lord's judgment of us. Then, when He says, "He that delivered Me unto thee hath the greater sin," it is in reference to Pilate's words, "Dost Thou not know?" For the Lord virtually replies, "It is *you* that do not know; and well for you that you do not."

In respect of the mention of "the Pavement" in verse 13, I may explain that it was customary with the Roman governors, whenever they went as acting under the Emperor, to carry with them a tessellated pavement, which was placed around their judgment-seat as an emblem of authority. Therefore, this action implied the pronouncing of final judgment.

Secondly, let us notice the accessories of the crucifixion. "And He bearing His cross went forth." The cross is, I believe, rightly described in the way in which we usually see it in pictures. It was customary to take the sufferer to the place of execution, to put the cross into the ground before nailing to

it the victim, who was then drawn up with ropes ; a nail was now put into the left hand, and another in the right, and the feet secured either with one or with two nails. There was a ridge in the middle of the cross for the body to rest upon, lest by its weight and through its agony it should break away. Wonderful it was that He should be thus impaled, who made every star, every angel, who made you and me ; but it was in love to us. He carries it to signify His willingness to endure it ; and Isaac, as he bore the wood for the sacrifice, was thus a type of Jesus bearing His cross. So we have it in Lev. 1. 3, concerning the burnt offering, that the offerer should "offer it of his own voluntary will." It brings before us those many scriptures where the word "Himself" occurs, such as "He gave HIMSELF for me." Only it has also a practical application to ourselves.

"Shall Jesus bear His cross alone,
And all the rest go free?
No, there's a cross for every one,
A cross for you, for me."

"Whosoever doth not bear his cross, and come after Me, cannot be My disciple." We may get more at its meaning if we look at the next words, "And Jesus, bearing His cross, *went forth*," or "went out." Out of where? Look at Hebrews xiii. 12, "Jesus also, that He might sanctify the people with His own blood, suffered without the gate." Calvary was outside of Jerusalem ; Jerusalem, the religious city. He was not crucified in the city, but outside its walls. Has that any practical application to us? "Let us go forth therefore unto Him without the camp, bearing His reproach." "Unto Him"—not sect or party ; and "without the camp," that is the religious world. Are you prepared to take up the cross and to take your stand outside of the religious world? It is the lesson drawn out for us by the Holy Ghost Himself. It will involve the cross in various ways to us : sometimes take us through unpleasant weather, when we should choose the fire-side ; we shall find it, it may be, somewhat expensive at times ; it will certainly bring us into reproach, and some day possibly into persecution.

"Into a place called the place of a skull." I do not feel sure whether the Holy Ghost has a lesson to teach us from the word ; it may be

that He would show us the end of all human wisdom (1 Cor. ii. 6-8). And then it tells us that "they crucified Him, and two other with with Him, on either side one, and Jesus in the midst." The other evangelists tell us that they were robbers, as though they would try to bury the Lord in shame and ignominy. "And Jesus in the midst." The first time He is so spoken of, it is as among the doctors in the temple ; but this was not enough, you see. He found that we wanted something beside teaching ; and the next time it is on the cross. Then, by-and-by, in the book of the Revelation we read of him in the midst of the throne, and of the four living creatures, and of the twenty-four elders, a Lamb as it had been slain.

The Spirit then speaks of the title put upon the cross, and of the division of His clothes ; these became the property of the soldiers upon whom the work of execution devolved. One little expression there is upon which I would dwell. The word translated coat might seem to imply an outer garment ; but it was really an inner vest, and would appear to have been of a costly and priestly character. It reminds me of the tabernacle, with its outer covering of badger skins, whilst beneath were the fine-twined linen, the blue, purple, and scarlet. So the Lord, though not pressing His claims upon everybody, never forgot who He was, and His clothes seem rather to have testified of the same thing. Another remark as to the tabernacle. You know that the proper place for the ark was in the midst of the camp, and when Israel journeyed it should still have been in the midst of them ; but we find that the ark went first, to find out a place for Israel to rest. So with Jesus ; His proper place amongst His saints anywhere is ever in the midst, admired and worshipped of all. But He leaves that place and goes in the front, and death fastened upon Him ; "the good Shepherd giveth His life for the sheep."

As to the title upon the cross, it was a singular piece of infatuation ; the title that they denied Him all the while He was among them, they give Him when He is upon the cross. Nor is it a small thing either, or of trifling importance ; for when the world is set right, according to God, the Jews will be first among nations, and a crucified Man will be their King.

Then *thirdly*, we have the scene upon the cross, as John depicts it. "Now there stood by the cross of Jesus His mother, and His mother's sister, Mary, the wife of Cleophas, and Mary Magdalene." Then Jesus commits His mother to the care of John. It would seem as if He had taken care of her up till now. He honoured His mother. Joseph seems to have been dead many years, and probably Jesus supported her. Now He was dying and commits her to the care of His beloved disciple. The aspect of this doctrinally is that He was now finally severing Himself from His life in the flesh down here. He knows His people now only in resurrection glory, and we never hear of Mary after the descent of the Holy Ghost. "Yea, though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know we Him no more." John brings before us, first, the severing of Himself from everything down here; then follows the cry, "I thirst." We know that the cry, "My God! My God! why hast Thou forsaken Me," precedes this; but that is found only in Matthew and Mark, the official gospels, not in either of the gospels which speak of Him as Son of Man or Son of God. John skips that time of Psalm xxii.; therefore we should do well to bear the fact in mind. There is a sort of pause to be made, that terrible interval when He could say, "Thy fierce wrath goeth over Me."

SHECHEM;

OR,

REALITY AND IMITATION.

WHEN God called Abram out from his home He promised him great blessing, but gave him no charge as to his walk. In Gen. xv. we hear the Lord telling Abram that He is "his exceeding great reward" for his faithfulness. Some time after the Lord appeared to him, and reveals Himself as the "Almighty God."

Then He asks Abram to "walk before Him," and He "established" the covenant of circumcision with His servant, telling him that any "uncircumcised man-child . . . shall be cut off from his people" (Gen. xvii. 14). Abraham obeyed the Lord, for "in the self-same day" he and all the men in his house

were circumcised. This covenant was "a token betwixt" the Lord and His servants until abolished by the cross of Christ. I want to call the attention of my reader specially to Gen. xxxiv. In Abraham's case we have REALITY. We have seen the servant of the Lord obeying Him with all his heart. In Gen. xxxiv. we see Shechem (a Gentile prince) anxious to make Dinah (Jacob's daughter) his wife. Jacob's sons tell him they "cannot give their sister to one that is uncircumcised," but promise to do so if Shechem will "CONSENT to be circumcised." Mark result. "The young man deferred not to do the thing." Why? "Because he had delight in Jacob's daughter." Here lies a very solemn lesson for the children of God in the present day; for Shechems are appearing on all sides who "defer not to do the thing" to gain their own end.

When leaving this world, the Lord Jesus charged His disciples to "preach the Gospel to every creature," and commands that those who believe are to be baptised. The Lord desires His children to come out from among "the unconverted" and "be separate," giving them promises if they do so, sealing His promises with the name "Almighty," with which name He sealed his charge to Abraham.

Many saved souls hearing the commands of the Lord to be baptised, to "do this (break bread) in remembrance of Him," and "to come out from among the ungodly," obey His commands. Satan does all he can to keep them back; he fails. He is not going to be easily defeated; he persecutes. No use! Those who "hear, see, and obey" their Lord are only driven closer to Him and to one another when persecuted. Satan sees he has failed again, so he tries a crafty device to bring confusion into the Church of God; and, sad to say, he has committed, and is committing, havoc among the saints by *imitation*. Go to any spot where the Gospel is being, or has been, preached, and godly men will tell you how they suffered persecution when they first obeyed the Lord, and that "no man durst join himself unto them" but those who were real; but now there are false professors on all sides. Why? Because there are Shechems at all places who "defer not to do the thing" to carry out the designs of their own wicked hearts.

A man of God, well known to the writer, was led to see his place in the church and in the world as a Christian. His unsaved wife was so angry, she persecuted him in every way she could devise; and, as a last resource, packed her trunk, telling him she would leave him if he continued to go on in this way. The man of God remained unshaken. He lived for his God. The wife saw that her efforts to draw him back were useless, so she tried her last plan. She "deferred not to do the thing," so that she might be as one with her husband. She professed to be saved. She could give day and date, and tell the verse through which she was led to trust the Lord, and wished to be received into fellowship with the Lord's people. *Many* saints were deceived in that woman, and would gladly have received her; but her husband was not so easily deceived. He knew there was no reality, and acted faithfully. A few years passed, and the Lord honoured His servant's faithfulness by saving his wife. Now she is a godly woman, praising God for her husband's faithfulness in dealing with her. I also know other wives who acted in the same way, and, deceiving their husbands, forced their way in among the saints, and are a grief to the godly and a handle for Satan.

Is this not the case everywhere? Can the reader not recall many instances where ungodly young men "defer not to do the thing" because they "delight in" some godly young women, who refuse to marry them because they are unconverted; and how sad to have to acknowledge that many are deceived, and are led away into the homes of Shechems.

Again, sons and daughters who have been present with their parents at the Lord's table for years think it is too bad they are cut off so long; and so they profess to believe, are baptised, and seek fellowship, that they may take the reproach off their name. They are like Shechem. Their parents "bought the truth" at a high price, but *they* know nothing of the hours of conflict and of reproach.

Shechem was not exercised in the least about entering into covenant with the Almighty; he wants a wife, and *must* get her. Hear how he speaks to the men of the city! He does not reveal to them his mind regarding Dinah; but tells them the covenant will be very profitable in money matters. Ah! chil-

dren of God, servants of the "Almighty," it is time to awake. Time to look out for every Shechem seeking fellowship with the saints. Is there not a wise man among you able to judge in these cases?

When Jasson's brethren bound him and delivered him into the hands of the Philistines, the "Spirit of the Lord came mightily upon him, and the cords that were upon him became as flax burnt with fire"; but when he gave himself into their hands "he wist not that the Lord was departed from him," and so they were able to "bind him with fetters of brass" which he had not power to break.

Child of God, remember this: self is a far more dangerous enemy than carnal brethren. They may treat you badly, but their action will only drive you closer to God, and give Him the privilege of working "mightily" through you. But if you allow self to ensnare you, you bring great dishonour upon the Lord and give permission to the enemy to "rejoice" over your fall.

A. G. W.

Questions and Answers.

Replies are invited to the following questions:—

What are we to understand by Gal. iii. 20?—"Now a mediator is not a mediator of one; but God is one."

Are what are known as "Watch Meetings" on the last night of the year according to Scripture, and if so, how ought such meetings to be conducted?

What action should be taken towards one who persists in coming up to the table and breaking bread against the unanimous voice of the assembly?

Please explain 1 Peter iv. 17.

Could any reader of *The Witness* help us by precepts or examples from Scripture as to the true meaning of the term railer? If what is said be *true*, can it in any way be called railing?

QUESTION 304.—To whom did the following Scriptures refer? Matt. xvi. 28, Mark ix. 1, Luke ix. 27.

Ans. A.—The succeeding verses, viz.: Matt. xvii. 1-8, Mark ix. 2-8, Luke ix. 28-36, compared with 2 Peter i. 16-18, show conclusively that our Lord refers to "Peter, James, and John," who were then "standing here," and were "about eight days after" "with Him on the holy mount," "eye-witnesses of His majesty." Our blessed Lord, Jesus Christ, then gave these favoured disciples a glimpse of His future "power and coming," a momentary view of that glorious kingdom of the Son of Man to which He is heir, both by Divine right as

Creator (Col. i. 16), and to which he has acquired an indisputable title by His obedience unto death (Phil. ii. 6-11; Heb. ii. 5-10). Even so. Amen! Come, Lord Jesus.

G. A. S.

Ans. B.—Comparing Matt. xvi. 28, Mark ix. 1, and Luke ix. 27, we read “There be some standing here (*i.e.*, among the disciples) which shall not taste of death till they see the Son of Man coming in His kingdom,” or “till they see the kingdom of God come with power,” or “the kingdom of God.” Taken in connection with the preceding verses, it shows the firm assurance the Lord gave, that some of the disciples (not all) should live to see the firm establishment and victorious progress of His kingdom after that His sufferings unto death had been consummated.

The Transfiguration scene afterwards gave corroborative assurance to some, and is alluded to in 2 Peter i., in this respect.

A. O. M.

[**Editor's Note.**—We have received a number of replies to this question, most of them almost identical with answer **A**. We give answer **B** as containing a somewhat different thought, but we incline to accept **A** as the correct reply. We do not see that the term, “the Son of Man coming in His kingdom,” can apply in any sense whatever to the introduction of the present dispensation.]

QUESTION 305.—Is Luke vii. 29, 30, a continuance of our Lord's teaching concerning John? or, is it the Spirit of God, through Luke, telling the result of our Lord's teaching (concerning John, verses 24-28) on the people to whom he spake when the messengers of John were departed? The ground of their hearts being either prepared or otherwise by the previous reception or rejection of John's teaching concerning Christ as witnessed in their baptism.

Ans. A.—These two verses are obviously inserted by Luke as a parenthetic clause (Rotherham brackets them), in order to state the two-fold result of the Lord's testimony concerning John—“And all the people that heard (Jesus), and the publicans (tax gatherers), justified God, having been baptised with the baptism of John. But the Pharisees and lawyers *rejected the counsel of God* against (respecting) themselves, not having been baptised of him.” The characteristic opposition of the Pharisees and lawyers, here recorded, also furnishes the ground for the comparison which the Lord goes on to draw in verses 31, 32, &c.—“And the Lord said, Whereunto then shall I liken the men of this generation? and to what are they like? They are like unto children sitting in the market-place, and calling one to another and saying, We have piped unto you, and ye have not danced; we have mourned to you, and ye have not wept.”

Alford says of verses 29, 30, “The whole form of diction is historical, and not that of a discourse,” which goes to confirm the above view.

D. R.

Ans. B.—Luke vii. 29, 30, seems a statement by the Holy Spirit, through Luke, of the effect of John's ministry—leading some to *side with* the Lord Jesus, and others to become more strongly opposed. Their “justifying God,” however, is not assurance as to their

real change; it was only so far an evidence of the impression of the truth on *their minds*. A. O. M.

Ans. C.—There can be no doubt whatever but that it is the latter. John's testimony was ever to Jesus, and those who accepted that testimony and submitted to John's baptism, in true repentance, were prepared for the fuller and more precious ministry of grace by the Lord Jesus. See Matt. iii. 11, 12; John i. 28-37, iii. 28-34; Acts xix. 3-5.

G. A. S.

[**Editor's Note.**—We believe the dispensational importance of the baptism of John is very generally overlooked. His ministry was pre-eminently preparatory. He was the fore runner of the Lord, and came to prepare His way (Is. xl. 3) in the sense of Luke i. 17, *i.e.*, “to make ready a people prepared for the Lord.” This “preparing” or “making ready” of “a people” was through a call to repentance. The baptism was a “baptism of repentance” (Acts xix. 4), and must never be confounded with believer's baptism of the present dispensation.

Those who came to be baptised by John confessed thereby that as a people they were not prepared to receive Messiah, nor fit to enter Messiah's kingdom; they therefore went down into Jordan (the river of judgment) “confessing their sins” (Matt. iii. 6).

But Pharisees and lawyers could not stoop to so humiliating a position, and their refusal to submit to the Divine ordinance of that day, *viz.*, *John's Baptism*, was equivalent to the rejection of the counsel of God respecting them. It was as much as to say, “We are prepared without any confession or repentance to receive Messiah”; and thereby they condemned God, for, in justifying themselves they were denying the justice of God's verdict.

And this throws light upon the position and action of Pharisees and lawyers as recorded in all the gospels. Having refused to bow to the conviction and verdict of God, they *could not* in that condition of soul accept Christ. They said, “We see”; therefore they were blinded, and their sin remained.

Nicodemus was a “Pharisee.” Presumably, like the rest of his co-religionists, he had refused to submit to the baptism of John; hence to *him* the significance of the words, “Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the Kingdom of God.”

“That He should be made manifest unto Israel, therefore am I come baptising with water” (John i. 31). The Lord Jesus *could not be manifested* to any who had refused to take the guilty place—who had refused submission to “the baptism of repentance.” They had not the capacity to know Him; they knew Him not, they received Him not, because they were not a people “prepared for the Lord.”

Not that there was any efficacy in the water of Jordan. The preparation lay not in the act of baptism, but in the condition of soul that *justified God* and *condemned self*, and it is the same still. Never was Jesus *manifested* to one who did not take the guilty sinner's place. The stout-hearted are far from righteousness (Is. xlvi. 12).

The end of Luke vii. gives an illustration of both. The woman that was a sinner goes into the kingdom before Simon the Pharisee. Taken in connection it cannot be questioned that *she* was one of those who

had been baptised, confessing her guilt, and precious to her and all such that testimony which she must have heard—"Behold the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world." Jesus was "manifested" to her; she was one of the "people prepared for the Lord." To Simon He was only a prophet, and now Simon doubts if He is *even that*, seeing He allowed such a character to touch Him.

The whole subject is exceedingly interesting, and will repay searching.]

FRIENDLY SOCIETIES.

QUESTION 306.—Is it right for a Christian to be in a friendly society, such as Free Gardeners, Foresters, Oddfellows, or to be in a funeral society, making a bargain for a coffin?

Ans. A.—In replying to the above question, I would say, Is it an act of obedience or disobedience for a Christian to belong to any of the above? Let the Word of God answer. James iv., verse 4; 1 John ii., verses 15, 16, and 17; and 2 Corinthians vi., verses 17 and 18.

R. G.

Ans. B.—Is not 2 Cor. vi. 14-18, "Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers," &c., enough to settle the question of a Christian's connection with such societies as the first three named? Are they not composed for the most part of unbelievers? Could a Christian glorify God in them? Would not active participation in them involve the sinking of testimony, consequent unfaithfulness to the Lord and to souls, and detriment to the spiritual life? Surely an evening spent at "the lodge" would not tend to foster communion with God. Do we find in the New Testament believers anywhere connected with "societies" outside the church of God?

As to the funeral society, perhaps if some dear brethren would put in the savings bank what they

spend on tobacco and beer, and other things as useless, the "coffin" (if needed another day) might be paid for without the society's aid, and without falling as a crushing weight on the poor widow after the breadwinner is gone.

D. R.

Ans. C.—Alas! that any who name the name of the Lord can raise such a question. Such things may be right and prudent for the men of this world, who do not know and believe the love that God hath to us, but a Christian is one who does—who died and is risen with Christ; and that which has taken us out of the region of legal ordinances, has also delivered us from all such merely human expedencies. "If ye have died with Christ from the elements of the world, why as though alive in the world, are ye subject to ordinances" (Col. ii. 20). How can a dead or risen man be a member of a friendly or any other society, whose existence implies that its members are alive in this world.

Is not "the living God" enough for us? Is not "all fulness in Christ" for us?

Or, has our God and Father forgotten our need, that we are left to the miserable resources of the world, whose friendship is enmity against God? Will He who delivered up His own Son for me, be glorified in my joining hands with those who reject Him, in order to provide for some calamity for which He has not provided.

Can I be really "waiting for His Son from heaven," catching for "the bright and morning star," and at the same time be making a bargain for a coffin! in an association which denies Him? Surely, if we knew anything of the power of the cross and resurrection of Christ, these questions could have no place. "We are not of the night nor of darkness, therefore let us not sleep as do others, but let us watch and be sober" (1 Thess. v. 5).

Read also 2 Cor. vi. 14-18, 1 Tim. iv. 9, 10. G. A. S.

EDITOR'S NOTE.

WITH this number we complete the fourteenth year of *The Witness*, and desire to record our thanks to the God of all grace for permitting us so long to continue this service.

It has been our endeavour to present the truth in its variety and breadth with definiteness and moderation, keeping back nothing that we deemed to be profitable, and yet seeking to present it in such a spirit as to give no unnecessary offence to any.

That much failure attaches to our efforts we are deeply conscious, and also that difficulties seem to increase every year; but we would not be deterred by either conscious failure or future difficulty from persevering in the work that is laid upon us.

We earnestly seek remembrance in prayer by all who are interested in this department of the work of the Lord.

We would again impress upon those who are competent to minister the Word with the pen, their privilege and responsibility to help in this work, and to do it diligently and with all the ability that God has given.

Conciseness is essential in all papers for such a periodical. We grieve to see the amount of time and labour sometimes lost chiefly because the articles are far beyond the limits of the space at our disposal.

Short, pointed, well-considered, and clearly-expressed papers are invaluable. We seek still the help of our brethren in replying to Questions. The response given so far has been very encouraging, and we desire to thank each one who has helped us in this way.

We refer our readers to the publisher's notice regarding probable contents of next year's issue, and also as to back numbers being sent *gratis* to any who desire to further the circulation of *The Witness* by distributing them among Christian friends.

That God in all things may be glorified, and His saints edified, sanctified, and comforted, is our earnest prayer.—ED.