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EDITED BY

JOHN R. CALDWELL.

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THE WITNESS:

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ON DISCIPLINE IN THE ASSEMBLY.

FROM NOTES OF AN ADDRESS BY J. R. C.

IT is the Spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing" (John vi. 63). "Though we walk in the flesh, we do not war after the flesh: (for the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds;) casting down imaginations (or reasonings), and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ" (2 Cor. x. 3).

My desire to-night is to try to help you into the knowledge of God's mind concerning the whole subject of discipline in the Church, because I believe that a great deal of what has taken place here, causing so much sorrow (as well as of what has happened many other places beside), arises from ignorance of the truth concerning such things.

The subject is great, and I ask you to be patient searchers of the Scriptures to-night; for I desire to let the Word of God be heard, and to say as little as possible myself.

One thing is strongly impressed upon me, and that increasingly for some time, viz., that nothing can be more abominable in the sight of God than the actings of the carnal mind in Divine matters. In other words, God will not be served by the flesh. God will blow upon it, blast it, confound it, and it is for His glory so to do. Carnal minds, unbroken spirits, proud, self-willed hearts dealing with the things of God, can result in nothing but bitterness, failure, dishonour, the ruin of all testimony, everything to be ashamed of before God. In speaking thus I am aiming at no side or party. I feel it is as much for myself as for

any one here. But let this be borne in mind, that whenever in dealing with any matter of trouble or difficulty *temper gets up*, it shows unmistakably that the flesh is at work! "The wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God." If any man loses his temper in dealing with the things of God, better far that he should go home to his knees and shut his mouth until he has learned to control himself. "He that hath no rule over his own spirit is like a city that is broken down, and without walls" (Prov. xxv. 28). "He that is slow to anger is better than the mighty; and he that ruleth his spirit than he that taketh a city" (Prov. xvi. 32).

I believe that in this we have greatly failed. In nearly all the assembly troubles and divisions that I have had to do with I could see as clear as noonday that generally on both sides of the questions at issue the flesh had been at work; temper had been up; the element of bitterness and evil feeling had come in and God was thrust out.

In such circumstances there can be no true *waiting upon God*; so He leaves those who think they can get on without Him to find out their ignorance, their weakness, their helplessness, until they learn by bitter experience that they can't get on without God.

Assembly troubles have an element of suffering in them which to sensitive natures is equalled by nothing else. But whatever the sorrow, the trouble, the shame, the bitterness of soul—even though, as in some cases, it has driven men and women to the mad-house—I believe it will all result in good and in glory to God if it only teaches us that we cannot handle the things of God in the flesh, that we cannot carry on the service and testimony of God without God Himself. This is one sense in which that proverb may be proved, "Out of

the eater came forth meat; out of the strong came forth sweetness." Out of the very sorrows that corrode our life, out of the very power that seems to fight against God to the overthrow of His truth, there may come real, solid, lasting blessing to our souls if only we are rightly exercised before Him.

Thus there is hope in God, although one may discern nothing but black despair as they look round about upon man and man's ways.

Notice, then, in the first place, that in the Church of God there are two classes of discipline. For the sake of distinction I might call them "*internal*" and "*external*." *Discipline* is a much misunderstood word. Usually amongst believers it is applied to "putting out of fellowship." This is a great mistake. The word in the original signifies *the parental dealing with the child*. It includes instruction, warning, rebuke, correction, patience, chastening—it includes every species of dealing which answers to the ways of a prudent parent with his child—and leaves as a final thing, a last resort, the "putting away from among yourselves" of 1 Cor. v.

I will only refer to one or two scriptures as illustrating "*internal discipline*." 1 Thess. v. 12—"And we beseech you, brethren, to know them which labour among you, and are over you in the Lord, and admonish you; and to esteem them very highly in love for their work's sake. And be at peace among yourselves."

"Now we exhort you, brethren" [the "you" here probably has special reference to those who were "over them in the Lord," certainly the work enjoined in the following words is most fitted for such], "warn them that are unruly, comfort the feeble-minded, support the weak, be patient toward all."

Now, all this is "*discipline*"—*internal discipline*. Not putting out of the fellowship, but dealing with those who are "*within*" in order that the fellowship of the Spirit may be maintained.

See also Titus iii. 10—"A man that is an heretic (or a sectarian man) after the first and second admonition reject." Here is a *first* warning; then, doubtless, a patient waiting upon God to manifest its effect. If no restoration to godly ways, a *second* warning, with all the instructing in meekness (2 Tim. ii.

25) that would necessarily accompany such warnings; and all this with a view to restoration before the final step of "rejection" comes into force.

I would also refer to 2 Thess. iii. 14—"And if any man obey not our word by this epistle, note that man, and have no company (or associate not) with him, that he may be ashamed. Yet count him not as an enemy (see Acts xiii. 10, Phil. iii. 18), but admonish him as a brother." There is a difference between this passage and Matt. xviii. 17, where it says, "Let him be to thee as an heathen man and a publican." I have not been able to see (though some hold it) that this passage involves exclusion from the fellowship of the assembly; I think there are very strong reasons for regarding it as an instance of *internal discipline*. Although inside the house of God there may be some over whose conscience the apostolic word has so little power that they practically, in certain matters of their individual walk and behaviour, do not yield obedience to it. If so, then there comes the instructing, the admonishing, the warning, perhaps even the rebuking before all of 1 Tim. v. 20; then, to give effect to such discipline, the refusal to associate in private life with such a one, according to the passage before us. And whilst thus in a measure separated from, yet is he not (as in Matt. xviii.) to be regarded as one of the enemies of, the Lord; but to be still admonished "*as a brother*."

This may seem hard dealing, and some under the plea of *love* may set this instruction at defiance and go hand in hand with one who "obeys not the word," as if nothing was amiss; but never let it be forgotten that true love will act out the word of God. "This is the love of God, that we keep His commandments" (1 John v. 2, 3). Such discipline is often required in the family. One of the children has been disobedient: the others are told not to associate with him, not to play with him, until he confesses his fault. He is still one of the family, and in the house, and gets his meals as regularly as the rest; but he is "*under discipline*," and it is easy to see how foolish and wicked and cruel to the erring one it would be for the other children under the plea of "*kindness*" to set aside the discipline enjoined by the parent

So, in 2 Thess. iii., he is "a brother" and to be counted and owned as such, but one who ought to be ashamed of his ways and who ought to be made to feel it.

If God were counted upon in all such "internal discipline," how often might we be saved from the necessity of acting out that awfully solemn last resort about which God has given such definite instruction.

(*To be continued.*)

PROPHETIC PAPERS. No. 13.

THE BOOK OF THE REVELATION.—*Continued.*
CHAPTER IV.

BY F. C. BLAND.

THE "μετὰ ταῦτα"; or, "the things which shall be after" the things narrated in chaps. ii. and iii.

The divisions of the book of the Revelation are so definitely arranged for us in the 19th verse of the first chapter, that we need not stop to dwell upon them.

A door is opened in heaven, and the first voice which the apostle hears (or I suppose we might read it as the voice which he had previously heard, chap. i. 10), speaks to him.

The first thing he sees is a "throne," and, afterwards, "thrones." A rainbow is seen round about the throne, and "a sea of glass like unto crystal before it." This is the third place where we are told in Scripture that a rainbow is seen. 1st, in Noah's days, after the flood; 2nd, in Ezekiel's time, after Israel's captivity; and 3rd, John sees it here just before the judgments are poured out on the earth. But in each case it is a pledge of God's covenant with His elect, and an assurance here that God is not going to destroy, but to restore; and, as has been remarked by another, these three occasions have a voice for us, reminding us that we should be Noahs in the presence of an apostate world; as Ezekiels in the midst of an apostate people; and like John, as those to whom God can communicate His counsels in view of impending judgment.

The thrones on which the elders sit are probably those referred to in Daniel vii. 9, and the elders, I think, represent all the redeemed of every previous dispensation; the

living and the sleeping saints who are caught up to be with the Lord, and who are here seen seated above, before the seals are opened or the judgments are poured out on the world. A remnant being seen all through the book as being preserved in the midst of the judgments, as Noah was in the ark during the days of the flood, or as Israel was in the land of Goshen while God's plagues were poured out upon Egypt.

The four "ζῶα" or "living ones," who have the same characteristics as the cherubim mentioned elsewhere in scripture, are seen all through this book as having part in the executive judgment of God. Who they are, or whether they are redeemed beings, we are not told; but they appear to be those to whom the executive power of God is committed in these times.

They and the four-and-twenty elders celebrate God's rights and glories as Creator, and their adoration does not seem to go beyond this in this chapter.

In chap. v. we are taken back to the book of Daniel, chap. xii. 4-9, where, as we remarked before, the book of God's counsels is sealed up until the time of the end.

Two thousand and four hundred years have run their course since the command was given to Daniel to seal the book, and still it awaits its opening as a fact, though we are told here who has the title to open it; and in chap. vi. we are told what the book contains. And, in passing, I would remark here on the utterance of the apostle, "I wept much," because "no one was found worthy to open the book, neither to look thereon." What an entering in spirit and in heart this shows into all that concerns the counsels of God and the rights of Christ! We read in the book of Ezekiel, chap. ix., that there were those found who sighed and cried for the abominations that were done in Israel, and how God took note of them and put a mark upon their foreheads; and we read in Malachi that there were in the midst of Israel's apostacy those who "loved the Lord, and spake often one to another," and the Lord hearkened and heard, and opened His Book of remembrance concerning them. Are there any tears shed now on account of the condition of things around us, and because of the little power

that we have to stem the torrent of evil that is coming in like a flood both on the Church and world?

The description of the Lord, in verse 3, as the "Lion of the tribe of Judah," fixes at once the actings which are about to take place as being in connection with the Jewish people, and not with the Church which is His body.

Christ was the "offspring" of David as to His genealogical descent. He was "the root" of David in connection with His rights as King of Israel.

The apostle turns to see the lion; but instead of a lion he sees a "lamb as it had been slain. And we may note that there is only one title for Him "who opens the Book," who judges, who conquers, and who reigns, "The Lamb."

The four living creatures, and the four and twenty elders, fall down and worship Him, having harps and golden vials full of odours; and they sing "a new song," an expression which I think always implies redemption or deliverance, whether met with in the Psalms or here. And as in chap. 4 God's rights as Creator are celebrated, here it is the rights of the Lamb as Redeemer which are sung. The corrected reading of *verse 10 would make it appear that those in heaven who are seated on thrones, after singing the song of their own redemption, look down and contemplate the redeemed nation on earth, and say, "Thou hast made *them* a kingdom and priests unto our God, and they *reign on the earth.*"

After this all worthiness is ascribed to the Lamb to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing; and every creature in heaven, earth, and sea responds and takes up the strain, to Him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb. And the four living creatures, and the four and twenty elders seal it with their Amen, and worship Him that liveth for ever and ever.

We now come to the opening of the seals: the living creatures, in each case of the first four, giving the call to the executors of God's judgments to come forth. It should be read merely "Come," the word "see" not being in the original in the oldest MSS.

In answer to the calls which follow the opening of the first four seals, four horses come forth as the executors of God's judgments, and before we go on to speak of this, I would ask my hearers to open the Gospel of Matthew at the 24th chapter, and compare as we go along the Lord's answers to the disciples' questions as to "what were to be the signs of His coming, and of the end of the age," with the opening of these seals in the 6th and 7th chaps. of the book of the Revelation.

In the last verses of Matthew xxiii. the Lord takes leave of Jerusalem, and tells the Jews that they are not to see Him again until they shall say, "Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord," a time, as has been remarked in a previous lecture, which synchronizes with the end of the 69th week of Daniel's prophecies, when the Messiah is cut off and has nothing.

The disciples ask the Lord to give them some further prophetic teaching, putting three questions to Him. The first, which is about the destruction of the temple, He does not reply to, but directs His answer to the things which were to be the signs of His coming, and of the end of the age; and He gives the disciples, in *plain language*, a history of the events which is given in *symbolic language* to the apostle John in Rev. vi. And both give an epitome of the events that are to occur in the 7th heptad of Daniel; or, in other words, in the last seven years of this dispensation, ending with the Son of Man sitting upon the throne of His glory (chap. xxv. 3).

The Lord begins by telling them that many should come in His name, saying, "I am Christ"; and if we turn to Rev. vi., we find a rider on a white horse, some mighty conqueror who will claim the throne of the world which rightly belongs to Christ. And it will be noted that there is a *difference* in the description of this rider on a white horse and the one mentioned in chap. xix., for it is added of the last that "in righteousness he doth judge and make war," a moral attribute that is omitted here.

The next thing we read in Matt. xxiv. 6, is that "there shall be wars and rumours of wars"; and when the second seal is opened (Rev. vi. 4), a red horse is seen to come forth

* Tregelles on Book of Revelation.

in answer to the call of the second living creature, and to him was given power "to take peace from the earth." The next thing we read of in Matthew is that there shall be "famines in divers places"; and when the third seal is opened, a rider on a black horse is seen selling a measure of wheat for a Roman penny, and three measures of barley for a penny, while the oil and the wine are not touched, indicating that while the necessaries of life for the poor are sold by measure, the luxuries of the rich are to be protected.

Next in Matthew come pestilences, and corresponding to this is seen a rider on a pale horse (when the fourth seal is opened), and death and the grave follow him. After these come persecutions "for His name sake," and in Rev. vi. 9, when the fifth seal is opened, there are seen "under the altar the souls of those who were slain for the Word of God, and for the testimony which they held." Then in verse 29 of Matt. xxiv. we read, that in those days the sun should be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars should fall from heaven; and in Rev. vi., when the sixth seal is opened, the sun becomes as sackcloth of hair, and the moon becomes as blood, and the stars fall from heaven.

"HE LED THEM TO SAMARIA."

"AND when they came down to him, Elisha prayed unto THE LORD, and said, Smite this people, I pray thee, with blindness. And He smote them with blindness according to the word of Elisha. And Elisha said unto them, This is not the way, neither is this the city: follow me, and I will bring you to the man whom ye seek. But he led them to Samaria" (2 Kings vi. 18, 19.)

Many a devout believer, and many an earnest inquirer into Scriptural truth, has been stumbled by the record of what appears to be the falsehood by which the prophet misled those who sought his life. Indeed, hardly any one seems to have raised the question whether, after all, there was any untruth in the case. Commentators have admitted that Elisha lied unto the men, and have endeavoured, more or less unsuccessfully, to justify

or excuse his so doing. More serious still, the translators of the Authorised Version, by rendering the last clause of verse 19, "BUT he led them to Samaria," have endorsed this view of Elisha's action; for surely the use of the word "but" implies a contradiction between what he promised to do and what he really did.

Now, while the scriptures written by the prophets and apostles are God-breathed, we know that the prophets and apostles themselves were neither inspired in all their utterances nor infallible in all their actions. In other words, that kind of inspiration which excludes all mixture of error is an attribute of THE BOOK, and not of the men who wrote it, or who are described in it. Indeed, one merit of the Book is that it records the sins and backslidings of the men without gloss or extenuation, no matter how righteous and holy may have been their ordinary manner of life. But in the narrative before us, as it is commonly understood, we are confronted, not with a simple case of failure in the life of a servant of God, but with a moral difficulty of the first magnitude. This will appear from the following considerations:—

1st. If Elisha denied his own identity, and if his statements to the Syrians concerning the place where he then was and the person unto whom he was about to conduct them were misleading, then, even while his heart was lifted up in prayer, his lips were guilty of a triple falsehood.

2nd. The falsehood was needless; it served no useful purpose, seeing that Jehovah had already smitten the Syrians with blindness, or, as Newberry renders the word, *with delusions*, "according to the word of Elisha."

3rd. Jehovah must have connived at and condoned his offence, for He wrought, at this time, by means of Elisha, a miracle, the like of which has not been seen before or since; and we do not read that He reproved the prophet, directly or indirectly, for what had been said by him.

And did Elisha lie? I think the consequences of believing that he did are so grave that we might well hesitate to admit such a belief, even if we saw no other way to interpret the story as it stands in our English Bible.

The key to the true interpretation of Elisha's

words is, however, furnished by the Revised Version, and it turns upon the change of one little word of three letters. In 2 Kings vi. 19, R.V., we find, "AND he led them to Samaria." The substitution of "and" for "but" does away with the idea of a contradiction, and sends us back to the earlier part of the chapter for an explanation of what Elisha really promised to do. What does the beginning of the chapter tell us?

That (verse 8) the king of Syria warred against Israel, and encamped in various places seeking to draw the king of Israel into an ambushade. Elisha is enabled to disconcert the plans of the enemy and save Jehoram from being taken by surprise, saying, "Beware that thou pass not such a place; for thither the Syrians are coming down." This happened "not once, nor twice," so that Benhadad came to the conclusion that he was being betrayed by one of his own officers. Having been informed, however, that his repeated disappointments were due to Elisha the prophet, he sends to take him prisoner, caring nothing for these displays of Divine wisdom and power—looking at them merely as obstacles to be dexterously overcome—and not considering that Jehovah could as easily disclose this design to His prophet as the other plans he had formed. A great host comes by night to Dothan—the very place where Joseph was seized and sold by his brethren (Gen. xxxvii. 17)—and compass the city about, intending, next day, to demand the surrender of Elisha.

In the early morning God works, in answer to the prayer of the prophet, two miracles—the young man's eyes are opened so that he sees the angelic guard, invisible to others, between Elisha and the Syrians; while the miracle is reversed in respect of the latter, who, being smitten with delusions (compare Gen. xix. 11), become unable to see what is obvious to all except themselves. In this state they were in the power of Elisha, so that he had no occasion to tell them an untruth. But he offers to conduct them to the man whom they were seeking.

Now, the capture of Elisha was only intended as a means toward the capture of the king, so that Elisha had a perfect right to refuse to consider himself as the man whom they were seeking. Nor was this a mental

reservation on his part. There is nothing in the story that would lead us to doubt that the Syrians were quite aware of who was speaking to them. He used no subterfuge in saying, "Follow me, and I will bring you to the man whom ye seek." He promised to lead them to the king of Israel, and to the king of Israel he led them (ver. 21). But they, being seized with a kind of Divine frenzy, are deprived of the proper use of their eyes, without being sensible of their own incapacity. They imagine that the prophet is about to betray the king into their hands, and they allow themselves to be led blindly through the gates of a strange city into the midst of a hostile army. Therein consists the miracle.

Thus the words of Jehovah's prophet were true words, and this scripture must not be quoted, as it sometimes is, as a proof that it is lawful to deceive our enemies in order to our own preservation. A. P. M.

PRAYER.

HOW much time, brother, do you give to prayer? The question is not how much time do you pass upon your knees, nor how much time do you spend in saying prayers, but how much time do you give to thinking of God, to communing with God, to pleading with God? Five minutes, ten minutes, twenty minutes, out of the twenty-four hours that make up the day? It might be well to place your watch beside you when alone with God, and learn what your habit is concerning real, Scriptural prayer.

The sinless Saviour who ascended from Calvary to the right hand of the Majesty on High, and "ever liveth to make intercession" for us, was once a Man on earth. It is said of Him on a certain occasion, when wearied with work after "the sun did set," that, "rising up a great while before day, He went out, and departed into a solitary place, and there prayed" (Mark i. 35). On another occasion we are told that "He went out into a mountain to pray, and continued all night in prayer to God" (Luke vi. 12). Have you even once risen up a great while before day, and prayed in a solitary place? Have you even once continued all night in prayer to God?

Look where we will, either through the Bible, or through the history of the church, the man of prayer is the man of power. It is not intellect that is wanted, nor culture, nor social position, nor money, to make a Christian an efficient witness and worker for the Master, but prayer, importunate prayer. One of whom the risen Jesus can say, as He said of Saul of Tarsus, "Behold, he prayeth" (Acts ix. 11), is receiving the best preparation that is possible for the service of the Lord will own, a preparation without which college and theological seminary, and even the study of the Bible, are utterly valueless.

Has He not taught us "that men ought always to pray, and not to faint"? (Luke xviii. 1). Has He not said, "Watch ye therefore, and pray always"? (Luke xxi. 36). Has not the Holy Ghost caused it to be written, "Continuing instant in prayer" (Rom. xii. 12); "Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit" (Eph. vi. 18); "In every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God" (Phil. iv. 6); "Continue in prayer, and watch in the same with thanksgiving" (Col. iv. 2); "Pray without ceasing" (1 Thess. v. 17)? If these positive precepts, that run all through the Bible, are disregarded, how can blessing be expected, and how can a Christian escape the anxiety, and care, and worry, and worldliness, and assaults of Satan and false doctrines, that make miserable and useless the lives of so many professing believers?

He who prays most is not only the most mighty, but he is the most calm, the most contented, the most peaceful amid the trials and sorrows of earth, because he instantly sees the hand of God in each event of life, and walks in such closeness of fellowship with Him, that no long and painful journey must be taken to be sheltered in a Father's bosom, soothed with a Saviour's sympathy, and guided by an abiding Holy Spirit. All benedictions in one, all strength, all safety, all consolation, all consecration, are found in frequent, fervent, and secret prayer. From Adam's day until now the happy and the honoured servants of the Lord have been, and are, and will be to the end, men of prayer. What, then, is said in the inspired Word about this blessed but neglected privilege?

First, we must pray in faith. "All things whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive" (Matt. xxi. 22). "Let him ask in faith, nothing wavering" (Jas. i. 6).

Second, we must desire the things we seek. "Therefore I say unto you, What things soever ye desire when ye pray, believe that ye receive them [or as the Revised has it, Believe that ye HAVE received them], and ye shall have them" (Mark xi. 24).

Third, we must be persistent. "I say unto you, Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you" (Luke xi. 9). Elijah "prayed earnestly [he prayed in prayer] that it might not rain" (Jas. v. 17).

Fourth, we must pray in Jesus' name, knowing our oneness with Him. "Whatsoever ye shall ask in My name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If ye shall ask any thing in My name, I will do it" (John xiv. 13, 14).

Fifth, we must pray in the Spirit. "God hath sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father" (Gal. iv. 6). "Praying in the Holy Ghost" (Jude 20).

Sixth, we must pray as obedient children. "Whatsoever we ask, we receive of Him, because we keep His commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in His sight. And this is His commandment, That we should believe on the name of His Son Jesus Christ, and love one another, as He gave us commandment" (1 John iii. 22, 23).

Seventh, we must ask for that which is according to His will. "This is the confidence that we have in Him, that, if we ask any thing according to His will, He heareth us. And if we know that He hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of Him" (1 John v. 14, 15).

But it is not instruction Christians so much need, as it is the spirit of prayer that will lead them to obey the Divine command, "Arise, cry out in the night; in the beginning of the watches pour out thine heart like water before the Lord" (Lam. ii. 19). As Bishop Hall well says, "It is not the *rhetoric* of our prayers, how eloquent they be; nor the *geometry* of our prayers, how long they be; nor the *music* of our prayers, how sweet our voices may be; nor the *logic* of our prayers, how argumentative

they may be, which God cares for. *Fervency of spirit* is that which availeth much." If you would be happy, Pray. If you would be humble, Pray. If you would be holy, Pray. If you would be useful, Pray. If you would meet the Lord with His approval, Pray.

Extract from *The Truth*.

ETERNAL LIFE.

"**E**TERNAL LIFE" is a phrase that is not found in the Old Testament, though we meet with the equivalent phrases, "life for evermore," "everlasting life," and "length of days for ever and ever," once each (Ps. xxi. 4, cxxxiii. 3, Dan. xii. 2).

When we come to the New Testament, we find it occurs no fewer than *fourty-four* times, exclusive of 1 Tim. vi. 19, which, in the R.V., is rendered "the life which is life indeed."

On examination we find the apostle John, in his gospel and first epistle, makes use of the term twenty-three times; and out of the seventeen times we find it in the gospel it was once used by the Baptist and once by Peter, and the remaining fifteen times by our Lord Himself.

All this is very significant, and furnishes ground for saying that eternal life is essentially a New Testament doctrine—that it is largely the revelation of the Lord Jesus Christ—and that the teaching of the apostle John on this subject, in his first epistle, is simply an echo of the Master's voice.

For the sake of clearness we propose to examine this subject in the following order:—

1. The Properties of Eternal Life.
2. The Promise of Eternal Life.
3. The Proclamation of Eternal Life.
4. The Presentation of Eternal Life.
5. The Possession of Eternal Life.
6. The Prospects of Eternal Life.

I. THE PROPERTIES OF ETERNAL LIFE.

That is, its nature. It will hardly be necessary to say that it is altogether different from natural life, which at death returns to its bestower: the body returns to dust as it was, and the spirit to God who gave it.

It just as widely differs from the life which Adam enjoyed before he sinned; for whatever was the nature of the life of primeval man,

one thing is certain, it was not eternal. For the life possessed by the first man in a state of innocence was a forfeitable one, and was held on the precarious tenure of obedience to a negative command. This life he lost the very day he transgressed the commandment; for God had said, "In the day thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die"; and die he did, and was cast out of Eden.

Neither is it a kind of angelic life; for just as Edenic life was a forfeitable one, and those who lost it were cast out of the garden, so the angels which kept not their own principality forfeited their life and place, and were cast out of heaven into pits of darkness, to be kept for the judgment of the great day.

Startling to some it may seem, yet it is nevertheless true, that eternal life is life of a far higher type than angelic, and that the weakest and poorest believer in God enjoys a life that neither angel nor archangel possesses.

Again, eternal life is not mere existence in a state of felicity with God in heaven.

Lost souls, fallen angels, demons, and the devil, all have a never-ending existence; but, of course, they do not possess this life; they exist apart from it; they have a derived existence which will be endless in its duration. It is often confounded with incorruptibility, though the two are as different as cause and effect, and stand in the same relation one to the other. Incorruptibility is never applied to the spirit or soul of the believer, but always to the resurrection body. It depends upon the possession of eternal life. Life is the cause, and the other is the outcome. The former belongs to the spiritual part of the saved, and is a present possession, whilst the latter is related to the bodily part, and is a hope that can only find its full realisation at the resurrection of the just.

Mark the order—life first, and then incorruptibility (2 Tim. i. 10), a glorious body state beyond death.

Eternal life is not immortality, though not one Christian in a thousand sees this. The true word for immortality only occurs three times in Scripture. In the following passage it is applied to the Lord Jesus Christ: "The only Potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords; *who only hath immortality*, dwelling in light unapproachable" (1 Tim. vi. 15, 16).

He alone hath essential, inherent, underived immortality, *i.e.*, deathlessness—a non-liability to die. In the remaining passages it is used of those who will be *alive* at the coming of the Lord—those who are His—and will be changed into a state of deathlessness without dying. “Behold, I show you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and *WE SHALL BE CHANGED*. For this corruptible (the dead body) must put on incorruption, and this mortal (liable to death) must put on *immortality* (deathlessness). So when this corruptible (dead) shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal (liable to death) shall have put on *immortality* (deathlessness), then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory” (1 Cor. xv. 51-54).

It will at once be apparent that at the appearing of the Lord in the air for His saints of every age, those who have been sleeping will be raised to an incorruptible body state, whilst those who are living will be changed in an instant of time, without dying, and enter upon an immortal body state. Both classes being as to their bodies eternally immortal and incorruptible. This is the only immortality that the Revelation of God knows anything about.

It does not belong to all men; it belongs inherently to Christ, and will be conferred upon those who will be alive at His coming. It is not, therefore, eternal life any more than incorruptibility, but depends upon the prior possession of it. This is the “living hope”—on its subjective side—to pass into a post-mortal state without experiencing weakness, pain, and dissolution of the body.

But you may, perhaps, be saying, “But all this is merely negative; will you please to tell us what you believe this life to be?” We, in part, for reasons already adduced, believe it to be life out of heaven—from God—procured by, and treasured up in Christ (who is the Eternal Life) for believing sinners; it is imparted to such by the Spirit through the incorruptible seed of the Word. A life that is neither peccable nor forfeitable, such as sin cannot corrupt, time destroy, death annul, or eternity wear out.

It is a germinal principle, “His seed,” imparted to the spirit, and which produces fruit unto holiness—a principle having spiritual properties, and consequently called “spirit.” In its origin and nature, as we have already seen, it is Divine, and hence it is termed “a Divine nature, though not the incommunicable essence of Deity.

With respect to its locale in the tripartite nature of man, it is denominated the “inner man,” dwelling in his higher part, in some way analogous to the symbol of Jehovah’s presence abiding in the inner shrine of the tabernacle in the wilderness. It is *life* in the pregnant sense, as opposed to spiritual and eternal death, the state and doom of the merely natural man.

In its final issue it is a life beyond the touch or power of sin with its defilement—out of the reach of every untoward circumstance—on the other side of the grave, with its gloom, with no possibility of judgment before it. It is far beyond the bounds of time—a life with God, in holiness, bliss, and eternal triumph. This is “the life which is life indeed.”

2. THE PROMISE OF ETERNAL LIFE.

There are two different ways of exploring a river in order to become acquainted with its various features. You may begin at its confluence with the sea, and follow it until you reach its source in the mountain rill that trickles out of the rock. Or you may commence there and trace it through all its windings, down dark dell, deep ravine, damp mead, and broad valley, until you lose all trace of it in the vast ocean beyond.

In a precisely similar way you may follow certain truths through God’s Word; beginning in eternity, and tracking them through time into the eternity of the future. The truth before us is a case in point. We can, in the writings of the apostle of the Gentiles, trace it from eternity to eternity.

Paul, in his epistle to Titus, shows that it was the subject of promise before eternity began to be measured out as time. “In hope of eternal life, which God, who cannot lie, promised before times eternal” (Titus i. 1).

Thus we see that God, “who cannot lie,” by reason of what has been aptly termed “the moral inability of perfect holiness,” gave to

the Son of His love the promise of eternal life for as many as should, by faith in Him, become heirs of the promise. This, of course, contingent upon His becoming flesh, and bearing sin in His own body on the tree of suffering, pain, and death. This, in the fulness of time, He gladly and willingly undertook for those who should hereafter believe on His name. "For known unto God are all His works, from the beginning of the world." This accords with His own words, addressed to the Father on the night of His betrayal: "As Thou hast given Him authority over all flesh, that He should give eternal life to as many as Thou hast given Him" (John xvii. 2).

That which was the subject of promise so early was not made known unto men until the appearing of the Lord Jesus. Though, we doubt not, the godly seed of all ages before He came possessed life, yet we fail to see that they knew it, except as a hope; for the simple reason, that it was not then made the subject of revelation. The most clear-visioned of the Old Testament believers in God did not get beyond a hope of life in the future. "Thou wilt show me the path of life: in Thy presence is fulness of joy; at Thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore" (Ps. xvi. 11).

In tracing the promise in its earthward course, the next step is in 2 Tim. i. 9, 10, which passage we must quote in full. "God, who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ before times eternal, but hath now been manifested by the appearing of our Saviour Christ Jesus, *who abolished death, and brought life and incorruptibility to light through the gospel.*" In this most pregnant scripture the Lord is represented as accomplishing three things—by His dying, disannulling death; by His teaching and works bringing life to light; and by His death and subsequent resurrection, incorruptibility, a glorious body-state in the life to come—before the gaze of men.

Though Job, Jacob, David, Isaiah, Daniel, and others, as we find from their utterances, all lived and died in the hope of resurrection and of life beyond, yet it was not fully brought to light as a thing of reality until Christ became, by rising from among the dead, the

first fruits of them who are sleeping. Then, and not till then, was there a visible manifestation of the fulfilment of the promise given in eternity by the Father to the Son. It was not the doctrine merely of life and incorruptibility, which before had been obscure, that was revealed, but the thing itself, in the person of the risen Lord. It was more than a proclamation of life, it was a manifestation of it—something the disciples could look upon and touch. This they did at the invitation of the Life, who said to them, "Handle Me and see, for a spirit hath not flesh and bones as ye see Me have." It was of this which the apostle wrote when he said, "Which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the Word of Life" (1 John i. 1).

They saw Him as the manifested life from among the dead, and beheld in Him the complete fulfilment of the Divine promise; so that looking upon Him they might truly have said, "This is the promise that He promised us—Eternal Life."

The promise as a doctrine was unfolded in His teaching, as we shall see; but the promise as a thing of reality was only seen in Him of the thorn-lacerated brow, nail-torn hands and feet, and spear-pierced side; and up to the time of its manifestation sin had reigned unto death, whilst from that time grace reigned through righteousness unto life eternal (Rom v. 21).

(To be continued).

WITNESS.

CHRIST was in the world as a Witness for God. "Behold, I have given Him for a Witness to the peoples (not *people*—Jews only), a leader and commander to the peoples" (Isaiah lv. 4). He was a faithful and true Witness (Rev. iii. 14), speaking what He knew, and testifying what He had seen (John iii. 11). "What He hath seen and heard, of that He beareth witness." He declared by lip and life the character of God: "I have made known unto them Thy name" (John xvii. 26), bearing clear, strong testimony to the righteousness and compassion of the Father. John learned his message from the one in whose bosom he lay: God is light, and God is love.

God bore witness to Christ—through John the Baptist, by His Spirit, by audible voice, by the signs and wonders that showed forth themselves in Him, and by the resurrection. "He hath borne witness concerning His Son."

Then the disciples of Jesus, who were also children of God, took up the double testimony, being sent to bear witness of the Father (John xx. 21), as well as to Christ Himself (John xv. 27). The Lord gave them this commission in parting with them, and they boldly took up the position as soon as the power promised was received (Acts i. 8; ii. 32).

This is the part of His disciples to-day: to continue to bear witness to the character of God—whatever can be learned of Him from the Word, from nature, from experience—declare it, publish it, make it known, press it upon the attention of all. Half the time God is neglected, shunned, rejected, because He is not known. Throughout the Old Testament we find all care taken to hand down the knowledge of God to succeeding generations "that they may set their hope in God." The great desire of the Lord is to get men to trust Him, love Him, follow Him; but this they cannot do till they know Him. Therefore it becomes the first duty of His people to make Him known—His greatness, His power, His holiness, His grace.

But this cannot be done apart from Christ, and so the two testimonies blend in one. In Christ the sinner finds the way of approach to Him whose holiness before was repellant and condemnatory. "Through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins." "There is one Mediator between God and man, the Man Christ Jesus." "The witness is this, that God gave unto us eternal life, and this I life in His Son."

Care must be taken that the witness is in no way one-sided: that "He taketh up the isles as a very little thing," adds force to "God beseeching you by us." The inhabitants of the earth are as grasshoppers before Him, yet "the very hairs of your head are all numbered." He who can say to the mighty deep, "Here shall thy proud waves be stayed," doth also carry the lambs in His bosom.

"Ye are My witnesses, saith the Lord."

M. M. A.

PRECIOUS.

"Unto you therefore which believe He is precious" (1 Pet. 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 nigh.
 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.

Correspondence.

WHAT IS SEPARATION?

THE letter under this head in the October number of the *Witness*, discloses a state of apparent indifference to what is due to the Lord. It is a question for the serious consideration of all who once severed their connection with religious systems where the authority of the Lord is practically disowned, and who now by their presence and co-operation sanction what is so dishonouring to Him, whether or not the latter end is worse with them than the beginning.

Clearly either their first act in leaving the old association was simply one of self-pleasing, or their return now to what had previously been judged as evil indicates a back-sliding condition of heart.

There is grave reason to fear that many of those who of late years have taken a place amongst brethren gathered together in the name of the Lord Christ, are unintelligent as to the position and what it involves. It is one thing to come out to brethren, to the truth of baptism or of "the breaking of bread," and another to go forth unto the rejected Christ outside the camp. The former may be done at little if any cost to self, and only adds to the confusion and to the weakening of any testimony to the truth which yet remains, whilst the latter will involve decided separation in heart and way from everything that is unworthy of the Lord and fellowship in His reproach. But to this, and nothing short of it, is the Christian called—"For unto you it is

given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on Him, but also to suffer in His behalf" (Phil. i. 29); "Our Saviour Jesus Christ gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us *from all iniquity, and purify unto Himself* a peculiar people, zealous of good works" (Titus ii. 14); and the command is plain to any who have an ear to hear, "Be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean" (2 Cor. vi. 17); "Let every one that nameth the name of the Lord depart from unrighteousness" (2 Tim. ii. 19).

Many children of God appear never to have had heart and conscience exercised with respect to the sin of sectarianism, and of the indignity done to their Lord when the *teaching of men is accepted to the setting aside of His own Word*. Possibly their attention may not have been directed to the scripture bearing on the subject; and, under the influence of early training and defective teaching, they continue undisturbed in unscriptural associations. Surely our heart should go out in longing desire for such, and our earnest endeavour should be to help and encourage into the path of obedience both by example and word. But this only can be done as we ourselves in communion with the Lord walk in the way of His commandments.

Having regard to the character of the time and the general condition of assemblies, should we not be instant in prayer for a revival of power with the truth, so that it should more deeply affect the hearts and consciences of children of God, and strike at the root of the worldliness and half-heartedness which is gaining ground amongst us. Far better, if needs be, that the ranks should become thinned than that the name of the Lord be dishonoured, or that the salt should lose its savour and the light become darkness. The tendency with many is to tone down the truth to suit the carnal mind.

R. S.

THE GOLDEN CENSER.

ESTEEMED IN THE LORD.—The following questions having been sent me anent the article on "The Golden Censer," which appeared in the *Witness* for November, 1888, I shall deem it a favour if you allow me to reply through your columns:—1st. In stating that "the altar of incense does not figure in the ceremonies of the great day of atonement," has Ex. xxx. 10 been overlooked? 2nd. Does Lev. xvi. 18 not refer to the altar of incense? 3rd. Is the "altar that is before the Lord" (Lev. xvi. 18) the same as the "altar of sweet incense before the Lord" (Lev. iv. 7, 18)? I shall take up the questions in the opposite order to that in which they are given:—

In Lev. iv. 7, 18, God especially guards the understanding of His people by defining the altar "which is before Jehovah," as the "altar of sweet incense" (the altar of the compound incense, LXX.) which is in the tent of meeting," while the other altar—that of the ascending offering—is declared to be "at the entrance of the tent of meeting."

In Lev. xvi. 15-22, on the contrary, we have the successive steps which the high priest takes **OUTWARD** from the place where propitiation was effected Godward, and in the secret presence of God, by the blood of the slain goat, **unto** the place where the bearing away of the sin thus atoned for was effected manward before all the people by means of the scape-goat.

Thus, in verse 15, the blood is brought "within the veil," and is sprinkled upon and before the mercy seat or propitiatory-covering. In verse 16, atonement is made for "the holy place," as also for "the tent of meeting." This verse implies, without mentioning directly, the fulfilment of that which the Lord commanded to be done in Ex. xxx. 10. This having been accomplished, it is written that "he shall GO OUT UNTO the altar that is before Jehovah": clearly, I think, unto "the altar of the ascending offering, which is at the entrance of the tent of meeting." Lastly, "When he hath made an end of reconciling (shall finish making atonement for, LXX.) the holy place, AND the tent of meeting, AND the altar" (verse 20), the high priest goes, still outwards, to where he confesses over the head of the live goat all the iniquities of the sons of Israel.

According to Ex. xxx. 10, atonement is made on the horns of the altar of incense once in the year. It was then purged with the blood of purification throughout the generations of the sons of Israel. But no incense is said to have been offered upon it on that day, nor indeed was there any man standing by it to offer incense thereon (Lev. xvi. 17). It is not even mentioned by name in Lev. xvi. and Heb. ix., the two scriptures which point to the great day of atonement, because the question to be settled on that day was that of God's *claim* against the *sinner*, and not that of God's *reception* of the *worshipper*.

A. P. M.

FRIENDLY SOCIETIES.

IN reference to Question 306, the three answers given to this question can mean nothing less than that it is *sinful* for a believer to belong to a friendly society. Such a sweeping condemnation of any who are linked with such societies is unwise, to say the least; and it is well to remember that the *principle* laid down would apply with equal force to many investments from which incomes are drawn, such as railway and bank shares. The *question* says nothing about spending an evening at "the lodge" (which in many cases is not a necessity), but is confined to *being in a society*. Where we have a clear command of scripture touching any point, transgression is *sinful*; but where there is not such a command, each must act before the Lord. And there are many things to which the word may safely be applied, "According to your faith be it unto you."

One who, in the spirit of faith, determines to keep clear of such societies, and carries out the same spirit by the exercise of a brotherly sympathy toward those who may be in need, will surely have his faith honoured by God, and receive his reward. But to burden the conscience of any by the assertion that to belong to a society is *wrong*, does not seem to me to be according to the mind of Christ. One who is "rich in this world," and able to support his poorer brethren when in sickness, as many, if able, would find pleasure in doing, might press his judgment of such a matter, and a large assembly in a corresponding position might do the same. But there are *many* assemblies composed exclusively of the poor of this world, and their proper anxiety touching any one of their number who may be ill is greatly relieved when they find he has an income for the support of his family; not because they are not ready to do their utmost to minister to him, but because they know that what they can do is needed for *extra*

expenses, apart from the common necessities of the family.

I cannot help thinking that if the writers of these replies had seen the anxiety I have seen about a heavy doctor's bill, and the feeling of how long it would take to pay it, and had shared my longing to be able to relieve such anxiety, they would have written a little more guardedly. I am not *advocating* links with such societies, and I know there are many snares connected with them; I simply deprecate such unqualified condemnation, and repeat my conviction that the principle condemned involves a good deal that some would not like to contemplate.

W. H. B.

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:—

What is the meaning of the word *heretic* in Titus iii. 10? and does that scripture afford ground for excommunication?

How does Christ, the High Priest, make intercession with God for the *sins* of His people as to *reconciliation*, seeing they have been reconciled to God by the death of His Son?

If a child of God commits a grievous sin, and sincerely repents of it, will he then be chastised or punished by God for that sin?

How is the difference between Matt. xvi. 28 and Mark ix. 1 to be explained, as our Lord surely could not have repeated His saying using other words the second time?

ON THE WORD "RAILER."

QUESTION 367.—Could any reader 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*?

Ans. A.—The word translated "railer," in 1 Cor. v. 11 and 1 Peter iii. 9, is a similar word to that translated elsewhere "reviler." Now Peter says, concerning the Lord Jesus, that "when He was reviled He reviled not again," consequently it is utterly contrary to His mind for a believer to be a "railer" or "reviler." Further, we are exhorted (1 Peter iii. 9) not to "render railing for railing," and in 1 Cor. iv. 12 Paul says, "being reviled, we bless." This is good in the sight of the Lord, and ascends as a sweet savour of Christ.

Reference might be made to John ix. 28, where the Pharisees "reviled" the man whose sight the Lord had restored, as showing that *malice* constantly underlies "railing" or "reviling." Though what is said may *sometimes* be true, it is contrary to the Lord's mind to rail, but rather to say, "the Lord rebuke thee" (Jude 9).

Ans. B.—A railer is one who, despising rule according to God (Jude 8), seeks by the unrestrained use of his tongue (Ps. xii. 4) to bring upon it contempt and ridicule (Luke xxiii. 35-39). He persists in the determination to say what he thinks with ill-disguised intention to wound the feelings and injure the character of those against whom his accusations are directed (Num. xvi. 2; 1 Sam. xxv. 10). A. L.

Ans. C.—With reference to the question as to railing in this month's *Witness*, I hope the following will be helpful:—In Num. xvi., we have an instance of railing, and the awful expression of Divine wrath that it drew forth; *the malicious disowning of God's gifts and appointments bestowed on Moses and Aaron* was evidently a case of very wicked railing. In Luke xxiii. 35-39, we see the dignity of our Lord disowned by the several classes gathered around His cross. Three words are used to express their common sin, *i.e.*, "mocked," "derided," "railed." 2 Cor. x. 10 seems to be a clear instance of railing against an apostle, in the contemptuous comment upon his bodily appearance and his preaching. The "prating with malicious words" of Diotrephes is evidently the same form of evil (3 John 10). From Jude we learn much as to the source and character of railing:—"despising dominion" leads on to "speaking evil of dignities" (verse 8); verse 9 shows that we may speak the truth and yet rail in so doing. The archangel Michael in his contention might have denounced the Devil in true and severe language, but he was not commissioned to do this; on the contrary, he owns even the lost dignity of a fallen angel and speaks with meekness. Shall we not, therefore, own with meekness the dignity that God in government confers on fallen men, and certainly as readily and with deepest thankfulness own the gifts and appointments of Christ in His Church which He confers on men redeemed?

The foregoing scriptures deal with railing in regard to the disowning of gift and authority by God and the Lord Jesus Christ, and we do well to take heed to them in view of the self-sufficiency and insubjection so sadly manifest both in the Church and in the world. The setting aside of Heb. xiii. 7, 17, 24, leads to much railing among saints. 2 Cor. xii. 20, points out various causes and forms of this evil. If we speak the truth about the sins and faults of others in unholiness, it has the character of railing; but words spoken in Spirit-begotten indignation meet with God's approval (see Matt. xxiii. and Acts xiii. 6-11). But surely we can appreciate the difference between such words addressed to such people and the words that would be suitable in admonishing or rebuking an erring saint; and, in either case, we must bear in mind that words suitably used by our Lord and His apostles would in many instances be unseemly from our lips. The "revilers" of 1 Cor. vi., and the "railer" of chap. v. 11, indicate those who frequently or habitually are guilty of railing. A. M.

Ans. D.—Railing in Scripture does not seem to have so much reference to the truth or falsehood of what is said as to the bitter enmity shown by words of insult. Shimei's cursing, in 2 Sam. xvi. 7, is an example of railing containing falsehood, for David was not guilty of the blood of the house of Saul. Again, the words of the Pharisees to the man who had received his sight (John ix. 28), "Thou art His disciple, but we are Moses' disciples," although expressing truth more or less, yet they constitute an act of railing.

Mephibosheth, in 2 Sam. xvi. 3, was *slandered* by Ziba, *not railed on*, when the latter said to the king, "Behold, he abideth at Jerusalem, for he said, To-day shall the house of Israel restore me the kingdom of my father." This was a falsehood and therefore a slander.

The sin of evil-speaking may be committed without falling into that of railing or of slander, for the evil spoken of about another may be true. H. P.

[**Editor's Note.**—There is a difference between one guilty of an isolated offence which might fairly be characterised as railing and one who "bears the character of a railer." It must be a sin so persisted in that the person stands convicted before all as bearing that character before they can be brought under the judgment of 1 Cor. v. 11. "In the multitude of words there wanteth not sin" (Prov. x. 19), and too often in the heat of controversy words are uttered that sound too like the voice of the "railer." In such matters *discernment* is needed, as in the case of the leper, to discriminate between "the scab," the "bright spot," the "bald head" that may be "pronounced clean," and the very similar manifestations that declare the man a leper and "utterly unclean." To take advantage of some improper expression, and set it down as "railing" in order to get a troublesome brother expelled from the assembly, is a grievous abuse of that judgment which is enjoined for the edification of the Church; it is a mockery of Divine discipline, and will surely end when practised in sorrow and shame.]

QUESTION 308.—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?

Ans. A.—"Watch Meetings," so called, are neither more nor less "according to Scripture" than any special meeting that may be arranged for thanksgiving and prayer; and there is no reason why they should not "be conducted" in the same way. God has divided time into "days and years" (Gen. i. 14); and many find it good to assemble at the hour when one year is closing and another is opening, to give thanks for the mercies and confess the failures of the past, and to encourage their hearts in God for the future. It is *always* "a good thing to give thanks unto the Lord," and prayer is as acceptable to God at midnight as at any other time. It is no question of right or wrong, and is therefore no matter for contention, but an opportunity for the application of the principle of Rom. xiv. 6.

W. H. B.

Ans. B.—With what object is the meeting convened? "To watch the old year out, and the new year in." Is the principle of gathering at the unseemly hour of eleven o'clock till past midnight for the glory of the

God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ? Let His Word answer—"Ye observe days, and months, and times, and YEARS" (Gal. iv. 10), and the words are sorrowfully added, "I am afraid of you, lest I have bestowed upon you labour in vain."

To whom were these words written? Alas! to a people that had "fallen from grace" so far as to mix up law and Gospel in a confused mass, and who had to be "travailed in birth again for till Christ be formed in them." Let such a condition of things as this epistle reveals be a solemn warning to saints of God gathered to Christ's name to refuse fellowship with the "watch-night meeting," as a departure from God's Word, and let the practice of the custom amongst the so-called churches of apostate Christendom be a reminder of the Lord's command, "Come out. Be separate. Touch not."

"Be ye therefore sober, and watch unto prayer" is the mandate; and consequently the attitude of God's saints is to be *watching* and *waiting* "for the Son from heaven, even Jesus, who delivered us from the wrath to come." C. G.

Ans. C.—There is as much scripture for holding a so-called "watch meeting" as there is for holding a weekly prayer meeting. But, while there is none for either, no one will deny that it is good for us that we should collectively seek to "draw near to God" thus frequently on stated, as well as on other special occasions. If believers come together with one accord to *pray out* the old year and *pray in* the new, reflecting on the much failure and unfaithfulness marking our path, and, at the same time, remember the "goodness and mercy" which the Lord has made to follow (pursue) us throughout the whole course of the departing year, abundant cause will be found for mingled confession and thanksgiving; and waiting on God, no difficulty need be felt as to how such meetings should be conducted. Let there be *reality* in such meetings, and the outcome surely will be "a closer walk with God" individually, greater unity, love, and power corporately, as we, constrained by the love of Christ, seek during what of another year is given us here, to live with increased devotedness "unto Him who died and rose again for us," and God will be glorified in the results. D. R.

[**Editor's Note.**—We publish answer B because it fairly represents the way such matters are frequently dealt with. We do not see that Gal. iv. 10 has any bearing whatever upon the subject. The Galatians error was a return in principle to Judaism, regarding the institutions of the old covenant as still obligatory, and imposing the yoke upon the Gentiles which Israel had found themselves unable to bear. It was in principle undermining the truth of the Gospel, and, as such, was severely censured by the apostle.

The principle at stake was—*the law versus the Gospel*. The epistle proves that justification must be by the one or the other, but not possibly by both. If then it is by Christ as revealed in the Gospel—the law with its carnal ordinances is done away: for the believer is no longer in God's reckoning alive in the flesh, but dead to the law and alive to God in the risen Christ.

But to confound the observance of days (feast days), months (such as the seventh and tenth), and years (such as the Sabbatic, seventh, or fiftieth year), as a Divine

obligation with the fixing upon such an occasion as the entering upon another year for a prayer meeting, is utterly to fail in distinguishing between things that widely differ. The scripture that really does apply is Rom. xiv. 5, 6, "One man esteemeth one day above another: another esteemeth every day alike. Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind. He that regardeth the day, regardeth it unto the Lord; and he that regardeth not the day, to the Lord he doth not regard it." We regard it, ourselves, as a very *unsuitable* time for such a meeting, and believe that carnal elements enter in to lend an enthusiasm to the occasion that is far from spiritual. Young persons would be better in their beds in most cases, especially where such is the wish of their parents or guardians.

But whilst we neither countenance nor approve such meetings—believing that if they be "lawful," they are, to say the least, "not expedient"—we could on no account judge those who believe that such meetings are the occasion of help and blessing to their souls. To their own master they stand or fall. Let not those who stay at home despise those who go to the watch-night meeting, and let not those who go to the meeting judge those who stay at home.]

A MEDIATOR.

QUESTION 309.—What are we to understand by Gal. iii. 20?—"Now a mediator is not a mediator of one; but God is one."

Ans. A.—The Galatians had fallen under the power of Judaizing teachers who were seeking to lead them away from Christ and to bring them under law, away from the ground of God's absolute, sovereign grace, His unconditional promise made to Abraham, as to the seed (Christ), to put them on the ground of works of law; and the object of the Spirit of God, by the apostle, is to show them that to go back to law for righteousness was practically to give up Christ and to put themselves under the curse. "For as many as are on the principle of works of law are under the curse" (Gal. iii. 10). "But that by law no one is justified with God is evident, because the just shall live on the principle of faith; but the law is not on the principle of faith; but he that shall have done these things shall live by them" (verse 11, 12).

God made an unconditional promise to Abraham and to his seed (Christ), but if the inheritance be on the principle of law it is no longer on the principle of promise. The question is then raised—wherefore then the law? Why was it given if righteousness was not to be had on that principle? The answer is, that the law was given for the sake of transgressions—in other words, to show that righteousness could not be had on that ground; for the very fact of the sin being forbidden brought out the rebellious will of man in actual transgression (see Rom. vii. 7-13). The law came in by-the-by, as it were (see Rom. v. 20), entirely outside the current of God's promise, and it was ordained by angels in the hands of a mediator (Moses). A mediator implies the existence of two parties. "A mediator is not a mediator of one" (party), there must at least be two for the mediator to act between; therefore the existence of the mediator proved conclusively that the people were off the ground of God's absolute promise, because that was from Himself, unconditional, and

rested entirely upon His own faithfulness. The fulfilment of God's promise rested, and ever rests, upon His unchanging faithfulness and truth. *God was the only party to its accomplishment*, and God is ONE; *i.e.*, the law in the hands of a mediator necessarily implies two parties, whilst God's promise was on His part alone. So that to be on the ground of law is to be off that of promise, and man, who is a sinner, being a party to its fulfilment, all is lost, which is just what has been demonstrated shutting us up completely to God's infinite and sovereign grace in Christ for righteousness and life.

G. A. S.

Ans. B.—Attention to the teaching in the context may help us to an understanding of this particular passage. The argument throughout is in proof that man is not justified by the law in the sight of God. Neither was the law given for that purpose; on the contrary, in result it served to bring in as guilty those who were under it. Jew and Gentile are now all alike under sin, that the promise by faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe. That is the promise to Abraham and his Seed (Christ) made by God 430 years previous to the law, which promise the latter could not disannul. Verse 20, in connection with what immediately precedes, may now be considered in support of the general argument. "A mediator is not of one; but God is one." The fact of the law having been ordained in the hand of a mediator is evidence that the law was insufficient for life; because sinful man being a party to that covenant, and the blessing thereby conditional upon his obedience, all necessarily would be forfeited, hence the need for a mediator. On the other hand, respecting the promise to Abraham and his seed, it is added, "But God is one." God, who of His own will and sovereign grace promised, in due time shall perform all that which He has promised, through Christ, Himself very God. No two parties to this covenant, neither possibility of failure; for all is of God. Not in anywise conditional or dependent on failing man—his only part in the transaction being to receive by faith the proffered blessing.

R. S.

Ans. C.—The rendering by Conybeare and Howson of the nineteenth and twentieth verses simplifies the text. "To what end, then, was the law? It was added because of the transgressions of men till the seed should come, to whom belongs the promise; and it was enacted by the ministration of angels through the hands of [Moses who was] a mediator [between God and the people]. Now where a mediator is there must be two parties. But God is one [and there is no second party to His promise]. The epistle was addressed to Christians who had been corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ by Judaizing teachers, who sought to pervert the Gospel of Christ by adding circumcision and works of law to it. And the epistle, being written to correct the error of the Galatians, of necessity treats upon the difference between law and grace, between the covenant of works and the promise in grace.

And the sense of the verse seems to be this, that in the giving of the law there must needs be a mediator, for sin stood betwixt God and man and there was no way of approach for man to God or God to man but on the ground of grace. And the law being of works and not of grace, God could not in person give the law, for

if He had come amongst the people in righteousness He must have consumed them. And in the giving of the law, the people were to take heed that they went not up into the mount or touch the border of it, for whosoever would touch the mount was to be put to death. But Moses, the mediator, stood between God and the people. Thus in the hands of a mediator was the law given.

But God is one in the promise made to Abraham. No mediator was needed, for there was no second party to it. It was a promise in grace. God, as Sovereign, promised Abraham that which He had purposed in Himself in eternity, that in his Seed, which is Christ (verse 16), should all the nations of the earth be blessed. And if we are to be partakers of the blessing it must be from union with Christ, the promised Seed, and not of works of the law. D. C.

Ans. D.—Gal. iii. 20 has been the subject of many interpretations. I submit the following:—The old covenant, made between God and His people Israel, had Moses as its mediator. The new covenant, which has God for its author and sustainer (see Heb. viii.), has God in Christ as its Mediator. Now a mediator cannot be a mediator of one party only. In the new covenant God's people do not enter into covenant obligations, but become the subjects of God's covenant purposes and promises. So God as one is Author, Sustainer, Fulfiller, and Mediator of His own new covenant, for Christ representeth in Himself both God and His people. A. O. M.

[**Editor's Note.**—To this question we have many replies, and as all are thoughtful and interesting it is only from lack of space that we do not insert all. We give four as specimens—three of which at least are substantially in harmony.

We here quote in full Alford's note on this verse, believing it to be valuable to those who will take the trouble to read it so carefully as to grasp its contents.]

[**Dean Alford's Note.**—The explanations of this verse, so obscure from its brevity, are so numerous (Winer counted 250; Jowett mentions 430) that they require a bibliography of their own. I believe we shall best disentangle the sense as follows. (1) Clearly, the terms "a mediator" and "God" are opposed. (2) As clearly "cannot be of one" and "is one" are opposed. (3) From this contrast arises an apparent opposition between the law and the promises of God, which gives occasion to the question of verse 21. Taking up therefore again (1),—*a mediator*, by whose hand the law was enacted, stands opposed to *God*, the giver of the promises. And that, in this respect (2);—(a) *a mediator* is not of *one*, but (b) *God* is *one*. And herein lies the knot of the verse; that is, in (b),—for the meaning of (a) is pretty clear on all hands; viz., that a mediator does not belong to *one party* (masculine) (but to *two*, as going between one party and another). Then to guide us to the meaning of (b), we must remember, that the numerical contrast is the primary idea: a mediator belongs not to *one*, but *God* is *one*. Shall we then say, that all reference of the term *one* (as applied to *God*) beyond this numerical one is to be repudiated? I cannot think so. The proposition *God* is *one* would carry to the mind of every reader much more than the

mere numerical unity of God—viz., His Unity as an essential attribute, extending through the whole divine Character. And thus, though the proposition *a mediator is not of one*, would not, by itself, convey any meaning but that a mediator belongs to more than one, it would, when combined with *God is one*, receive a shade of meaning which it did not bear before,—of a state of things involved in the fact of a mediator being employed, which was not according to the oneness of God, or, so to speak, in the main track of His unchanging purpose. And thus (3), the law, administered by the mediator, belonging to a state inconsistent with oneness, a state of two at variance, is apparently opposed to the promises, belonging entirely to THE ONE, the one (faithful) God. And observe, that the above explanation is deduced entirely from the form of the sentence itself, and from the idea which the expression "*God is one*" must necessarily raise in the mind of its reader, accustomed to the proposition as the foundation of the faith; not from any preconceived view, to suit which the words, or emphatic arrangement, must be forced. Notice by the way, that the objection, that the Gospel too is *in the hand of a mediator*, does not apply here: for (a) there is no question here of the Gospel, but only of the promises, as direct from God: (b) the mediator of the Gospel is altogether different, and His work different: He has absolutely reconciled the parties at variance, and MADE THEM ONE in Himself. Remember St. Paul's habit of insulating the matter in hand, and dealing with it irrespective of all such possible objections. I must refer the reader for even the shortest account of other explanations, to my Greek Test. We may profitably lay down one or two canons of interpretation of the verse. (1) Every interpretation is wrong which understands *Christ* by "*the mediator*" in this verse. The context determines it to be abstract, and its reference to be to Moses, the mediator of the law. (2) Every interpretation is wrong which makes "*one*" mean "*one party*" in the covenant. "*God is one*" itself confutes any such view, being a well-known general proposition, not admitting of a concrete interpretation. (3) Every interpretation is wrong which confines "*God is one*" to its mere numerical meaning, and does not take into account the ideas which the general proposition would raise. (4) Every interpretation is wrong which deduces from the verse the agreement of the law with the promises: because the apostle himself, in the next verse, draws the very opposite inference from it, and refutes it on other grounds. (5) Every attempt to set aside the verse as a gloss is utterly futile.

QUESTION 310.—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?

[**Editor's Note.**—We do not insert any replies to this question, because it is so vague that in replying it is necessary to assume details of which as matter of fact we are ignorant. The "unanimous voice of the assembly," important though it be, is nothing in itself except it be fully in accord with the Word of God. On the other hand, a brother would require to have very good ground for setting such an expression of opinion aside, and thus condemning the whole.]

CHRIST, OR ANTICHRIST.

JOHN v. 17-47.

THERE are three very important characters in which the Lord Jesus is presented to us in these verses:—

1st, as THE SUBJECT OF TESTIMONY;

2nd, as THE GIVER OF LIFE;

3rd, as THE EXECUTOR OF JUDGMENT.

Now He stands in relation to all men in one or other of these positions.

First, He presents Himself as the SUBJECT OF TESTIMONY, but it is nevertheless as coming in the Father's name. "I seek not Mine own will, but the will of the Father which hath sent Me. If I bear witness of Myself, My witness is not true. There is another that beareth witness of Me; and I know that the witness which he witnesseth of Me is true" (v. 31, 32). His own witness was also true; but that which He states is—"If I am seeking to glorify Myself, I demand not your confidence. I ask you not to believe." Just as He says elsewhere, "He that speaketh of himself, seeketh his own glory; but he that seeketh his glory that sent him, the same is true, and no unrighteousness is in him." And this ever holds good. If a man is seeking to exalt self, he has a motive that is not truth,—his witness is not true. At the same time, there was a witness unto himself, and as such, He appeals to all the various testimony that existed for Him in the world. "Ye sent unto John, and he bare witness unto the truth" (v. 33). Again, "The works which the Father hath given Me to finish, the same works that I do, bear witness of Me" (v. 36). Again, "The Father Himself, which hath sent Me, hath borne witness of Me" (v. 37). And again, "Search the Scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of Me" (v. 37).

The Lord Jesus refers to these four witnesses: first, John; secondly, His works; thirdly, the Father; fourthly, the Scriptures: and yet He tells those to whom He spoke, "*Ye will not come to Me, that ye might have life*" (v. 40). Presented with this full and adequate testimony to the consciences of men (not merely an abstract testimony, but that which was suited to their circumstances), they

refused it all, they would not come to Him, that they might have life. And mark the terrible conclusion, "Ye will receive this evil one." "I am come in My Father's name, and ye receive *ME* not: if another shall come in his own name, *HIM* ye will receive" (v. 43). What a testimony against man!

Another character in which we find the Lord Jesus presented here, is in LIFE-GIVING POWER: "As the Father raiseth up the dead, and quickeneth them; even so the Son quickeneth whom He will" (v. 21). Life-giving is attributed both to the Father and the Son.

But there is marked distinction in that which follows, as to the third character of Christ—the EXECUTOR OF JUDGMENT. "The Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son" (v. 22). As "Son of Man," He has been dishonoured and rejected by men; therefore all judgment is committed into His hands, in order "that all men should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father" (v. 23). Here He stands alone.

And see the point that is settled here.

When the Lord Jesus presents Himself as giving life, He also, and most graciously, shows us how we may count on the assurance of possessing life. Now this is of the very greatest importance. There is many an one that can with truth of heart own Him as the giver of Divine life, that, nevertheless, is unable to say, "*I have that life.*" Our Lord does not leave the anxiety of such unanswered. After stating that all men (even those who had rejected Him, as we have seen) should one day in His character of Judge honour the Son, even as they honour the Father, adds, "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 (judgment); but is passed from death unto life" (v. 24).

The question is one of judgment or of life. We have seen that the Father gives life, and the Son gives life. We have seen, too, that all judgment is committed unto the Son. But here Jesus shows who is to come under the judgment, and who is to have life. This answers the question at once. He says, he that believeth "*hath,*" not shall have, "*everlasting life,*" and that such an one "*shall not*

come into judgment, but is passed from death unto life." On this basis all happy feeling before God, all joy is founded. Here begins the exercise of all holy affections and ways. A child cannot love its parent before it is born (there is no need to reason about that), though it may love long before it can express it, long before there is intellectual explanation.

Here is the difference between the law and the Gospel. Law puts a man upon the acquisition of life, it sets him to do before he gets life. All Christian holiness, all Christian affections flow from the fact of *having* life. The voice of the Good Shepherd reaches the ear, and he who hears it, believing that the Father hath sent the Son, has this assurance, he "shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life." It would be to bring into doubt His own work, were Christ to call such in question as to salvation. He ever keeps distinct His two offices of Life-giver and Judge.

It might appear that in verses 28, 29 He confounds the two. But is it so? No; He states a further truth. He had before been speaking of the quickening of the soul, and now He says, "Marvel not at this," there is going to be a resurrection of the body also. It is in resurrection that He will fulfil the whole effect and result of His life-giving power. There will be a "resurrection of life," and also a "resurrection of judgment." The two things are kept most definite and distinct. But the honour of Christ as "Son of Man" is secured from all. *We* (those who have believed) do not need judgment to oblige us to render Him honour, *we* honour Him *now* as the source of life, He has quickened us, forgiven us our sins, through Him we have fellowship with the Father, He has done everything for us. The wicked *shall* also honour Him *then*.

There is a remarkable passage in Rom. viii. in illustration of this distinction. The apostle, after speaking of the law, takes up the result of the work of Christ, and says, "The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death," &c.; and then, in verse 11, "If the Spirit of Him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, He that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by His

Spirit that dwelleth in you." That will not be true of the wicked at all; they will not be raised in virtue of the Spirit of Christ dwelling in them—they have not His Spirit.

We see, then, as it were, this great track of life. Christ is the Life-giver to His people; first to soul, and then to body.

The evidence to others of *our* having life is shown in conduct, though that is not brought out here; but the proof and the assurance to my own soul is based on this, "He that heareth My word and believeth on Him that sent Me, hath everlasting life." Whilst fruits will flow, and must flow, from faith in Christ, it is of the utmost importance, in the midst of the evil with which we are conversant, to have the ground on which peace rests as simple as possible, and that is just what God has made it. It is the atoning death of Christ. The link to my own soul is as simple as possible, it is not a long process of ratiocination which might tend to puzzle and perplex, but the evidence of the Word, "He that heareth," and faith cometh by hearing.

What is the effect of this? *Christ becomes everything to us.* Surely, this is practical sanctification. If I wanted to describe a holy man, I should describe one who was always thinking of the Father's love and the Son's grace, and never of self.

Here, then, there is comfort and peace (and what a comfort is the *settled certainty of salvation!*), in this setting to our seal that God is true. It is not in the searching of my own heart, but in the assurance of the Word of God. *There is nothing like the simple certainty of faith.* "He that hath received His testimony hath set to His seal that God is true." I assume that I am a person in an anxious state of soul and wanting to get the certainty of life possessed. I look at the testimony of God. There I get absolute certainty. I say, "God is true." This is faith. All that I discover in myself is not faith. I may be much exercised, but there is not one thing in my own heart that can in the least assist me in finding out anything about this life. Faith rests upon the testimony of God. When I have received and rested upon His testimony, it is important for me to examine myself as to my ways and the like, but I never go and search into my own

heart for certainty as to whether the blessed Son of God has told me the truth, "He that heareth," &c. Observe again; there is no searching any further than this; I believe on Him who sent the Son; in the presence of the Father and the Son, I have eternal life, and who can give me more. Life may be fed, indeed, here, and glorified hereafter; but there is no searching any deeper. There may be exercises of soul in bringing to it; but the definition John gives of a Christian is this, "We have known and believed the love that God hath to us." "Hereby perceive we love, because He laid down His life for us."

There is another point: the written testimony of God has a higher place than any other.

A few words more upon the difference between life-giving and judgment. Now it is that Christ gives life. When He comes as Judge, He will not give life at all, He will come for judgment. There is no confounding or mingling of the two things, either as to time or act. If judgment comes in before grace has given life, who can stand?

(To be continued).

PROPHETIC PAPERS. No. 14.

THE BOOK OF THE REVELATION.—*Continued.*

CHAPTER VI.

BY F. C. BLAND.

TO connect this lecture with the last, we must remind our readers how we traced the identity of the Lord's teaching in Matt. xxiv., which is in plain language, with the symbolic language of Rev. vi. and vii.

In Matt. xxiv. 29, we read, "That the sun shall be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven"; and in Rev. vi., when the sixth seal is opened, the sun becomes black as sackcloth of hair, and the moon becomes as blood, and the stars fall from heaven. Finally, in Matt. xxiv. 31, He sends His angels with the sound of a trumpet, to gather His elect from the four winds; and in Rev. vii., after the seventh seal is opened, John sees a great multitude which no man could number, gathered out of all nations, kindreds, and tongues, who stand before the throne and the Lamb, having come

out of "great tribulation"—the very words used in Matt. xxiv. when speaking of the same time of trouble.

* It was said by one to whom we are indebted for many precious sayings concerning the Word of God, that when he found an Old Testament text quoted in the New Testament, he felt as if God had put a lamp into his hand and bid him go back and read the Old Testament text by the light of the New; and having learned all he could by that light, he often travelled back with his lamp in his hand to the New Testament again, and re-read that which was written there by the light he had gathered from the Old.

We must be struck when reading the promises of Rev. vii. 16, 17, that they are familiar to our ears, and we at once turn back to the book of the prophet Isaiah, chap. xlix., and ascertain to whom these promises were made in time of old.

The chapter opens with the words of Jehovah Messiah calling on the isles to listen to Him, telling them that Jehovah had ordained Him from the womb to be His servant, His messenger to Israel; and in verse 4, He makes His complaint, that so far as Israel was concerned, "He had laboured in vain, and spent His strength for nought." In verse 5, Jehovah answers His complaint saying, "Though Israel be not gathered, He should be glorious in the eyes of the Lord, for that He would give Him to be a light to the Gentiles. Then in verse 7, He is told that though the nation abhorred Him, and though kings and rulers despised Him, Jehovah would still give Him for a covenant to the people (Israel), that their waste places should be inhabited, and the prisoners of Zion should get the call to come forth. And then we get the promises given here, which are fulfilled word for word in Rev. vii.

The heavens and earth are called, as in Isaiah xlix., to break forth into singing, for God hath comforted His people (Israel), and will have mercy on His afflicted.

Israel's title, then, to these promises which are quoted in chap. vii., is indefeasible; and will hold good against the claims of all the world. They may become

true to a Gentile multitude, as taking hold of the skirts of a Jew, but the Jew holds the title to them against all claimants. We may lay it down, therefore, that these are Jews who, having passed through the day of Jacob's trouble, have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Some hold that they are a resurrection people, others that they are redeemed for the earth, and that they stand before the Son of Man when He sits upon the throne of His glory (Matt. xxv). The reader must form his own judgment on this. It is said, on the one hand, that the surroundings of the throne preclude the possibility of its being an earthly scene, on account of the throne of God being mentioned and the angels round about it, and of course there is something in this; but, on the other hand, it is contended that in Matt. xxv. 31, the Lord at His coming as Son of Man is described as sitting on the throne of His glory and surrounded by His holy angels; and it is further contended that a promise made in the Old Testament of earthly blessings to an earthly people, can hardly be relegated for its fulfilment to the resurrection state, and this, I confess, has much force to my mind. May we turn for a moment to the rest of that lovely chapter in Isaiah, and see how this wondrous dialogue, which begins between Jehovah and Messiah, is carried on between Jehovah and His poor afflicted Zion?

God has been speaking of blessing to the Gentiles, and Zion thinks that she has been forgotten, and is jealous of the Gentiles, saying, "The Lord hath forsaken me and my Lord hath forgotten me. Upon which He answers her, with good words and comfortable, saying, "Can a woman forget her sucking child that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb; yea, they may forget, yet will not I forget thee." Then Zion is called on to lift up her eyes and see all her children gathering back to her again, until in her amazement she asks where they (probably the ten tribes) have been while she is a captive and has been wandering to and fro; upon which she is told that the numbers of the restored nation will be more than the scattered one; that Gentiles shall first bring them back, and their kings shall be their nursing fathers and queens their nursing mothers; that God will contend with

those that contend with them, and will save their children. I think some place must be left for these in the book of the Revelation, and I can see them nowhere else if they are not those spoken of here. As one of our own poets has said—

"The fount of life shall then be quaffed
In peace by all who come;
And every wind that blows shall waft
Some long-lost exile home."

I have been led away in speaking of the blessings promised to this great multitude, and was near forgetting to refer to the sealed remnant of one hundred and forty-four thousand; possibly they may be a representative number, and may stand for the whole of the twelve tribes, but I see no reason why they should not be the exact number that will be sealed, and they may be those who are called, in Matt. xxiv. 30, the tribes of the land who mourn when they see Him. And if all that we have read in the opening of each of the seals corresponds *accurately* and consecutively with what we read in Matt. xxiv., as we have seen it to do, we may reasonably look for those called "the tribes of the land" to appear somewhere in this category; and if this be so, their place of mention would be exactly here.

"When He had opened the seventh seal, there was silence in heaven by the space of half an hour" (Rev. viii.). What thoughts does this silence suggest to our hearts!

The prayers of suffering saints are about to ascend, and God will have heaven itself keep silence, lest anything should hinder them reaching His throne. The angel is there with his censer, and not with incense only, but with *much* incense, which ascends from the golden altar before the throne; and it is added, the prayers of the saints ascended up before God out of the angel's hand.

But is this true only of the saints spoken of here? Is it not the privilege of every tried and tempted one, in every dispensation, and at every time, to know assuredly that the feeblest aspiration of the feeblest saint has as much attention from God as those spoken of here, and that they ascend up in the sweet savour of Him who appears in the presence of God for us, and who maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God.

And now the trumpets begin to sound; the first four have reference to judgments poured out on the visible creation, and would appear to operate against those who were not sealed with the seal of the living God on their foreheads. They resemble much the plagues of Egypt, and the remnant here are preserved as the children of Israel were in the land of Goshen, when God smote the earth with similar judgments.

This one hundred and forty-four thousand may be those who are to be Jehovah's witnesses to the rest of the nation, and will "declare His mighty acts" to those who have not seen them (Ps. xcvi. 1, and cvi. 2).

Chap. ix. is a chapter of great depth, and gives us an insight into the unseen world, the world of spirits.

We gather this from it, that in the closing days of this dispensation the action of spirits or demons in this scene of apostasy will be something especially awful; that the bottomless pit (whatever that may mean) will be opened, and that two hundred millions of demons are let loose on the earth.

The description of them is of course symbolic, and we do not attempt to expound it; but it indicates that terrible powers are possessed by them for the torment of those who have not the seal of God on their foreheads like the one hundred and forty-four thousand of chap. vii.

We also learn that there are grades of those lost spirits, and I suppose this may be what is meant by the expression—"The rulers of the darkness of this world, the wicked spirits in heavenly places." The four angels described as being bound in the river Euphrates seem to have some special place in this time of mystery and awfulness, but all are under the king, Apollyon, the destroyer.

But how solemn it is to read that man has become so apostate, and so completely under the power of Satan, that the judgments of God no longer teach the inhabitants of this world righteousness, for, it is added, "they repented not." Their attitude towards God here is negative—"they repented not"; but presently we will find that as God's judgments intensify, and the vials which are afterwards poured out "fill up the wrath of God," man fills up the measure of his iniquity; his daring and

apostasy progresses, and they "blaspheme God" because of their plagues (chap. xvi. 21).

I ask, can any man read these words with unconcern? The subtle effect of hardening one's heart against the dealings of God are perilous to the Christian as well as to the unsaved. God's elect are His elect for time and for eternity, but woe to the man who makes this an excuse for hardening himself against Him, or trifling with, or thinking lightly about, obedience to His truth. God, in the sovereignty of His grace, will bring every one of His children finally into His kingdom; while in His government over them He may have to bring them in with chastening and save them as by fire. Thus the Word of God is a two-edged sword, and the Lord's warnings to His disciples are profitable to all—"Pray ye that ye may be found worthy to escape these things and to stand before the Son of Man."

Chap. x. begins with the apparition of a Mighty Angel, clothed with a cloud, and a rainbow upon His head. His face was as the sun shineth in his strength, and His feet as pillars of fire. I think these attributes can only pertain to the Lord Jesus Christ, and it appears to me that He is the same person who is very similarly described in the 10th chapter of the book of Daniel. A perusal of the chapters together will greatly interest the reader.

When He had spoken, "seven thunders uttered their voices." John is about to write what he has heard, when he is forbidden to do so, which may be an intimation to us that there are things in this book of deep mysteries that we must wait to have revealed to us; and to profess to be able to expound all in detail, and to use our human ingenuity in doing so might be to break some seal. He swears by Him that liveth for ever and ever that there should "be time no longer," or rather, no longer delay; saying, that in the days of the voice of the last trumpet, the mystery of God should be finished; and in explanation of the meaning of the expression, "there should be time no longer," I may here transcribe an exposition of this, which commends itself to me, and may be of use to my readers also, on the three expressions in the New Testament—the fulness of time (Gal. iv. 4); the fulness of

times (Eph. i. 10); and there shall be time no longer (Rev. x. 6).

1st. "The *fulness* of time" was when God, having tried man in every way, and when his condition was found to be such that there was no remedy, "God sent forth His Son, made of a woman, made under the law," &c.

2nd. "*In the fulness of times*" will be when all the threads, so to speak, which are being spun out by those who are the subjects of God's dealings in this dispensation shall have run out, and shall all synchronise and be brought to an end by *the coming* of the Lord.

The time of misrule ends by Christ taking His power to reign; the time of testimony ends by judgment; the time of the Church's suffering, by being glorified with her Lord; the time of Israel's blindness, by the veil being taken away; the time of Gentile dominion, by the stone smiting the image; the time of creation's thralldom, by the manifestation of the sons of God; the time of Satan's power, by his being cast into the bottomless pit.

3rd. "There shall be *time* no longer," does not mean that time ends and eternity begins, but that the strangeness of God's ways, the mystery, as it is here said, of God letting man go on without interfering in judgment, is now finished; in other words, that God's long-suffering has now reached its limit.*

From this, onward to the end of the book, the visions become more definite, and the sphere to which they refer more circumscribed, Jerusalem becoming the centre of God's future dealings.

ON DISCIPLINE IN THE ASSEMBLY.

FROM NOTES OF AN ADDRESS BY J. R. C.

I COME now to speak of that "last resort," commonly known as "excommunication."

Read 1 Cor. v. I believe that verse 2 points to the action that God would take if the assembly were in a right condition before Him. If saints came together mourning before God over sin in the midst, I believe God would come in, in power, and show Himself on behalf of the mourning ones. But is

it not the case that often there is sin and no shame or sorrow about it? Often the conduct of some in the assembly is below even the world's ideas of righteousness and holiness, and yet the church refuses to be ashamed. Is it to be wondered at if God allows us to reap the fruit of unjudged evil in bitterness of soul?

Verse 3 shows that Paul identified himself with the troubles of assemblies from which for the time being he was absent. Some, of whom better things might be expected claim now a days to stand aloof from all assembly troubles that do not happen to arise in that particular assembly with which they are immediately connected. But surely it is a responsibility of age, experience, and grace, to look beyond the little circle of immediate association, and to seek by godly counsel to follow helpers with the truth. On the other hand, such help is sometimes repudiated and resented as "*interference*," as doubtless a party in the Corinthian assembly did toward Paul.

Thus the unspiritual condition of those who take a prominent part in assemblies is often manifested. They want to carry out their own will, and therefore they resent the most godly and wise counsel as "interference."

From verse 5 we learn that the object of the discipline prescribed is not destruction (except of that which is evil), but salvation—restoration. Not as it was under the law. Then, the extreme of judgment was death—it was the destruction of the person. It is in keeping with the whole character of this dispensation of grace that restoration and salvation should be the object aimed at. But read on (verse 6)—here we find that another purpose of the discipline comes into view, viz., the safety of the assembly.

As to the sinning one, the object is restoration of soul. As to the assembly, the object is deliverance from the working of evil. "Know ye not that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump." That is its nature. If retained in the midst instead of being "purged out," it goes on spreading, infecting, corrupting, lowering the whole moral tone of the assembly.

Just as in that other simile used in 2 Tim. ii. 17, a cancer or gangrene—it eats on slowly but surely until the whole body is enfeebled, and until, the vital parts being reached, death

* *The Christian Witness.* By J. L. H.

ensues. When *such* a disease takes hold of a man his only safety is amputation.

And this is true of evil, whether as in 1 Cor. v. it be evil practices, or as in 2 Tim. ii. or Gal. v. 9, it be evil doctrine. There be some who teach that Scripture affords no warrant for excluding from fellowship for doctrinal evil. I know not how such blindness can exist in the face of the above scriptures; but add to these the Lord's commendation of Ephesus, in Rev. ii. 6, and His censure of Pergamos in ii. 15, and any who would in the face of these scriptures teach otherwise comes under the category of Titus iii. 10, 11.

Thus, then, the Lord instructs, first, for the benefit of the sinning one, that he be "put away;" second, for the benefit of the gathered saints, that he be "put away."

Verse 7—"Even as ye are unleavened," *i.e.*, that the assembly may practically correspond with that which it is in God's reckoning. In chap. vi. 11, it says, "But ye were washed, but ye were sanctified, but ye were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and in the Spirit of our God" (R.V.). God reckons His children to be "saints" or "holy ones," cleansed from all sin, and accepted in the Beloved, unleavened even as He is. Therefore ought the behaviour of such to correspond with their standing in Him, as it is written, "Be ye holy for I am holy."

Verse 8—"The unleavened bread of sincerity and truth." These are two things which God has joined together, and if you or I put them asunder we shall surely come to grief.

Many a man is "*sincere*," but not knowing *the truth* his sincerity is energising him to go persistently in opposition to the revealed will of God.

Others there are who have *the truth*—they know much—but they hold it not in sincerity and uprightness of heart. Such a man is a ready instrument for Satan. The "mystery of the faith," must be held in "a pure conscience"—truth and sincerity must go together.

Verse 13—"Put away from among yourselves that wicked person." Notice, it does not say put away from among yourselves that "brother;" the moment it comes to this, that according to the command of God the man has to be put away, then he stands before the saints as a "wicked

person." You may be convinced from your knowledge of the man that he really is a Christian; you may be waiting, and praying, and hoping, and expecting that he will be restored, but still, his behaviour is such that until God manifests that he is His, by repentance and restoration of soul he can only be recognised as a "wicked person."

Before we leave this chapter I would ask your attention to that word, "When ye are gathered together." I do not think that the saints generally at all realise the importance that God attaches to their being thus "gathered together."

In 1 Cor. xi. 18, we find the expression, "come together in the church." That does not mean come together in a building called a church—but rather "when ye are come together as God's assembly"—gathered together unto the Lord, to act in the Name of the Lord, carrying out that which He has commanded. This act of delivering to Satan, or of putting formally away from the fellowship, was not to be done in a meeting of *brethren*, nor yet in what is called "a business meeting;" but in a gathering of the assembly of God, all who compose the assembly being present so far as possible. And I believe there is a deep significance in this. If God permits evil so to develop in any individual, in spite of the internal discipline already alluded to—in spite of warning, beseeching, rebuking—so that at last it becomes evident that the only course remaining is the "putting away," He intends that such a calamity should have such a voice to the heart and conscience of all as nothing else could have. I believe that such an occasion should be availed of for the most solemn, soul-searching, conscience-arousing instruction and exhortation from the Word. I am persuaded that when God permits such cases to be manifested—a case of covetousness, or of drunkenness, or of fornication, or of railing—it is that every soul may tremble and bow before Him; that each may "consider himself" lest he also be tempted; that he that thinketh he standeth may take heed lest he fall; that any who are failing of the grace of God, any who are tampering with evil, though they may not yet have openly fallen, may be brought in self-judgment and brokenness of heart to yield themselves unto

the Lord. Oh, terrible warning! that one in our midst should have fallen so low as to be cut off from the assembly of God.

Brethren—is this the spirit in which such things have been dealt with? Is it not the case that often two or three leading brethren get the whole thing to do—that it is done in two minutes, the names “read out,” and away they go, no more about it, like being brought up before the magistrate for some petty offence? “Ten days in prison,” and away they go; that is the end of it. The church may have been asked to wait together, for a matter of solemn import had to be dealt with; but nineteen out of twenty go away, and neither know nor care what is being done.

In 2 Cor. ii. 6, we read of the punishment being inflicted of many. The allusion may be to Joshua vii. 25, where of Achan it is written, “And all Israel stoned him with stones,” or Deut. xvii. 7, “The hands of the witnesses shall be first upon him to put him to death, and afterward the hands of *all the people*.”

Thus the judgment became the act of “all Israel,” and so ought it to be in the assembly. Not “*They* put him away,” but “*We* put him away from among ourselves.”

THE DESCENT INTO EGYPT.

“All the souls that came *with Jacob* into Egypt, *which came out of his loins, besides Jacob's sons' wives*, all the souls were threescore and six (66)” (Gen. xvi. 26).

“*Thy fathers* went down into Egypt with threescore and ten (70) persons (Heb. ‘souls’)” (Deut. x. 22; *c.f.* Gen. xvi. 27) Exod. i. 5.

“Then sent Joseph, and called his father Jacob to him, and all *his kindred*, threescore and fifteen (75) souls” (Acts vii. 14).

IT has often been asserted, by superficial readers of “the sacred letters” (2 Tim. iii. 15), that these three statements of the number of souls that went down into Egypt contradict each other. But we, who believe that “every writing” of these sacred letters “is God-breathed” (2 Tim. iii. 16), cannot admit that contradictions exist therein. And here, as elsewhere, all we have to do, in order to convert an apparent discrepancy in the inspired narrative into an additional proof of its entire accuracy, is to honour the

Holy Scriptures by reading them carefully, and allowing them to explain themselves.

The first number quoted (66) is easily verified from the list of Israel’s descendants furnished in the earlier part of Gen. xvi. The persons who composed it are as follows:—

Reuben and 4 sons,	- - -	5 souls.
Simeon and 6 sons,	- - -	7 ”
Levi and 3 sons,	- - -	4 ”
Judah, 3 surviving sons and 2 grandsons,	- - -	6 ”
Issachar and 4 sons,	- - -	5 ”
Zebulun and 3 sons,	- - -	4 ”
Dinah,	- - -	1 ”
These were Israel’s descendants by Leah.		
Gad and 7 sons,	- - -	8 ”
Asher, 4 sons, 1 daughter, and 2 grandsons,	- - -	8 ”
These were his descendants by Zilpah.		
Benjamin and 10 sons,	- - -	11 ”
By Rachael.		
Dan and 1 son,	- - -	2 ”
Naphtali and 4 sons,	- - -	5 ”
By Bilhah.		

In all, - - - - 66 souls.

Thus we see that the first enumeration includes (according to the very precise definition given in Gen. xvi. 26) only such of Jacob’s direct posterity as accompanied him into Egypt, and does not include (1) Jacob himself, (2) Joseph, who was “in Egypt already” (Ex. i. 5), (3) “Jacob’s sons’ wives,” and (4) Joseph’s sons “which were born him in Egypt.”

The second figure (70) indicates the number of “the fathers” (Deut. x. 22) who went down into Egypt—not only those who went down “with Jacob,” but all who, having gone down, became the fathers of the people Israel. In addition to the 66 already mentioned, we have, therefore, to count (1) Jacob himself, (2) Joseph, who was in Egypt first of the family, and (3) Joseph’s two sons, Manasseh and Ephraim, born in Egypt, in order to see that “all the souls of Jacob’s house, which came into Egypt, were threescore and ten” (Gen. xvi. 27). Or, more particularly, Jacob and his descendants by Leah numbered 33 persons (Gen. xvi. 15), his descendants by

Zilpah, 16 (verse 18), his descendants by Rachael, including Joseph and his two sons, 14 (verse 22), and his descendants by Bilhah, 7 (verse 25)—which comes to the same thing.

The figure mentioned by Stephen, however, in his address to his judges—namely 75—is the one that has caused the greatest perplexity to the biblical student. This perplexity is increased instead of lessened by the fact that the LXX. version of the Old Testament Scriptures contain this very number, 75, in Gen. xlvi. 27 and Ex. i. 5, instead of 70 as we have it in the Hebrew or the English A.V. It is true that this reading of the Septuagint has often been appealed to as the solution of the difficulty, and it is assumed that, as Stephen was a *Grecian* (that is, a Greek-speaking Israelite, which must never be confounded with a *Greek*, who would be, of course, a Gentile), he quoted the LXX. of Gen. xlvi. 27; “the variation in numbers,” it is added, “not affecting his argument.”

But this explanation, besides being founded on a very dangerous principle, will be found, on examination, rather to have cut the knot than to have untied it.

Stephen defines the seventy-five persons of whom he spoke (Acts vii. 15) to be Joseph’s kindred, whom he (Joseph) sent and called to him at the particular time signified by the word “then” with which the verse opens in our translation—namely, when he sent and called to him his father Jacob also. But the five additional names required to make up the seventy-five of the Septuagint version of Gen. xlvi. 27, are given in an appendix to verse 20, where we are informed that Manasseh had one son, Machir, and one grandson, Galaad; while Ephraim had two sons, Soutalaam and Taam, and one grandson, Edom, or Edem, son of Soutalaam. These, although Joseph’s kindred, are not among those whom he sent and called to him, or who came to him with his father Jacob, and therefore not among those to whom reference was made by Stephen.

Personally, I have little doubt that the Septuagint appendix to Gen. xlvi. 20 crept into the text in the same way that so many of the additions in the later MSS. of the New Testament must have been introduced. What was written on a marginal note by one copyist,

intent on harmonising different scriptures, was, by the scribe who followed him, incorporated into the text. Thus the sons and grandsons of Manasseh and Ephraim have been supplied from Num. xxvi. 28 to 37 and 1 Chron. vii. 14 and 20, where all the names are to be found; Soutalaam being spelt Southala, Taam becoming Tanach, and Edom, Eden. This information, valuable as a reference had it been confined to the margin, became a source of confusion when it was discovered in the text, leading other copyists to adjust the figure 70 to the list of names as they read it, thus making 75, as they have done in v. 27.

Like others of more recent date, whom this mania for “reconciling texts” has led astray, they have left strong presumptive proof of their tampering with the sacred record. Thus Gen. xlvi. 27 and Ex. i. 5, which have been altered, are brought into contradiction with Deut. x. 22, which they have allowed to remain unchanged. Then their rendering of Gen. xlvi. contradicts itself, inasmuch as they reckon the sons of Joseph (v. 27) as *nine* souls, which number would bring the total up, not to 75, but to 79. Moreover, if I mistake not, the Samaritan Pentateuch, which often agrees with the LXX. against the Hebrew, agrees, in the verses under consideration, with the Hebrew, and differs from the LXX.

All this is merely negative, showing what Stephen did *not* mean. The Scriptures themselves, as we have received them, contain a sufficient indication of what he *did* refer to. The clue is furnished by the words, “besides Jacob’s sons’ wives” (Gen. xlvi. 26.) We may infer almost certainly, from what is recorded concerning Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, that the sons of the last-mentioned patriarch married among their near relations, who were also descendants of Abraham. “Jacob’s sons’ wives” (Gen. xlvi. 26) would thus be “Joseph’s kindred” (Acts vii. 14) by blood as well as by marriage. The mention of “the Canaanitish woman” in connection with Simeon (Gen. xlvi. 10), seems intended to indicate that his wife was no longer living. Judah, as we know from Gen. xxxviii., was a widower; while Joseph espoused Asenath, his wife, in Egypt. This leaves nine women to be added to the number of souls “that came

with Jacob into Egypt, *which came out of his loins,*" in order to give the grand total of "Joseph's kindred" (not including his father, Jacob), whom he sent and called unto him. Sixty-six and nine, equals seventy-five—the number given by Stephen.

Thus the three figures quoted are correct, and the exact definition that accompanies each of them has only to be attended to, in order to prove their correctness. The blunder of the LXX. suggests the further instructive fact—that another mode of counting might have been adopted, and a fourth sum total arrived at without, even then, introducing a contradiction into the narrative. A. P. M.

THE ALTAR OF BURNT OFFERING.

EXPOSITORY LECTURES on the TEMPLES of SOLOMON and EZEKIEL. By THOMAS NEWBERRY, Editor of "The Englishman's Bible."

THERE are five altars mentioned in the sacred Scriptures. The first is in Ex. xx. 24—"An altar of earth thou shalt make unto Me, and shalt sacrifice thereon thy burnt (ascending) offerings, and thy peace offerings, thy sheep, and thine oxen: in all places where I record My name I will come unto thee, and will bless thee." This was the simplest form of altar. Probably the first erected to Jehovah was of this character. We may well suppose that Cain erected an altar of earth; and Abel might have erected another of the same kind. This primitive altar sets forth the simplest form of worship through sacrifice unto God.

The next mentioned is

THE ALTAR OF UNHEWN STONE,

concerning which we read in Ex. xx. 25, 26—"And if thou wilt make Me an altar of stone, thou shalt not build it of hewn stone: for if thou lift up thy tool upon it, thou hast polluted it. Neither shalt thou go up by steps unto Mine altar, that thy nakedness be not discovered thereon." Probably the altars erected by the patriarchs were of this description. When Israel entered the land of promise, Joshua set up one of these. "Then Joshua built an altar unto Jehovah God of Israel in mount Ebal, as Moses the servant of Jehovah commanded the children of Israel,

as it is written in the book of the law of Moses" (Joshua viii. 30, 31). It is necessary to observe that the prohibition as to tool and steps is connected with the altar of stone alone. The altars in connection with the tabernacle and Solomon's temple could not have been constructed without tools. In the altar described in Ezekiel, the steps are expressly mentioned as being towards the east. You may ask, why these two prohibitions in connection with the altar of unhewn stone?

"Prayer is the simplest form of speech
That infant lips can try."

God would have us in His worship to be simple, unostentatious, and unartificial. Not as those that think that they shall be heard for their much speaking, and who think that God requires eloquence of words and finely-constructed sentences in order to acceptable worship and prevailing prayer. We are not to be of the number of those who love to stand praying in the synagogues and at the corner of the streets that they may be seen of men, who only expose their shame and nakedness to open view.

We now come to the third altar—

THE ALTAR CONNECTED WITH THE TABERNACLE

in the wilderness, of which we read in Ex. xxvii. 1-8; no longer of the simplest form as those already noticed—an altar of earth, or of unhewn stone, without steps—but an altar which required tools to form it, and would require steps or other means of ascent in order to reach it. It was to be of shittim wood. And shittim wood in connection with the tabernacle is that which is emblematic of the humanity of the Messiah; the Child born, as well as the Son given; the Seed of the woman, as well as the Son of God. It was to be of shittim wood, for God has not only provided a Lamb for a burnt offering, but He has also provided in the person of His own Son the altar upon which the sacrifice was to be laid. The shittim wood was to be overlaid with brass. Brass is the emblem of enduring strength. Christ was not only the Seed of the woman, but also the mighty God; not only capable of suffering, but mighty to endure, and mighty to save.

In the midst of the altar there was a grate of network of brass a cubit and a half from the ground, thus bringing the brazen grate in the centre of the altar to a level with the blood-stained propitiatory or mercy-seat. The Psalmist says—"In the day when I cried Thou answeredst me, and strengthenedst me with strength in my soul" (Ps. cxxxviii. 3). Though the sufferings of Immanuel were such as none but He could endure, God sustained Him in the hour of His deepest agony.

And he made staves of shittim wood, overlaid with brass, so that the altar might accompany the children of Israel in their wanderings in the desert.

We now pass on to the fourth altar—

THE ALTAR CONNECTED WITH SOLOMON'S TEMPLE

(2 Chr. iv. 1). There is no shittim wood mentioned in connection with it, but only brass. We have in this another type of the One through whom worship is alone offered to God. It was much larger than the altar in connection with the Tabernacle, because it was for a larger company of worshippers. Instead of it being five cubits square and three cubits in height, it was twenty cubits square and ten cubits in height. The size of the altar corresponds to the internal measurement of the holiest of all—twenty cubits square and ten cubits in height—equal to the height of the cherubim which stood ten cubits high, and whose wings extended ten cubits on either side, and meeting over the centre of the propitiatory. This may suggest to our mind that the atonement is commensurate and co-extensive with the holiness of God.

As the altar would represent in round numbers about forty feet square and twenty feet in height, some mode of ascent is required, and steps are enjoined in connection with the millennial altar. Inasmuch as morning by morning the wood was to be laid in order on the altar upon the fire, and the sacrifices, divided into their parts were to be laid in order upon the wood, and the various sacrifices of the day—the burnt offering, peace offering, sin offering, and trespass offering—laid out in order; and as in the time of the dedication of the temple,

when Solomon offered up sacrifices which could not be told or numbered for multitude, it is manifest that access was required on every side.

We now pass to the altar mentioned in Ezekiel xliii. 13-18—

THE ALTAR CONNECTED WITH THE MILLENNIAL TEMPLE.

This will be in dimension less than the altar of Solomon. It is intermediate in size between the altar connected with the tabernacle and that of the temple of Solomon. It was twelve cubits square and seven cubits in height.

Why has God enjoined an altar in connection with the millennial temple? During the present dispensation Israel has no altar nor sacrifice. The only thing which in the Christian Church takes their place is the Lord's Supper, commemorative of His broken body and shed blood. But no sooner is the present dispensation closed by the coming of the Lord for His Church than Israel again comes to the front, and the Sabbath-day—the seventh day—comes again into force. Hence our Lord said, "Pray that your flight be not on the Sabbath-day." During the millennial period the seventh day, Sabbath, will be observed, not only by Israel, but by the world.

"From one Sabbath to another, shall all flesh come to worship before Me, saith Jehovah" (Isaiah lxvi. 23).

FOR WHAT PURPOSE WERE SACRIFICES INSTITUTED?

God Himself was the originator of sacrifices. When our first parents had sinned, "Jehovah Elohim made coats of skin, and clothed them," instead of the fig-leaf covering of their own devising.

"Abel offered a more excellent sacrifice than Cain." What did he offer? Of the firstlings of the flock. Sacrifices were ordained and commanded to be offered by God, to teach this important truth—that sin is a capital offence; that "the wages of sin is death"; that "the soul that sinneth, it shall die." Secondly, "That without shedding of blood is no remission" (Heb. ix. 22). "God will by no means clear the guilty." Sin must be atoned for; blood must be shed. I believe that is the principal thought in sacrifice. That

God, though gracious and loving, is also infinitely holy, just, and true; and in order for God to remit the smallest sin, that sin must be atoned for by death.

Sacrifice sets forth another equally important truth, and that is *substitution*; the innocent offered up instead of the guilty; the perfect for the imperfect; the clean for the unclean. This is shown where God provided, in the place of Isaac, a ram, caught in the thicket by his horns, which was offered up instead of Isaac.

Then, again, why those innumerable sacrifices enjoined and offered under the law? Day by day there was the daily lamb, morning and evening. Week by week, Sabbath by Sabbath, year by year, and on certain occasions thousands of offerings smoked on Jehovah's altar. Why? Teaching another truth, viz., that these victims were insufficient of themselves to put away sin. The blood of bulls and of goats could never take away sin. These victims were inferior; they failed, therefore, in meeting the requirements of the infinitely holy and righteous God. If there had been an offering that could have purged the conscience, then these would have ceased. "But in these sacrifices there is a remembrance again made of sins." Why, then, these offerings? They were a foreshadowing of God's own sacrifice. In Genesis xxii. we have a wonderful unfolding of Divine truth. There Abraham was called upon to offer up his well-beloved son. We see them going up together, and Isaac saying to his father, "Behold the fire and the wood; but where is the lamb for a burnt offering?" What is the Divinely-inspired answer? "God will provide Himself a lamb for a burnt offering." God has provided Himself a Lamb for a burnt offering. It is the voice of Jehovah that says, "Awake, O sword, against My Shepherd, and against the man that is My fellow, saith the Lord of Hosts: smite the Shepherd" (Zech. xiii. 7). Israel will confess in the latter day, as we, by grace, now confess, "All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and Jehovah hath laid upon Him the iniquity of us all" (Isaiah liii. 6). That which was foreshadowed by the ram, the bullock, and the goat, had its full accomplishment in the person of Immanuel, as the Seed of the woman; as the Child born He

was able to succour, He was capable of dying; but as the Son of God, Jehovah's fellow, His Divine nature gave infinite value to the atoning sacrifice which He offered. The Just One suffered for the unjust: He who knew no sin was made sin for us; thus did the sword awake against Jehovah's fellow. There is the sinless Son of Man, the woman's Seed, the Son of the virgin, "holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners," led as a lamb to the slaughter. There in all the sinlessness of His humanity; there in all the value of His Deity. "Lo, He comes with clouds; and every eye shall see Him." What then? Israel shall say, "This is our God, we have waited for Him; we will be glad and rejoice in His salvation." "Blessed be He that cometh in the name of Jehovah." Then the word shall be fulfilled, "They shall look upon Him whom they pierced, and mourn for Him." There is a grand and glorious day for Israel. When they see Him "a nation shall be born in a day." Then Israel shall be saved. In the meantime Israel has been set aside, and God is showing mercy to the Gentiles. But there is a solemn word to us. "If thou continue in His goodness: otherwise thou also shalt be cut off" (Rom. xi. 22). God is able to graft them into their own olive tree, and He will do it. When God has taken out of the Gentiles a people to His name, He will return and build again the tabernacle of David that has fallen down, and set it up; and so all Israel will be saved. Then the restoration of Israel shall be as life from the dead to the Gentile world.

CHARACTERISTICS OF GOD'S CHILDREN.

In faith,	-	believers,	-	Acts xvi. 31.
In relationship,	-	children,	-	Rom. viii. 16.
In standing,	-	saints,	-	1 Cor. i. 2.
In knowledge,	-	disciples,	-	John viii. 31.
In walk,	-	pilgrims,	-	Heb. xi. 13.
In influence,	-	lights,	-	Matt. v. 14.
In testimony,	-	witnesses,	-	Acts i. 8.
In work,	-	servants,	-	Rom. vi. 22.
In conflict,	-	soldiers,	-	2 Tim. ii. 3.
In communion,	-	friends,	-	John xv. 15.
In expectation,	-	heirs,	-	Rom. viii. 17.

ETERNAL LIFE.

3. THE PROCLAMATION OF ETERNAL LIFE.

It was fitting that the Revealer of life should be its first proclamation. Neither to patriarch nor prophet, apostle nor evangelist, angel nor archangel was delegated this high privilege; it was reserved for Him whose sole right it was to preach the first full gospel of life that human ears ever heard.

He, as we have seen, was the life manifested in the flesh—proved to be it by bestowing in grace life to the dead, grappling with death in its own dark domain, and being grandly victorious over it.

During the complete course of His ministry on earth He was incessantly proclaiming this gospel to men, sometimes with glad acceptance, and, again, at other times with rude rejection. On one occasion, near the close of His ministry, so great was the defection among His professed disciples on account of the truth preached, that He, with grief-weighted heart, turned to a few of those who gladly heard His words and said: "Will ye also go away?" To which one nobly answered, "Lord, to whom can we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life" (John vi. 66-69). Yes! lips never spake like His; the words of life were ever welling from them, like streams from a perennial fountain, producing life, beauty, and fruitfulness wherever they flowed.

As the Light of Life He walked through the worse than Egyptian darkness of this world, casting illuminating and life-imparting rays upon all who, though sitting in the shadow of death, believably turned to Him.

As the Water of Life He carried vital refreshment to the thirsty souls who, in the burning desert scene, cried, "Give me this water that I thirst not."

He, the Living Bread, came down from heaven to give His flesh for the life of a famine-stricken race; and those among the hunger-bitten sons of men who ate of Him lived; and none who did so perished. His words, works, and ways were a constant proclamation of life for the dead.

O, servants of God, ye who would preach a full gospel, study long and well His own words; make them yours by appropriating faith; let their spirit and teaching saturate

yours; meditate upon them until you feel the pulsations of His life within you. Let no considerations fetter your mind, or close your lips from preaching the very truth that He so constantly proclaimed. Preach His very words—"Whosoever believeth on Him shall not perish, but have eternal life." Hedge them not about with restrictions or conditions, or you mutilate and pervert the Gospel of Christ. We unhesitatingly say we know of no condition attached to the preaching of the Gospel in this or any aspect of it.

"The Spirit and the Bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And WHOSEVER will, let him take of the water of life freely."

4. THE PRESENTATION OF ETERNAL LIFE.

"The gift (free gift) of God is eternal life" (Rom. vi. 23). "God hath given unto us eternal life" (1 John vi. 11). "I give unto My sheep eternal life" (John x. 28). The Spirit giveth life" (2 Cor. iii. 6).

Nothing can possibly be clearer than this, that eternal life is the free unmerited gift of the Triune God to unworthy sinners. Mark you, this life is not something evolved out of man; there is no spark of vitality in him that may be fanned into a flame—no more than there is fire in the iceberg, or snow in the heart of a volcano. Its instincts and attributes are not found in humanity, therefore it can neither be evolved on the part of man, nor evoked on the part of God.

Some maintain that the Gospel is the instrument by which life is evoked from the soul, in some such way as the solar rays evoke the life of the seed; but there is this difference between a seed and the soul—the one has life in it, the other has none. When a corrupt tree brings forth good fruit, when a bitter fountain sends forth sweet water, when men gather grapes from thorns, and figs from thistles, then you may expect the impossible, viz., life out of death.

This life eternal cannot be inherited by any; if so, surely the young man who came to Jesus saying, "Good Master, what shall I do that I may inherit eternal life?" (Mark x. 17-22) would have obtained it thus; and if he, why not others? But his youth and riches, his position and power, his stainless moral life, his

genuine politeness, his intense earnestness, coupled with his humility, all did not avail to procure for him this blessing. He had to learn this one lesson: that he must take his place as a bankrupt sinner, and receive life simply as a free gift. This is the only way to obtain this boon.

Need we say, this life is not to be *merited* by any; nothing can be done to merit its bestowment.

Yet how long it takes even divinely awakened ones to see this; how severe the process through which some have to pass before all thought of creature merit is got rid of, and before they see the utter hopelessness of being, or doing anything to merit eternal life. How long and frequently do they clutch at this rope of sand, thinking there is something meritorious in convictions, repentance, prayers, and faith, to procure life for them. Good, and necessary as these are in their own place, yet let them be as deep and as real as God could make them, or as the human soul could experience or bear, yet not all combined could suffice to merit or purchase this priceless blessing. If so, then it could no longer be a *gift*, neither could it be by grace. God presents it to men as His free gift—the purchase of the blood of Christ. He has Himself removed every barrier and hindrance to its free reception and full enjoyment by the sin-atonement death of His Son; therefore, you, my friend, may receive it at once. The love, the grace, and the gift of life is yours for the taking. Will you take it and say, “Thanks be unto God for His unspeakable gift?” This is all He requires; this is all you need.

(To be continued).

Correspondence.

DEAR BROTHER,—A practice has crept into many assemblies, of late years, chiefly in connection with children's work (but not confined to it in some instances), of teaching *by objects* such as a loaf, to express the bread of life; an apple, rotten in the centre, to represent the human heart; &c., &c. And this is justified on the ground that our Lord largely referred to objects in nature in His teaching; but while this is true, are we to *expect* that the Holy Spirit, in this dispensation (which is essentially a spiritual one), will reach the heart through the senses, or only through the Word? Our blessed Lord said to His disciples—“I have many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. Howbeit when He, the Spirit

of Truth, is come, He will guide you into all truth,” &c. Have we any warrant to suppose He will use any other instrument than the Word? See John xiv. 26, xvii. 17; Eph. i. 18, and many similar scriptures. Do you not consider that if a purely spiritual work were carried on without such attractions as magic lanterns, acrostics, painting pictures for prizes, &c. (such things may or may not be right, *apart from the holy things of God*; I do not go into this), the Lord would honour it? Is it not a mistake (not to use a much stronger word) to suppose these things are aids to the Holy Ghost?

Again, is the system of Bible searching for words, like ordinary lesson books, calculated to instil reverence into young minds for the Word of God?

I ask these questions as the minds of some godly ones are being exercised about them. If such things are right, you could perhaps help to relieve their consciences; if not right, the sooner they are discontinued the better.—I am, dear Brother, yours very affectionately,
ENQUIRER.

HAVING observed the frequency with which evangelists and teachers visit various towns, may I ask why so many of the country assemblies are passed by? Is it understood that they don't stand in need of evangelising or teaching, being *already perfect*, or are they not worth the time thus spent?—Yours in the Lord,
B. T.

Questions and Answers.

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

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.

We await further replies to these questions:—

How does Christ, the High Priest, make intercession with God for the *sins* of His people as to *reconciliation*, seeing they have been reconciled to God by the death of His Son?

How is the difference between Matt. xvi. 28 and Mark ix. 1 to be explained, as our Lord surely could not have repeated His saying using other words the second time?

We also invite replies to the following questions:—

Is it scriptural to appoint two or three brethren to see those that apply for fellowship, or should it be left to the guiding of the Spirit?

Did Christ receive power at His baptism to work miracles? Is it derogatory to our Lord's holy Person and Name to speak of Him in similar terms as of Moses or other Old Testament prophets who wrought miracles by *imparted* power?

What is to be understood by Heb. iii. 14, "For we are made partakers of Christ, if we hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast unto the end"? Are we to understand that, though saved, we can be lost?

QUESTION 311.—What is the meaning of the word "heretic" in Titus iii. 10? and does that scripture afford ground for excommunication?

Ans. A.—"A man that is an heretic," is, literally, "a factious man"—"one who creates or fosters factions." Connecting the word "factious" with what goes before (ver. 9), concerning the avoidance of "foolish questions, and genealogies, and contentions, and strivings about the law," which are "unprofitable and vain," such a man would be (quoting Bloomfield), "One who takes up any doctrine in opposition to, or inconsistent with, the fundamental truths of the Gospel, especially if anxious to promulgate his own notions, and from a vain glorious desire of being the head of a sect." According to this, "a factious man" has already virtually taken an outside place as regards the Christian assembly, and therefore it is *there* he is to be dealt with, if, peradventure, God may give him repentance to the renunciation of error and the acknowledging of the truth.

Should "the first and second admonition" prove ineffectual, the apostle's direction to Titus then is, "reject," or, as Alford and R.V. (margin) give it, "avoid" him; or probably better still is Rotherham's rendering of the passage—"From a party-man, after a first and second admonition, *excuse thyself*." The same Greek word, variously translated in A.V., "excuse," "intreat," "avoid," &c., is found in 1 Tim. iv. 7 and 2 Tim. ii. 23, in the identical form in which it occurs in Titus iii. 10 ("paraitou"), and is, by the last-named authority, in both cases rendered as in the passage before us—"But from the profane and old wives' stories, *excuse thyself*"; "But from the foolish and undisciplined questionings, *excuse thyself*." The meaning of this is made plain by a comment from Bengel, "*Reject*—cease to admonish him; for what use is it? It would be useless labour" (Matt. vii. 6). Or, as was said of another, "Ephraim is joined to idols: *let him alone*"—that is, have no fellowship with him in his position, doctrines, or practice; leave him in the outside place he has chosen for himself.

Inasmuch, therefore, as the scripture in question contemplates a man who, although once, by profession at least, *within* the assembly, has now assumed a place *without*, in fact, seeking there to "draw away the disciples after him," it surely is a misunderstanding and a misapplication of it to excommunicate on the ground of it. The person has already practically excommunicated himself, and the action prescribed is with a view to his being righteously brought back, failing which the final step is to be taken, *viz.*, *avoidance*. On the general question of excommunication, it may be remarked:—Before the amputation of a limb is resorted to, the presence of disease, threatening the whole body, should first be demonstrated beyond a question; and next, that ere the adoption of such extreme measures

all possible means for the removal of the disease and the preservation of the limb should have been tried and proved unavailing. *Cutting off* may be the most expeditious method of getting rid of a troublesome "member"; but if, as the result of wise, patient, godly discipline, there is a righteous disposal of the difficulty with the retaining of those involved, greater spiritual power and skill would be displayed, and dishonour to the Lord, the triumph of Satan, and the sorrows of division (so oft ensuing), with all its attendant evils, prevented. Where it is a case to which such a word as, "Put away from among yourselves," &c., applies, of course it is very different. D. R.

Ans. B.—The word "heretic" here is an adjective, attached to the word man, and might lawfully be rendered a "factious" man, *i.e.*—a man full of crotchets—making difficulties over small things, and dwelling on minor points, to the neglect of great principles. Such a man, after one or two warnings, have no more to say to; leave him alone; and let him learn, by the refusal of the godly to listen to him, that his notions are vain. The word "reject" does not seem to refer to excommunication, but to refusal to *receive as a teacher*. A. O. M.

QUESTION 312.—If a child of God commits a grievous sin, and sincerely repents of it, will he then be chastised or punished by God for that sin?

Ans. A.—In David's case, though from Psalms xxxii. and li. there is full proof of genuine repentance, yet there is the severe and open punishment, and the reason assigned is "because thou hast made the enemies of God to blaspheme." The holiness of God is thus honoured. Hebrews xiii. shows us that "chastening" takes the form of the *rod*, as also of the reproof. "Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap," is a standing principle of God's equitable dealing. We cannot lay down any rule as to *how* God may see fit to deal in every several instance, but we may be assured that *true* repentance (and restitution if possible) will always bring about with it the acquiescence of the soul to bear any punishment God may see fit to inflict. On the other hand, it would be most dangerous to our souls to conceive the idea that the exercise of repentance condoned meet chastisement. Well for us if the genuine repentance lead us to say, "Let me fall into the hands of the Lord, for His mercies are great." A. O. M.

[**Editor's Note.**—As indicated in the above reply, the case of David is in point. God is a Father to His children; but He is also a Lawgiver and Governor. In grace and in righteousness, on the ground of propitiation, He forgives, fully and freely. But in *government* He may visit the iniquities of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation. The history of Jehoshaphat, and all the unutterable evils that resulted from his ungodly alliance with Ahab, is a case in point also. There is, moreover, the law of sowing and reaping (see Gal. vi. 7, 8). The sin, though forgiven, may yield bitter fruit, which must be reaped in due time, and the sorrow of it borne in patience and humiliation.]

The great mercy of God, nevertheless, often comes in to modify even this; and, when expecting great judgment, His erring ones are often surprised at His tender mercy. "Thou wast a God that forgavest them, though Thou tookest vengeance of their inventions" (Ps. xcix. 8).]

QUESTION 313.—Please explain 1 Peter iv. 17.

Ans. A.—Those "elect strangers," to whom the apostle was writing, had already entered upon an experience of "fiery trial" which was destined to wax hotter as the time went on. To be "reproached for the name of Christ," to "suffer as a Christian," was to "suffer according to the will of God"; and thus He who "maketh the wrath of man to praise Him" can use man as His hand (Ps. xvii. 14) in disciplinary dealings with His people, making all to issue in the eternal blessing of the persecuted. These sufferings, with which chapter iv. and other parts of the epistle are so much occupied, are evidently meant by the "judgment" which "must begin at the house of God,"—"the house of God" being, of course, *believers* described in the following clause as "*us*," and who, in the next verse, are called "the righteous," and in chap. ii. 5, "as living stones are built up a *spiritual house*." Temporal judgment begins "at us" as "the house of God"—who, "when we are judged, are *chastened* of the Lord that we should not be condemned with the world" (1 Cor. xi. 32)—and ends with "them that obey not the Gospel of God" ("the ungodly and the sinner") in *eternal* judgment, *utter perdition*. Solemn words for these days of smooth things, when men would eliminate from the Word of God all that pertains to "justice and judgment," which, nevertheless, must continue to be "the habitation (foundation) of His throne." D. R.

Ans. B.—This verse gives the reason why God allowed "fiery trial" to come on the early church. The passage from verse 12 to verse 19 is one sentence. "The house of God" has to endure, in common with the unbelieving nation, severe trial. In this case it would serve to purge out mere professors, and it would purify the true-hearted, and thereby glorify God. But if God permitted His own to suffer thus, how terrible the end of the unbelieving nation! and, in principle, the end of every unbeliever! For, it is added, if the righteous, the true believers, be thus, with difficulty—*i.e.*, by the way of severe trial and suffering—saved (implying the necessity of trial to purify, and so manifest the real faith of the godly), where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear? What hope can they have? Wherefore, let all persecuted for righteousness' sake, commit themselves to the Faithful Creator.

A. O. M.

Ans. C.—This opens a very solemn and deeply instructive aspect of the truth, but one only little remembered in the present day. The allusion is doubtless to Ezekiel ix. 6. We must never forget that God is light, and that whatever may be the fulness of that grace which brings salvation nothing can possibly change the nature of God. He cannot have anything in His presence which is contrary to that nature, and the nearer our relationship to Him,

so much the more jealous is He that we should be in heart and life agreeable to Him. He said of Israel, "You only have I known of all the families of the earth: therefore I will punish you for all your iniquities" (Amos iii. 2). The eleventh chapter of the first epistle to the Corinthians shows how jealous the Lord is over those who bear His name, and who profess to own Him Lord at His table. He waits for us to judge ourselves; but if we fail to do so, He chastens us that we may not be condemned with the world. What a blessed effect would be produced in us individually and collectively if we always bore in mind these solemn yet precious truths! What withering would there be to the flesh, and how chastened and how sober should we be in all our ways, and especially in our capacity as forming part of His house! There would never arise such a question as that which precedes the one in your December number, to which I am endeavouring to respond, if all felt that we had to do with Him who begins in judgment at the house of God, and whose "eyes are as a flame of fire; and His feet like unto fine brass, as if they burned in a furnace" (Rev. i. 14, 15). Precious Saviour! who hast in tenderest love called us around Thy table to remember Thee in Thy death. How well does it become us to tread with unshod feet where Thou art in the midst; while, with adoring hearts, we "show the Lord's death, till He come."

Another point to be considered is, that whilst *this* is emphatically the "day of salvation," so that the glad tidings of the grace of God are proclaimed to the uttermost parts of the earth, it is equally true, that "Now is the judgment of this world." We are apt to lose sight of this side of the truth; but if the Gospel reveals God's righteousness for the sinner who believes in Jesus, "the wrath of God is also revealed from heaven, against all ungodliness." If the resurrection of Christ from the dead assures the believer that his sins are blotted out, and that he is justified, so, on the other hand, the same resurrection of Christ is the public declaration to the world on God's part that "He has appointed a day, in the which He will judge the world in righteousness by that Man whom He hath ordained" (Acts xvii. 31).

The fact is, the sentence has gone forth, though not yet executed; the present is simply a time of God's long-suffering patience. "The Judge standeth before the door," but God "is not willing that any should perish; but that all should come to repentance." May He write these things upon our hearts, that we may not only know how we ought "to behave ourselves in the house of God," but that we may, with a deeper sense of the solemn character of the moment in which we are called to witness for Him, serve Him more faithfully, and "wait for His Son from heaven," as those who have heard Him say, "Surely I come quickly." G. A. S.

[**Editor's Note.**—It is noticeable that the original is "from (*apo*) the house of God." It is a judgment beginning there, but proceeding onwards toward all. This is analogous to Ezek. ix. 6, and Jer. xxv. 29, where the same principle is seen. Prov. xi. 31 is also so similar as to suggest a reference to it in the mind of the writer.]

BIBLICAL SOLUTIONS

of difficult and apparently unreconcilable portions of Scripture.

No. 6.

BY A. P. MACDONALD.

The former papers were—

- | | | |
|---------------------------------------|-------|-------------|
| 1. That which was spoken by Jeremiah, | - - - | June, 1888. |
| 2. "He shall be called a Nazarene," | - - - | Oct., 1888. |
| 3. The Golden Censer, | - - - | Nov., 1888. |
| 4. "He led them to Samaria," | - - - | Jan., 1889. |
| 5. The Descent into Egypt, | - - - | Feb., 1889. |

Others will follow at intervals.

The attention of all thoughtful readers of the Word is commended to these helpful papers.

FROM THE EXODUS TO THE TEMPLE.

1 Kings vi. 1. "And it came to pass in the four hundred and eightieth year after the children of Israel were come out of the land of Egypt, in the fourth year of Solomon's reign over Israel, in the month Zif, which is the second month, that he began to build the house of the Lord."

Acts xiii. 17-22. "The God of this people of Israel chose our fathers, and exalted the people when they dwelt as strangers in the land of Egypt, and with an high arm brought He them out of it. And about the time of forty years suffered He their manners in the wilderness. And when He had destroyed seven nations in the land of Chanaan, He divided their land to them by lot. And after that He gave unto them judges about the space of four hundred and fifty years, until Samuel the prophet. And afterward they desired a king: and God gave unto them Saul the son of Cis, a man of the tribe of Benjamin, by the space of forty years. And when He had removed him, He raised up unto them David to be their king."

THE foregoing dates have occasioned no little difficulty in the chronology, and appear inconsistent with each other. On the one hand we have the, at first sight, unequivocal declaration of **1 Kings vi. 1**, which assigns 480 years as the period between the Exodus and the foundation of the Temple; on the other, the language of Paul which assigns 450 years to the time from the division of Chanaan to Samuel the prophet. That the difference involved is very considerable may be seen from the following extension of the scheme of dates in Acts xiii.:

Acts xiii. :—

- | | | |
|--|-------|------------------|
| V. 18. The wanderings in the wilderness, | - - - | 40 years. |
| V. 20. The period of the judges, | - - - | 450 " |
| V. 21. The reign of Saul, | - - - | 40 " |
| | | <hr/> 350 years. |

To which must be added :—

- | | | |
|---|-------|-----------|
| The reign of David (1 Kings ii. 11), | - - - | 40 years. |
| 3 completed years of Solomon's reign (1 Kings vi. 1), | - - - | 3 " |

Giving, from the Exodus to the Temple, - - - - 573 years.

The Old Testament chronicler and the New Testament apostle deal with the same space of time, the beginning and end of which are fixed points, yet the latter makes it nearly a century longer than the former! And their figures seem inelastic, as figures usually are.

Here also, as in most passages of real difficulty, we have confusion worse confounded by the alterations introduced into the various MSS. by translators and copyists. Thus the Septuagint version of **1 Kings vi. 1** differs from the Hebrew; while the New Testament MSS. offer an alternative reading (adopted by Lachmann, Tischendorf, Tregelles, Wordsworth, and the R.V.) of Acts xiii. 19-20, according to which "He gave them their land for an inheritance, for about 450 years: and after these things He gave them judges until Samuel the prophet"—whatever that may mean.

All sorts of expedients have been resorted to in order to get rid of this difficulty. Some, following Usher, have accepted the period as one of 480 years, and have adjusted all the intervening chronology to this date, considering **1 Kings vi.** sufficiently explicit to overrule the conflicting testimony of Acts xiii. Others disregard that passage, which they deem an interpolation, because of the variation in numbers between the Hebrew and the LXX., and the absence of any date in the parallel passage in **2 Chron. iii. 2**. Lastly some have endeavoured to explain the not very intelligible words of the Revised Version of Acts xiii. 19-20 so as to bring them into harmony with **1 Kings vi. 1**.

But suppose that the figures, as we have received them, are genuine! If so it is obvious that each writer must have adopted a different system of calculation. This, I submit, is the true state of the case.

Paul, in the synagogue at Antioch in Pisidia, gives an outline of the history of

Israel, and fills in the dates according to their simple chronological order. But the inspired writer of the Book of the Kings, in giving the date of the foundation of the Temple, mentions only the years that Jehovah will acknowledge in connection with His House. And, in a statement of sacred or prophetic time, the Lord only takes into account the years of Israel's national existence!

It remains, then, to determine during how many years Israel's national existence was in abeyance in the period between the Exodus and the foundation of Jehovah's House. The Book of Judges supplies us with the required information. In it we find that the people were subjected to five periods of captivity to the surrounding nations on account of their repeated departures from Jehovah. Five times Israel sank into the condition of a mere province of some more powerful neighbour, and five times its liberties had to be reconquered by the edge of the sword. The duration of these captivities is recorded as follows:—

Judges

iii. 8.	Under the king of Mesopotamia,	- - - -	8 years.
iii. 14.	Under the king of Moab,	18	"
iv. 3.	" the king of Canaan,	20	"
vi. 1.	" Midian,	- 7	"
xiii. 1.	" the Philistines,	- 40	"
	In all,	- - - -	93 years.

It is with a feeling of astonishment and awe that one finds, on deducting these 93 years of servitude from the total of 573, that the remainder is the exact number of the mystic era of the Book of Kings—namely 480 years. This coincidence is too striking to be merely accidental. Its significance is too evident to be misunderstood. It shews us that Jehovah reckons the years of His people's servitude as though they had not been. It tells us that Solomon began to build Jehovah's House in the 480th year of Israel's history as a free people!

An objection has been raised to the foregoing solution, because of the omission of the 18 years' servitude to the Ammonites mentioned in Judges x. 8, 9. But this omission is not arbitrary—on the contrary it is an exception which proves the rule. Let us read

the narrative: "Eighteen years [oppressed they] all the children of Israel *that were beyond Jordan* in the land of the Amorites, which is in Gilead. And the children of Ammon passed over Jordan to fight against Judah, and against Benjamin, and against the house of Ephraim; so that Israel was sore distressed." But to be sore distressed—to become subject to disastrous invasion, and to lose important provinces—does not annul the national standing of a state. The Danes have been defeated on their own territory at Dybbol, and the French at Sedan. The former have lost Slesvig and Holstein, and the latter Alsace and Lorraine. But Denmark and France are none the less nations, maintaining their independent existence as before.

Besides its intrinsic interest, this solution is valuable as throwing light on Daniel's prophecy of the 70 heptads, where the same system of reckoning is followed. From the rebuilding of the fortifications of Jerusalem under Nehemiah, and the consequent resumption by that city of its status as capital of a free state, to the proposal of Himself by the Messiah to His people, as the King bringing salvation, according to the prophecy of Zechariah and the record of Matt. xxi., was 69 weeks of years, or 483 years. The present interval, during which Israel is scattered and the Holy City trodden under foot, counts for nothing. The 70th, and last, week of years will begin when Israel again takes its place as a nation among nations, and is acknowledged as such by a treaty confirmed with a foreign power. The power who will confirm such a treaty will be the Coming Prince of Daniel: the Wild Beast of Revelation.

ON DISCIPLINE IN THE ASSEMBLY.

FROM NOTES OF AN ADDRESS BY J. R. C.

WE have seen the two-fold object of putting away the sinning one, viz.: that he may be brought to repentance and that the assembly may be blessed.

These two results are seen in the second epistle. See chap. vii. 8-11, and also chap. ii. 6-8. From the passage referred to in chap. vii., you see what a searching of hearts there had been in the Corinthian assembly.

The discipline had not only wrought the deliverance of the sinning one, but also had produced a most salutary effect in the souls of the saints generally. For illustration of this, turn with me to Lev. xiv. 33, &c. If it was suspected that there was a plague in the house, the first person to be told about it was the priest. Well would it be for us, if, when sin and difficulty arise in the assembly, we only bore in mind that we can do nothing without the Priest! He is the first to be told, the first whose help must be sought.

I do not stay to dwell upon the various details, though they are most instructive, but remark that first there was to be the removal of the leprous stones, next the scraping of the whole house, next the substituting of other stones, and, lastly, the plastering again of the whole. If this did not effectually eradicate the plague, then the house was to be taken down; and it is noticeable that this was to be done by the priest, no mention being made of any other taking part in this work as in the removal of the stones, the scraping and the replacing of stones.

Now the point I want to draw attention to is this, that although only one stone or two stones really had the plague, *every stone* in the house required to be scraped and replastered. And is not this exactly what we find in 2 Cor. vii. There had been a scraping of every heart and conscience, the edge of God's truth cutting into every soul like a circumcising knife. And discipline fails of its object where this is not its result. The plague will break out again at some other point or in some other form.

We have seen that this solemn act of discipline is to be done when the church is gathered together, and we have seen something of the importance of this. *lev. xiv. 33*

But I would add that, if the proper result of the discipline is to be secured it is of the utmost importance that the action be unanimous.

It is in the epistles to the Corinthians that we find the very strongest exhortations to oneness of mind and judgment.

Now in order to unanimity two things are essential. First, there must be certainty as to matters of fact. Secondly, there must be certainty as to the nature of the sin. Now, as

to evidence, I will ask you to turn to a few scriptures to ascertain what is the Divine method.

Deut. xiii. 12—"If thou shalt hear say in one of thy cities"—mark this word, "hear say"; if it is only "hear say," you cannot act upon that—"then shalt thou *enquire*, and make search, and ask diligently." Thus the facts are to be elicited and the whole report taken out of the region of "hear say" and brought to light upon credible and reliable evidence. "And, behold, if it be truth, and the thing certain, that such abomination is wrought among you."

But what if it be not *certain*? What if there be not sufficient evidence to make the thing certain to all? What if there be one who honestly has a doubt as to whether the accused is guilty? Then clearly it is a call from God to defer action until further light is given. Commit the matter to God, and seek that He may make plain to all the guilt or innocence of the accused.

To act in uncertainty, to act prematurely, is the sure way to bring about division among saints, to frustrate the object of discipline, to bring the way of truth into disrepute, and to dishonour the name of the Lord.

Again, in Deut. xvii. 4, we have the same steps—diligent enquiry, the thing found to be true, and this upon such evidence that it is "*certain*."

In this passage, verse 6, we have a further safeguard—"At the mouth of two witnesses, or three witnesses, shall he that is worthy of death be put to death; but at the mouth of one witness he shall not be put to death."

The same is confirmed in Num. xxxv. 30. This is God's law as to evidence; and we shall see that it is not abrogated, but confirmed, in the New Testament.

And remember that the final act of putting away from the fellowship of the assembly answers to putting to death under the law, and the evidence in such a case must proceed upon the same lines. See Matt. xviii. 15. Here the same principle is asserted by the Lord Himself; so that if every effort to "gain" the erring brother should fail, and the matter must ultimately come before the assembly, it may be brought forward in such a form as to carry conviction to all.

Thus we see that the evidence which is to satisfy the assembly must be just such as would carry a unanimous verdict with an unbiassed jury.

The same principle is adhered to by the apostle in 2 Cor. xiii. 1. Notwithstanding the searching of hearts and clearing of themselves which had taken place, as recorded in chap. vii., still the apostle knew right well that there was much still remaining to be brought to light and judged. He does not give Corinth up, but he declares his purpose of coming to them, and that, when at last he does come, it will be to exercise in judgment his apostolic authority; not merely calling upon the church to "put away," but, by the power committed to him as an apostle, delivering to Satan. But although he might have acted in supernatural discernment as well as with supernatural power, he calls them to act with him, declaring that whatever he does shall be based upon evidence which they must supply, and every word of which must be substantiated "in the mouth of two or three witnesses."

Again the same rule in 1 Tim. v. 19.

Thus we see how important is *certainty* as to matters of fact. If there be not sufficient evidence to make the matter certain to all, then the only course open is to commit it to God in faith until He makes it plain.

It may be hard to *wait*. It is always irksome to the flesh. It is hard for the zealous in the assembly, and harder still for the one that perhaps has been unjustly accused; but scripture and natural conscience agree in this, that the accused must be held to be innocent until he has been *proved* to be guilty. The discipline of patient waiting upon God will be profitable.

The second thing about which I said there must be certainty is, "the nature of the guilt." Now as to such a sin as drunkenness there may be no question as to the nature of the offence, and yet even then it might be a question as to whether the person had been really under the power of the sin and stood before God and man convicted of being a drunkard. I say such a question *might* be raised in certain exceptional cases, although as a general rule the fact of a man being intoxicated is evidence that it has power over

him, and that he is really a drunkard and not one simply beguiled into a single act of sin. But to illustrate more fully what I mean, take the sin of covetousness. I believe, if it was really understood what this sin is in the sight of God, and if it was dealt with according to the mind of God, there would be many a sad exposure, and many a one would be "put away" who is now in the fellowship of assemblies, and whose title to such fellowship is never questioned. I doubt not that the term "covetousness" would scripturally apply to many cases of what is commonly called "being in debt," a sin that is causing the names of Christians to become a stink in the nostrils of the world. It is only "being in debt"; but what does this mean? In many cases neither more nor less than putting the hand into other people's pockets and living upon their earnings, but doing it in such a way that it does not come before the law of the land as theft or robbery.

God does not mean any of His children to be "in debt." His command is, "Owe no man anything"; and every case of "debt" that cannot be met is a call to self-judgment. Nevertheless there are differences between some cases and others that set them *morally* as widely apart as the poles.

There are cases where some, through trial of adverse circumstances, and in deep sorrow of heart, have drifted most unwillingly into debt. Such ought to be deeply sympathised with, although not excused or justified.

On the other hand, I believe there are numerous instances which are traceable to nothing but a desire to gratify self by expenditure in ways that circumstances did not warrant—pandering to self at the expense of others, running regardlessly into debt which they knew they could not and would not be able to pay. Such a line of conduct, weighed in the balances of the sanctuary, is nothing more nor less than covetousness, and the person guilty of it is, in the language of the Scriptures, "a covetous person."

But I refer to this instance to illustrate how difficult it may be, and what grace and wisdom are needed, in some cases to arrive at *certainty* as to the nature of the sin.

To ascertain the exact nature of the guilt of one accused of "railing," is very often equally

or even more difficult ; requiring spiritual discernment in no ordinary degree, and patience to wait the full manifestation of its character. It may take a long time ; but, depend upon it, if God is waited upon in faith He will manifest it in due time to the satisfaction of all.

There may be many a case of evil-speaking that does not amount to the sin of railing. There may be other cases where the sin *outwardly* may appear no worse, but which, upon closer inspection, give evidence of proceeding from envy and malice, and judged in the light of God, it is not only railing but murder in the heart. How solemn and far-reaching is the word—"He that hateth his brother is a murderer."

PROPHETIC PAPERS. No. 15.

THE BOOK OF THE REVELATION.—*Continued.*
CHAPTER XI.

BY F. C. BLAND.

HERE, in chap. xi., John is given a reed like unto a rod, and is told "to measure the temple and the worshippers therein," but to leave out the outer court and to measure it not, for it is given unto the Gentiles ; and it is added, "the holy city shall they tread under foot forty and two months."

This is the first mention we have in the book of the Revelation of the period referred to more than once in the book of Daniel as "a time, times, and an half," and mentioned again several times in these chapters as 1260 days, 42 months, and a time, times, and the dividing of a time. And when God is pleased to emphasise any expression, as He does this some eight or ten times in the books of Daniel and the Revelation, it means that it is to be kept carefully before us. It is probably the time to which He tells us He has, for the elects' sake, shortened those days.

The first thing that strikes us here is that there are worshippers in the temple at Jerusalem ; and, moreover, that they are *inside* worshippers, not worshippers of the outer court, and are recognised as such by God.

This leads us definitely to the conclusion that the temple will have been rebuilt in Jerusalem, and used for Jewish worship. It is called "the temple of God" in four different classes or divisions of scripture :—

1st, In the Old Testament prophets (Mal. iii. 1). 2nd, In the gospels (Matt. xxiv. 15—and here the holy place is named). 3rd, In the epistles (2 Thess. ii. 4). And 4th, In this book of the Revelation (chap. xi. 1).

In John iv. the Lord says that the hour was coming, nay, had then come, when neither in Jerusalem nor in the mountain of Samaria should men worship the Father. It is plain, therefore, that this is not the worship of the present time, nor can it be the worship of apostates. It is therefore the time when worship will be again restored in Jerusalem, and accepted by God from those Jews gathered there *as Jews*.

TO THE BRETHREN LEAVING FOR AFRICA.

MARCH 23, 1889.

"BOUGHT with a price, ye are not your own" :

You've died, you live to Christ alone ;
You've heard the call to Afric's shore,
And gladly enter the open door.

To that dark continent you go,
With all its misery and woe,
To tell of Him who bled and died,
God's blessed Son—the Crucified.

You now can part with those you love,
For Him who came from heaven above
To save your souls from hell and sin,
And *all* your ransomed powers redeem.

Yes ! often at the throne of grace
Those left behind shall seek His face
On your behalf, that He will bless
And crown your labours with success.

Poor Afric's sons shall yet be saved,
And in Christ's heart their names engraved ;
And gather with us round the throne,
To sing His praise and His alone.

Bless ! bless the Lord, for this your choice ;
And Afric's sons shall too rejoice,
And sound His praise on their loved shore—
To Christ be glory evermore.

"Till He come," oh ! hear the word,
From your loved and absent Lord.

"Caught up together in the air ;"
And Afric's sons shall too be there.

"Fear not," dear brethren, labour on ;
Soon, soon, you'll hear the words—"Well done !"
And in His name whose love you tell,
To each and all we bid "Farewell !"

These two modes of worship are totally different, and could not exist on earth at the same time; and this is one of the strongest arguments to show that the Church with its worship in spirit must be taken out of the way to make room for that which is according to form and ritual. But as detail is not the character of our lectures, we cannot dwell on this at length here.

In verse 3 we are taken back to the 4th chap. of the book of Zechariah, where the two annointed ones are spoken of as "the two olive trees standing by the God of the earth"; and I must note here that wherever God is called "the God of the earth," it is while Israel is back in their own land, and God is dealing with them as His people. He is called the God of heaven during the times of the Gentiles, or while the power of the world is in their hands, and Israel is *Lo Ammi*, or not a people. This verse appears to refer to the first half of the 70th week of Daniel, or the $3\frac{1}{2}$ years called here 1260 days, for they continued their prophecy until the beast (the antichrist) ascends out of the bottomless pit and destroys them.

It will be remembered that in our lecture on Matthew xiv. reference was made to the remarkable analogy between what is narrated there and the events of these last days. John the Baptist, prophesying for about the same period, and Herod (the antichrist of his day) slaying him when he has finished his testimony; and the testimony, which ends, as far as he is concerned, is taken up by the disciples for about the same period. This latter will have its fulfilment in the remnant whom we read of as being slain for the witness of Jesus, and for the testimony which they held, of which more in its place.

There would be much that is interesting to say about these two witnesses (who, I believe, will be Moses and Elias) did time permit. The reasons given for their being those two prophets, seem to me to be conclusive, as far as anything that has yet to be fulfilled can be so.

1st. They were the two great acting parties, or mediators, between God and Israel. Moses made intercession for Israel; Elijah against them.

2nd. The miracles they do are of the same

character as those done by Moses and Elias while they were on earth. They call down fire from heaven, as Elias did; and smite the earth with plagues and turn the waters to blood, as Moses did; and, again, they have power to shut heaven that it rain not in the days of their prophecy, as Elijah did, namely for three years and six months (Luke iv. and James v.).

3rd. They were the two who were seen with the Lord on the Mount of Transfiguration; and, as another has remarked, they are called "the two witnesses," because they bore witness there to His death, which He should accomplish at Jerusalem; and, by-and-by, they will be witnesses, as we read here, to His coming again. But may they not be the two men who stood clothed in white at His sepulchre witnessing there to His resurrection? and may they not again be those two men we read of in Acts i. 4, who bore witness to the disciples as to His ascension? Every event in the Jewish economy had to be testified to by two witnesses, and if these two parties are the same all through, we would have witnesses to *His death, His resurrection, His ascension, and His coming again.* And who can tell but they may be the two for whom the places are reserved at His right hand and His left, which were refused to the two sons of Zebedee?

4th. They had both remarkable endings to their lives. Elijah was taken up to heaven in a cloud; Moses died, and God buried him; and as we read in the epistle of Jude, Satan contended for his body; and that according to his rights over those who die in this world; Michael does not presume to dispute his right, but refers him to God, who is sovereign over the dead and living, and does what He will.

It has been objected that they could not die again after being seen in glorified bodies with the Lord on the mount; but surely a body appearing in glorified form may differ from a resurrection body, and the same objection might be made to the Lord Himself dying after appearing with them in the same glory on the mount; and we must take heed not to limit Him, who gives not account of His matters to any, and who does what He will in heaven and earth.

We read that their dead bodies lie for three days and an half in the street of the city which is spiritually called Sodom and Egypt, and where our Lord was crucified, an expression which will be a guide to us when seeking to interpret the meaning of the word "Babylon," which is applied to places and systems further on in this book.

On the sounding of the seventh trumpet there are great voices in heaven, and a song is sung which I take to be anticipative of that which is just about to be accomplished, the heading up of all things under Christ, according to the 8th Psalm, and also according to the purpose declared in Ephesians, when God makes known the mystery of His will as to the gathering together of all things under Christ, both things on earth and things in heaven, even in Him. The elders give thanks upon hearing this. Thunders did not move them to worship; but the vindication of the claims and rights of Christ does so.

Chapter xii.—The 12th chapter of the Revelation opens with a vision in heaven of something which is to take place on earth. We must remember that in this book God is dealing with the earth; and, as we have often remarked in these lectures, that His earthly people, the Jews, are the subject of these dealings, and Jerusalem the centre of them.

The woman clothed with the sun, &c., &c., can be no other than the Jewish nation, and the time here referred to, the time of Jacob's trouble.

Her being clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and having on her head a crown of twelve stars, reminds us of Joseph's dream, and they may be mentioned here as symbolic of creation glory, with which God is about to clothe His earthly people.

Then as to the question, who is represented by the man-child? Whoever it be, it is some one who comes into existence during the time of Israel's travail pangs, those days of tribulation to which there has been no parallel in the world's history, nor ever shall be. I do not think that this man-child can represent Christ, for the time of His birth was not a time of travail pangs to Israel, which the time spoken of here certainly will be.

I believe, then, that there will be a remnant like the Maccabees of old, who are raised up

in the midst of the nation to do mighty acts, or as Daniel xi. says of them, the people that do know their God shall be strong and do exploits. "The Makeline" who understand among the people (Daniel xi. 33), and who fall by the sword and captivity, and by flame many days, possibly these 1260 days of Rev. xii. 6.

It has been contended that this man-child can only be the Lord, because it is said He was to rule all nations with a rod of iron; but this is the very promise given to *the overcomer* in Rev. ii. 33 and 34. Whatever may, therefore, be said in favour of any other interpretation, I see nothing that can be said against this, and it is only reasonable to suppose that if there are those spoken of in the book of Daniel as filling the very same position, and in like circumstances in which we find these spoken of here, that they are identical; Whether they are slain or caught up alive to God and to His throne, I do not presume to say; but that they form part of the first resurrection is sufficiently plain to need no further comment. That the woman is not the Church seems plain enough, even if the Church could be imported into this earthly scene, for the Church never brought forth Christ, and I suppose it will hardly be contended that she represents the blessed Virgin Mary!

The woman flees into the wilderness, where she is miraculously fed by God for the 1260 or the second 3½ years of the 70th heptad. These may be the weak and feeble part of the nation who flee (Matt. xxiv. 16-20), when they see the abomination of desolation set up, while the remnant who do know their God are strong and do exploits.

Then in verse 7 comes the shaking of the heavens, when God shakes the devil and his angels out of them, when that mysterious and awful battle of spirits takes place there; Michael and his angels prevailing over Satan, the accuser, and dislodging him from his place in the heavenlies.

He is cast out into the earth, and his angels with him, and comes down having great wrath, because he knoweth that he hath but a short time, namely, these three years and a half, to which, for the elect sake, God shortens those days. Then comes that wondrous song in heaven as to the power

of the blood, the answer to every accusation of Satan against the saints in heaven; as it is the subject of all testimony on the earth.

The dragon persecutes and tries to destroy the woman, or the part of the nation that flees into the wilderness, and tries to swallow her up with a flood. Whether this is an actual flood of water, or a flood of armed foes, we do not stop to inquire; it is sufficient for us to know that it is a mighty and last effort to destroy the Jews who flee into the wilderness; but the earth helps them by swallowing up the flood (whatever it may be), probably by an earthquake. We are then told that the dragon was wroth with the woman, and sent to make war with her seed, *which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ*, an expression of great moment, as it declares at once that this remnant is a believing one, and their being designated as keeping the commandments of God would, I think, mark them to be of the people to whom was given the law and the testimony. The verses in Daniel xi. before referred to, from the latter part of verse 32 to the end of verse 35, gives a striking description of them, not only as understanding amongst the people and instructing the many, but as falling by the sword and captivity, and flame and spoil for many days. These are probably the sons and daughters of Israel spoken of in Joel ii., to whom God sends visions and dreams, and those spoken of again in Psalm cxxvi., who go forth weeping, bearing precious seed, but whose captivity is returned like the streams of the south, and who come again with rejoicing, bringing their sheaves with them.

The woman is seen here fleeing into the wilderness. It may be that it is she who is referred to in Canticles viii. 5, coming up out of the wilderness leaning on the arm of her beloved, no longer forsaken and despised, "but fair as the moon, clear as the sun, and terrible as an army with banners."

"JESUS—THE SAME."

THE love that led JESUS YESTERDAY down from glory to the depths of the Cross to die for me, a vile sinner, leads Him to live for me in glory TO-DAY, there to plead for me, and will fetch Him down again, so that He may have me to-morrow FOR EVER with Himself. E.

ETERNAL LIFE.*

IN SIX ASPECTS. BY J. HIXON IRVING.

5. THE POSSESSION OF ETERNAL LIFE.

"HE that believeth on the Son HATH eternal life" (John iii. 36). "He that heareth My word, and believeth on Him that sent Me, HATH eternal life" (John v. 24). "Whoso eateth My flesh, and drinketh My blood (assimilates Christ by faith), HATH eternal life" (John vi. 54). "He that hath the Son HATH life; he that hath not the Son hath not life" (1 John v. 12).

There is not one solitary condition attached to the proclamation of the Gospel, neither is there one to the enjoyment of the life it presents. There is but *one* to the possession of this life, and that is faith. This condition is of vital importance; of such importance that we may of a truth say, No faith, no life. It is received, possessed, and enjoyed by faith. Not for faith as a payment, but by faith as an instrument.

All who believe in God through His word have this life; whilst all who do not believe are dead in trespasses and sins. "It is of faith that it might be by grace."

This life is, then, the present possession of every child of God. "The water that I shall give him (said Christ) shall *be in him* a well of water springing up into eternal life." Just as the soul is in the body, so is this life in the Spirit. Some, alas! deny this, and, pointing to Col. iii., say, that the "*life is hid with Christ in God*," and that the most the Christian has now is a pledge and promise of it.

It is perfectly true that life, as to its source and sustentation, is with Christ in God; but just as natural life has its origin in the "Father of Spirits," and is sustained by Him, but is at the same time in the individual, even so this spiritual life is derived from, and is sustained by Him, but is nevertheless in the believer. "We know that we have passed from death unto life because we love the brethren. He that loveth not abideth in death. Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer: and ye know that no murderer *hath eternal life abiding in him*" (1 John iii. 14, 15).

It is no mere promise or pledge the child of God has; but the thing itself abiding in

* Ready shortly in book form. 1/ per doz., p.f. Witness Office.

him, as the sap in the tree, and as fragrance in the flower. It is sad to think that many of the Lord's loved ones are experimentally in no better position than those who lived in the twilight of past dispensations, having life and not knowing it, and, in consequence, not enjoying it. What is the cause? Simply this: they have taken their teaching from men and not from God; they have diluted the "sincere milk of the word" with the water of the system they have been brought up in, and hence a sickly condition of soul, a clouded state of mind, a fitful experience, and a powerless life.

How is it with you, my friend? Have you this life in possession? Or are you a child of God, and yet would call it presumption on your part to say that you have this life? Doubting one, read this—believingly read it—and then see if it would be presumptuous to say, "Thank God, I have eternal life." "He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in Himself: he that believeth not God HATH MADE HIM A LIAR; because he believeth not the record God gave of His Son. And this is the record, that God hath given unto us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son hath not life. These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God, *that ye may know that ye have eternal life, ye who believe on the name of the Son of God*" (1 John v. 10-13). O, fellow-believer, can doubt exist in the light of this? Can fear have an abiding place in the heart that simply rests upon His word? Impossible!

O, ye unsaved ones, think of the ingratitude you are displaying to the gracious God—think of an attitude so foolish and so fraught with peril to your soul as you are manifesting toward Him in the rejection of this dual gift, His Son and eternal life. Think of this: as long as you continue in your present state you are making God a liar; He says so.

Every moment, hour, day, and year you continue to reject this gift of God you are doing this—denying His truth, and adding sin to sin—"treasuring up wrath against the day of wrath."

Let your mind bow to His word—you will yield to His desire concerning you—your heart open to receive His gift; and then, though you

may not feel it, you have a life beyond the power of death. Wait not for better feelings; tarry not for an experience of a change within you; hesitate not to grasp by faith the offered gift of God—eternal life.

6. THE PROSPECTS OF ETERNAL LIFE.

Our limited space will not permit us to do more than to give a brief glance at this, the closing aspect of our theme. To those who have followed us thus far we need not say that life in prospect is not set before the believer as a reward for service, but as an encouragement to it. It is not life in prospect in the present age, neither in the age to come, "when Christ shall all His grace display in the fair millennial morning"; but in heaven and eternity.

Almost every phase of a believer's life is touched by eternal life in prospect.

Is he a *disciple*? Then it is set before him as a recompense for whole-heartedness in discipleship (Matt. xix. 29).

Is he a *workman*? Then it is put before the mind as a stimulus to constant well-doing (Rom. ii. 7).

Is he a *warrior*? Then in order to encourage him to fight the good fight of faith, and finally to be more than a conqueror, it is declared to be something to be laid hold of with a firm grasp (1 Tim. vi. 12).

Is he a *steward* of the manifold gifts of God? It is deemed by the Spirit sufficient to give birth to a large-hearted liberality (1 Tim. vi. 17-19).

Is he a *sower*? Then as an inducement to continue sowing to the Spirit, the reaping of this life is held out as the sure and certain prospect (Gal. vi. 8).

Is he a *reaper* in the wide harvest field of this world? Then in the hard but happy toil, he is to strengthen himself by the thought of gathering "fruit unto eternal life" (John iv. 36).

Is he a *fruit-bearing branch* of the True Vine? Then, as an incentive to bear much holy fruit, the sure end of such a life is pointed out (Rom. vi. 22).

Is he a *heir of God* through Christ? Then to strengthen hope it is declared that this life in its full pregnant sense and final stage is part of the heirship (Titus iii. 7).

There is not one simile applied to the Christian which we have mentioned but presupposes the possession of life.

Following, working, fighting, giving, sowing, reaping, fruit-bearing, and hoping can only be done by the living and not by the dead, for the dead serve not God. So that those scriptures and others of a like kind do not clash, but harmonise with and complete those which speak of life as a present possession; and, consequently, leave no room for the legal dogma, subversive of the free grace of God and destructive to souls, that life is a reward for works, or a bestowment for merit in the individual.

At the same time, it is the final end of a life of godliness, and of such only, for godliness is profitable unto all things, having the promise of the life that now is and of that which is to come.

In drawing our meditations to a close, we cannot do better than briefly contrast the life possessed by the saint now with the same life in eternity, and thus get a final glimpse of its future prospects.

Here it is surrounded by sin, and is in conflict with many foes; there it will be surrounded by holiness, and conflict will for ever be past.

Here its progress and development is in measure retarded; there every barrier to its growth will be completely removed.

Here its functions and activities are hindered and restricted; there they will have full unhindered play in "the liberty of the glory of . . . God."

Here its glory and beauty are hidden; there it will be unveiled, and the bloom of its unfading beauty will be gazed upon through eternal day.

Here it is a plant of a strange clime, far from its native abode; then it will be transplanted to its natural soil, and bloom beneath its own fair skies; then the bud will burst into leaf, and the flower give place to fruit.

Now it is filled with longings that cannot find satisfaction; then and there it will have every longing fully met in the presence and fulness of its source.

Now its history is measured by the life of its possessor; then its duration will be measured by the life of its Author and Giver—the Eternal God.

"Now unto Him that is able to guard you from stumbling, and to set you before the presence of His glory without blemish in exceeding joy, to the only God our Saviour, through Jesus Christ our Lord, be glory, majesty, dominion, and power, before all time, and now, and for evermore. Amen."

QUESTIONS asked at the close of Mr. Newberry's Lectures on the Temple, and the ANSWERS given by Him.

4. *How was it that God would not allow David to build the temple?*

DAVID was a type of the suffering Messiah, and through his experience was fitted to be a type of Christ as sin-bearer. But Solomon, in his peaceful reign, was fitted and used of God to build the temple.

The spiritual temple of God will be erected by Christ in resurrection glory as "the first-begotten from the dead." Christ in His life and death laid the foundation even as David made preparation in his life time; but it is the risen and glorified Christ, of whom Solomon was a type, who will build the temple of God, and He will bear the glory.

5. *For what purpose were the side chambers of the temple used?*

It would appear from the description given by David that the lower side chambers were used as the treasuries of the dedicated things: they are mentioned in 1 Chron. xxviii. 12 as "the treasuries of the house of God."

Those on the second and third storeys were probably provided for the accommodation of those priests who, day and night, ministered in their course in the house of Jehovah.

The side chambers entered on the east, and leading from one to the other toward the west, where the holiest of all was situated, suggest the thought of progress in the glory; the soul drawing nearer and nearer to God, and to conformity to Him.

Then rising upward from the first to the second, and from the second to the third storey, may well suggest the thought of progress upward as well as onward, rising higher and higher in the knowledge, admiration, and enjoyment of God.

While the chambers, expanding as they rise from five to six, and from six to seven cubits in breadth, seem to tell us that the faculties of the redeemed in resurrection will be for ever expanding in their capacity of understanding, enjoying, and serving God long as the eternal ages roll.

6. *Will the fourth temple be in existence when the Church is caught up?*

The present is a spiritual dispensation. God owns no temple on earth now, but that composed of living stones, wherein a spiritual priesthood offer up spiritual sacrifices (1 Peter ii. 4-9).

But when the present dispensation terminates, and the Holy Ghost, as Comforter, having completed His work is no longer present as such on the earth (2 Thess. ii.), then will come the great apostacy, and the man of sin, the lawless one, will be manifested.

Then there will be a temple acknowledged as the temple of God on the earth, and sacrifices permitted during the first three years and a half of the last week of Daniel's 70 weeks; the sacrifices antichrist will take away, when he sets up the abomination of desolation in God's temple.

7. *Can you say where the temple mentioned in Ezekiel will be built?*

God will fulfil His promise to Abraham, and His covenant with David, in bringing back His people to their own land. Then that prophecy will be fulfilled—"It shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of Jehovah's house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it" (Isa. ii. 2). The inheritance of the tribes shall be portioned out in the order and arrangement described in Ezekiel xlv. Seven tribes toward the north, and five tribes toward the south of the holy oblation; for God will take to himself a portion of the land, 25,000 reeds, or about 60 miles square. This will be divided into three parts. The portion to the north—25,000 reeds in length and 10,000 reeds in breadth, or 60 miles long and 24 miles broad—will be for the priests, and the sanctuary will be in the midst. There will be a similar portion for the Levites, of 25,000 by

10,000. On the south there will be a portion of 25,000 reeds by 5000, and the city will be in the midst of it. Thus the mountain of Jehovah's house, and the sanctuary in the midst of the priests' portion, will be the centre of worship to the whole earth; and Mount Zion, in Jerusalem, in the midst of the city portion, will be the centre of Messiah's government and rule.

8. *By whom will the fifth temple be built?*

There are several verses in the prophets, and especially in Isaiah, such as chapter xl. and other portions, which seem to throw light on this subject. God will cause the Gentiles to bring from all parts gold, silver, &c., to make the place of his feet glorious (Isa. xl. 13). Then, with regard to Jerusalem, we are told that the Gentiles shall build up her walls; their kings and their queens shall be nursing fathers and nursing mothers. It would appear from these scriptures that the Gentiles will be associated with Israel in the building of this temple, even as the servants of Hiram, king of Tyre, were associated with Israel in the building of the temple of Solomon.

9. *Will Christ reign as Son of Man during the millennium; and will it be on the earth, literally, or over the earth?*

We have but one intimation of His body presence on the earth at that time. We read that when he comes His feet will stand on the Mount of Olives (Zech. xiv. 4).

(To be continued).

"IN SAFETY."

(Deut. xxxiii. 12.)

THERE is only one place of safety; nowhere else is it assured—"by Him," near the Lord. The wanderer has no assurance of safety. Following afar off leaves one exposed to all kinds of temptations. Allurements have ten-fold force because the counter attraction is so far away. Dangers are much more alarming because the object upon which the eye is fixed always appears the largest and most real. So the saint becomes afraid of a man that shall die, because, forgetful of the Lord his Maker. Troubles increase; for there is always an Amalek to harass those who are behind on the road.

And not only is it "by Him" in a general

sense ; but there is one place the Lord has for each beloved one. What that is, no one else can tell him. It is a secret the Lord delights Himself to make known to the one near enough to hear His voice. Step by step He leads the one willing to be led. Sometimes it is leading "the blind by a way they know not"; but they may be in perfect peace if conscious of His direction. The place He would have them fill He will certainly lead to ; and the place to which He leads must be the right one.

In that place safety is assured. This is one of God's "shalls." The beloved one *shall* dwell in safety in that place the Lord has found out for him. There is no uncertainty about it. Circumstances may seem to suggest the contrary ; but the promise is safety, not exemption from difficulty. Israel in the Red Sea were in the place appointed by God, their leader, and therefore in perfect safety ; but "they went through the flood on foot," and perhaps found it rough walking.

"The Lord shall cover him all the day long." This is the secret of safety. All the day long expresses ceaseless, instant care. The beloved one will be "in the fear of the Lord all the day long," and so will the Lord be also instant in vigilant guard and protection. "The Lord is a shield to them that walk uprightly." Not that He is neglectful of His own when they are careless of Him. No ; if we are faithless, He abideth faithful. But things are permitted by that shield to pass which may sting sharply, in order that wandering ones may be awaked to their position and led to inquire after the "place by Him."

But who is the beloved one here spoken of ? Is it only some specially favoured one ? Everyone who is Christ's may claim it, for He "loved the Church and gave Himself for it." But it is also written, "If a man love Me he will keep My words ; and My Father will love him, and we will come and make our abode with him." Let it be the care of each one to fulfil the condition and be the beloved of the Lord, not merely by reception, but by reciprocity of affection ; satisfying His heart by being near Him, gratifying His love by being in the place He has sought out as the right and best one, and so having reason to "be quiet from fear of evil." M. M. A.

Correspondence.

AUSTRALIA.

[Many who remember the earnest labours of our brother, Richard Graham, in the British Isles, will be pleased to read the following extracts from a private letter.]

MELBOURNE, 27th Dec., 1888.

MY DEAR BROTHER,—On the 4th of January it will be one year since we arrived here. As we look back twelve months we can sing—

"How good is the God we adore,
Our faithful, unchangeable Friend," &c.

Amid a scene of great pleasure-seeking and indifference we have sown much precious seed, by word of mouth, and by gospel, booklet, and tract. We have attended races and pic-nics on public holidays, scattering the seed far and wide. On the Cup Day, early in November, about twenty brethren gave away 25,000 tracts and booklets, besides holding aloft four large banners with texts, in large type, upon them. These were read by many thousands as they wended their way to the course. Many read them aloud and made all kinds of remarks : some favourable, others unfavourable. We know that sinners in the old country have frequently been saved through tracts given away at races, and we trust for a harvest in connection with such sowing out here.

Recently two new halls (weather-board) have been erected by the saints ; and now there are nine halls worked by those in happy fellowship. There are six assemblies breaking bread, and it is more than probable that there will be three others before long. There are 500 or thereabouts in fellowship, and they are of one mind and one heart—assemblies working harmoniously ; it is pleasant to see so many dwelling together in unity. I have attended many of the fortnightly oversight meetings, to which any taking oversight can come from the six assemblies ; these meetings are very helpful to all that are seeking fellowship, and to those exercising care for the saints. There is a pleasing spirit of being subject one to another in the fear of the Lord, and a great and loving desire to bind saints together according to the mind and will of the Master. Public holidays here are frequent, and these days are mostly utilised for conferences, or for having evangelistic work at some centre of gathering for pic-nickers. At these conferences, the truth is told out with no uncertain sound ; yet it is done with much grace and love, so that the soul of the believer may abundantly enjoy it. I don't think I ever saw more eagerness to buy the truth and sell it not, and such a standing shoulder to shoulder in the things of God. In Ezra and Nehemiah's time they were a *separated* and *gathered* people. The two go together still. "Come out from them, and be ye separated"; not "go back to them, and be ye mixed."

The Monday night meetings here for believers have been good. Our brother, Rice T. Hopkins, has spoken to as far as 400. They are well attended every year, and always on the increase as each year comes round. He generally gives them up for the summer, as it is too hot for both speaker and hearers. Many have been greatly blessed. They have been most helpful to all believers in building them up in the truth.

We have seen a good many converted during the last twelve months, and a number baptised and received into fellowship, and still the work goes on.

There are 800 in the Sunday schools, and we are (*D.V.*) to have a treat for them in the country on New-year's day, when we expect over 1000 will take tea. There are about seventy teachers. The children get three meals: one at 10.30 a.m., just after arriving on the ground; the next at 1; and the other at 5. They have tea at both of the last meals, along with sandwiches, buns, cake, &c. The colonials believe in having a whole day's treat.

It is evident that those who go to the sects and have fellowship with them in their Gospel work, or any other religious work, can never have wept over sectarianism, and judged it to be sin. If saints would truly take their place with the rejected Lord Jesus, they would be a great power to draw saints out after Himself to His praise and glory, and to their present blessing and eternal reward.

A new hall is being built in Petersham, Sydney, and after it is completed, which may be about the middle of April, I hope to get over for meetings. R. G.

FRIENDLY SOCIETIES.

DEAR BROTHER IN THE LORD,—The dear brother, whose letter on this subject appears in January *Witness*, rightly observes (1) that "where we have a clear command of Scripture touching any point, transgression is sinful"; and (2) that the principle involved in the question of a believer's membership with such societies will "apply with equal force to many investments from which incomes are drawn, such as railway and bank shares." But surely he has entirely missed the plain import of 2 Cor. vi. 14-17, in assuming that we have no such command. I suppose the whole subject, considered in the light of this passage, hinges upon the question as to what really constitutes the "unequal yoke"; and this again naturally resolves itself into the double inquiry (1) Does the "inequality" consist in the fact that the object sought to be attained by such association, or shareholding, is *in itself* wrong? or (2) in the very circumstance that those who are thus "linked" together are "believer" and "unbeliever," those between whom a distinction as great as that subsisting between Christ and the devil, righteousness and unrighteousness, light and darkness, has been divinely established? To this two-fold inquiry, there can surely, with those taught in the Word, be but one answer, viz., that not the object (primarily, at least), but the subjects forming the yoke constitute the "inequality" here condemned. Scripture type and example alike unite with the precept here and elsewhere, in demonstrating that, while the object sought may be in itself perfectly right, the *yoking together* for its attainment of children of God with those who, notwithstanding possible attainments in moral refinement and intellectual culture, are yet "children of the devil," is an abomination to the Lord. For example (1) Deut. xxii. 10—Ploughing *per se* was obviously right; but the *yoking together* of ox and ass (clean and unclean animals, typical of believer and unbeliever) to plough, is emphatically forbidden. (2) 2 Chron. xx.

35-37—It was right, in itself, for Jehoshaphat to send ships to Tarshish for gold; but wrong to *join himself* with wicked Ahaziah to do so. The word of the Lord to him on this occasion is deeply significant, as marking His disapproval of the compact, apart from any reference to the object in view:—"Because thou hast" (not "made ships to go to Tarshish," but) "*joined thyself with Ahaziah*, the Lord hath broken thy works." And who can tell how many similar "works"—friendly and building societies, commercial partnerships, banking companies, &c.—have been "broken," because of the very fact of the Lord's people being entangled therewith? Or, how many "ships" have sustained disaster and ruin because of there being a "Jonah" on board, fleeing, not certainly altogether from the "presence," but from the *precepts* of the Lord?

And, further, it is well to note that it was not that Jehoshaphat *personally accompanied* Ahaziah to go to Tarshish. This, had he done so, would have been equivalent to a believer attending the society meetings, "spending an evening at the lodge," &c., in which *alone* some dear brethren appear to see a possible evil, while they "see no harm" in the yoke of membership itself, which gives them the right to be there; and, in fact, honestly looked at, renders them *responsible* to discharge the duties of a position they ought never to have assumed. Imagine an ox voluntarily, for the sake of what it could get, yoking itself upon equal terms with an ass; and then, *because* he is a clean animal, and the other unclean, shirking his full share of the burden, and throwing it upon the poor ass; and yet, at the close of the day, expecting an equal share of fodder, &c., with the latter. Surely, "a word to the wise" on this point should be sufficient; and the Scriptures, adduced enough, to indicate with no degree of uncertainty that it is, primarily, at least, the compact itself, the "joining," or "yoking" together, of the "children of light" and the "children of darkness," which is displeasing to our Father—God. Let us, to whom He has, in sovereign grace, revealed so much of His blessed will concerning our proper position and path down here, so far from thinking we have, any of us, attained to perfection, either in the *knowledge* or *practice* thereof, seek diligently to test and compare *both* with "what is written," and with a readiness to apply the keen edge of the Word to whatever of our cherished projects and associations we may find contrary thereto, although their excision may involve a good deal that the flesh in us "would not like to contemplate." The subject is one that might be profitably enlarged upon; and of this I am fully satisfied, that if the consideration of it is prayerfully approached, with full preparedness of heart to "do whatsoever He saith unto" us, the "links," or "yokes," in question, thus weighed in the unerring balances of the sanctuary, will be "found wanting." Then, and then only, shall we obtain grace to look, not "this way or that way"—at *side issues*, such as the poverty or wealth of assemblies, or individuals, as affecting our obedience to the will of the Lord, or at present temporal gain or loss—but upward to Him who "is able to make all grace abound toward us; that we, always having all sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work" (2 Cor. ix. 8). W. E. S.

OBJECT TEACHING.

MY DEAR BROTHER,—The question proposed by your correspondent in the February number of *The Witness*, with respect to the use of the Bible in the way of an ordinary book, and natural appliances, such as “object lessons,” “magic lanterns,” and the like, as aids or accompaniments to the Gospel, demands the serious attention of all amongst us who revere God, or have at heart the interest of fellow-sinners, whether old or young. Permit me, therefore, to contribute somewhat the result of many years’ observation and exercise of mind on the subject.

There is truth in the adage, “Familiarity breeds contempt”; and, surely, if ever there was need to guard against any approach to that it is now, when on every hand may be observed a rapidly-increasing tendency to undermine the authority of God’s Word.

Profanation we understand to be the act of treating with irreverence sacred things, which may be done by applying them to common use; and is there not cause to fear that this is done by children for pastime, or the sake of reward, making use of the Bible for a purpose which any ordinary book would serve equally well?

Further, since “the Gospel of Christ is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth,” does not the adoption of other instrumentality, as though to make the Gospel more attractive or more effective, indicate either a want of faith with respect to that which God has ordained to effect His own purpose, or else a desire, on part of those who adopt other means, to produce some other result? And, whereas, we are surrounded by a huge system of religious machinery which Satan is using to hold in the world the elect of God, does it not behove us to take good care lest we should become instrumental in bringing to pass results somewhat similar, by introducing into our religious exercises, or Gospel services, an element suitable to the carnal mind? It does not require any extra amount of observation or spirituality to discern the work of the enemy in all this mixture of material, and of persons also, by means of those “unions” and “associations” ever multiplying; whereas, in Scripture, we find sanctioned only the one union or association, and that composed of elect individuals gathered out from the world, and together unto the Lord, by the sole instrumentality of the Word of God applied to the hearts by the Holy Spirit.

Some suppose that they find in Scripture ample warrant for the use of “object lessons” to illustrate truth, and the Lord’s method of teaching is referred to as example. True it is that, in past dispensations, God was pleased to use manifold types; but it must be remembered that it was God who did so. But without specific instructions to that effect, what priest or prophet ever dared to make them? And the solemnity of the thing must appear evident as we consider that if, in the use of a type, a man had deviated in any wise from the lines laid down by God, he would have been cut off in judgment. Even for the making of the tabernacle, after Moses had been shown the pattern, and received in detail instructions, a special man had to be set apart for the purpose, and filled with the spirit of wisdom, before he dare put his hand to it. Now, little is thought of making or using models of

things which then were considered sacred, not to be touched by ordinary hands, inasmuch as they were illustrative of Divine realities; and, if imperfect, would have been misrepresentation of truth. As regards the Lord’s teaching, in each case the object referred to was of its kind perfect, a bird or a flower, and was used to teach His disciples the care God had over the work of His hands. To such teaching now, surely none will object. Another kind of teaching, “parabolic,” we dare not attempt, seeing the Lord’s purpose thereby was to clothe in mystery, rather than to make plain, truth to the minds of those He addressed. But in striking contrast to all that, we see now the imperfect work of man’s hand used as objects to make clear to the natural understanding truth which must needs be received in the heart, on the authority of God’s Word, by the aid of the Holy Spirit; else it were better, far better, for the hearers that their lot had been cast in Central Africa, where the letter of Scripture had never reached.

There is not one word to warrant the idea that the apostles resorted to methods or expedients of the kind; and the word to Timothy, in view of the time when men will not endure sound doctrine, is “Preach the Word.”

Pray excuse the length of this letter, because of the great importance of the subject. R. S.

“FOR ALL THAT ARE IN AUTHORITY.”

FOR much more than half a century I have begun and ended the matter of politics with prayer for rulers, according to the commandment in 1 Tim. ii. 2., observing also the commandment in Romans, “tribute to whom tribute,” and shunning all words of murmuring against the powers that be, or lightly speaking of them. They are to be revered for their office, of God appointed, if not for themselves.

If we labour for them aright in the closet, we shall not fail to see that we are out of place, out of character if sitting in Sodom’s gate to reform the city or check its evil. We, being Christ’s members, are seated with Him in the super-heavenly places; were I under the law, and were I judge, I could find my rule from day to day whereby to judge my fellow-men; but the rule of kingdoms can be now only by the sword—Christ utterly excluded. Whereas, I am His bought servant, having no will but His, no business but that of pleasing Him and showing Him forth—my mind and ways a polished mirror of Himself.

The night is far spent, the day is at hand, the time too precious to be wasted. Let us live to purpose, having the Spirit’s testimony by the Word that we please God.

If rulers would secure their own ruin and the people’s, let them strike hands with Rome. To this, alas! the courses of this kingdom are tending; and I would say again, let us beware lest we be slack in our helping rulers in our closets.

I need not say that to be altogether true to the Lord, I must neither vote nor be voted for. The conscience if not spiritual, but rather natural, easily and generally also misleads the people of God. It is by prayer that we, who have favour with God our Father, can do real good to this realm—so favoured of God, and so guilty.

R. C. CHAPMAN.

Questions and Answers.

We await further replies to these questions:—

How is the difference between Matt. xvi. 28 and Mark ix. 1 to be explained, as our Lord surely could not have repeated His saying using other words the second time?

We also invite replies to the following questions:—

Is it scriptural to appoint two or three brethren to see those that apply for fellowship, or should it be left to the guiding of the Spirit?

What is the New Testament signification of the Old Testament type of the shutting up of the suspected leper (Lev. xiii. 21)?

If one is excluded from an assembly on the ground of holding the doctrine of the non-eternity of punishment, and is afterwards received into another assembly, what ought to be the attitude of the former assembly towards the latter?

Is there any scripture to warrant the union of assemblies of a like mind to form a basis of acting independently from those they consider as not following the Lord fully?

CHRIST'S INTERCESSION.

QUESTION 314.—How does Christ, the High Priest, make intercession with God for the sins of His people as to reconciliation, seeing they have been reconciled to God by the death of His Son?

Ans. A.—High priesthood is part of the wondrous provision of grace for those who, as subjects of that grace, occupy a place of nearness to God. The position secured for them by virtue of the blood (Eph. ii. 13) is maintained by means of the priestly ministrations (Rom. v. 10), for all there must be perfect according to God.

The word rendered "reconciliation" (Heb. ii. 17, A.V.) means "propitiation," there the work of Christ "Sacrificial" and "official" is viewed as one; the former, finished for ever at Calvary, being the basis upon which the other is being carried on without intermission.

The whole standing in grace of the believer, as a child of God "accepted in the beloved" (Eph. i. 6, 7), a royal priest, privileged "to offer up spiritual sacrifices" in the holiest (Heb. x. 19, and 1 Peter ii. 5-9), or, in Levite service, outside (Heb. xiii. 11-16), is of the sovereign will of God on the ground of atonement; whereas moral fitness to occupy that exalted position, or ability here to make way against inward natural tendencies and the various temptations incident to the condition, path, and warfare of the redeemed in the wilderness, would be impossible apart from the Great

High Priest, who ever liveth at God's right hand to silence every accuser and to save them to the uttermost who come unto God by Him. Rom. viii. 34; Heb. iv., 15, 16; 1 John i. 1, 2; compare Exodus xi. 9-13 and John xiii. 2-10. R. S.

Ans. B.—As no special scripture is referred to, it is difficult to find out what the questioner refers to, as no scripture that I know of speaks of "Christ the High Priest making intercession with God for the sins of His people." It does say He makes intercession for us, but not for OUR SINS.

Hebrews ii. 17 tells of the "merciful and faithful High Priest in things TO GOD making reconciliation for the sins of the people." The questioner will find in the new translation that the word "reconciliation" is translated "propitiation for the sins of His people," quite a different thing. Propitiation is one aspect of the atoning work of Christ, and is wholly Godward, answering God's claims against us; reconciliation is what we get (see Rom. v. 11, marginal reading, new translation). God is now beseeching men to be reconciled, and we who were once sinners have been reconciled. Propitiation on the other hand leads us back to what was made by Christ and by blood, and which He Himself is, and as set forth in Lev. xvi., is one aspect of the atonement. The goat on which the Lord's lot fell, and whose life was taken and whose blood was carried in and sprinkled on and before the mercy-seat, setting "forth" the Godward side of the work of Christ; the other setting forth His bearing away our sins. The former, I presume, is what Heb. ii. 17 refers to. J. S. D.

Ans. C.—This question might have been more easily answered had reference been made to any scriptures suggesting a difficulty. It is nowhere said that Christ makes intercession "for the sins of His people," but for His people themselves. Even as the high priest of Israel went once a year (on the day of atonement) into the holiest with the blood of the sin-offering, so "Christ being come an High Priest . . . by His own blood He entered in *once for all* into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption." "The way into the holiest," thus "made manifest," is laid open to all coming by "the blood of sprinkling"; and, by the Ever-living High Priest, who is there with the memorials of accomplished atonement, the believer is set down before God in all the value of that one sacrifice. We are "reconciled to God by the *death* of His Son," but the Holy Ghost, in the Levitical types and in their antitype (unfolded most fully in the epistle to the Hebrews), so links the offering with the intercession of the High Priest, that the two must go together. As the resurrection gives to the death of Christ evidential value, so His "unchanging priesthood" ensures its perpetual freshness and efficacy, whereby His people are maintained in unalterable acceptance. This question settled, a new relationship is formed, and those who "have been to the altar and witnessed the Lamb burnt wholly to ashes for" them, become *children in the family* of God. It is they who "have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous" (1 John ii.), whose business, as such, is to keep "the children" in realised fellowship with the Father, or to restore them to this when interrupted

by sin. The advocacy with the Father, like the priesthood with God, is carried on upon the ground of "the propitiation." D. R.

[**Editor's Note.**—Propitiation was made by Jesus on Calvary for the sins of His people. On the ground of propitiation once accomplished, each believing one is reconciled to God. By Him, therefore, "We (believers) have received the reconciliation."] "

The intercession of the High Priest proceeds continuously on the same ground, viz., that of the propitiation made once for all by the death of Christ.

His intercession—His appearing in the presence of God for us in all the value of His perfectly acceptable atoning work—secures our access to a Holy God whilst still we are compassed with infirmity and liable to sin, and also secures for every saint all needful grace for every exigency of the wilderness way. He succours the tempted (Heb. ii. 18); He is "touched with a feeling of our infirmities" (Heb. iii. 15); He has "compassion on the ignorant and them that are out of the way" (Heb. v. 2); "He is able to save unto the uttermost" (Heb. vii. 25); He secures our access to God as supplicants and worshippers (Heb. iv. 16; x. 19-22).

May the saints learn experimentally more and more of the infinite grace of our great High Priest.]

THE MIRACLES OF CHRIST.

QUESTION 315.—Did Christ receive power at His baptism to work miracles? Is it derogatory to our Lord's holy Person and Name to speak of Him in similar terms as of Moses or other Old Testament prophets who wrought miracles by imparted power?

Ans. A.—The Lord Jesus was at His baptism publicly accredited as God's beloved Son—sent as the Lamb of God (see John i.). Not until this time had God's time come that He should begin His public ministry, and He is thus, as the true Servant of God, avowed of God and filled with the Holy Ghost for service. Conjecture is vain as to His ability before. And surely we cannot speak of the Son as on the same level with the servant; the One in whom dwelt the fulness of the Godhead bodily, as but co-equal with Moses. He said, "The Father which dwelleth in Me He doeth the works."

Let us remember the distinction He made between Him as the Servant of God and the essential Son of God—a great mystery in one sense, yet clear to the faith which delights in Him who is "God manifest in the flesh." A. O. M.

[**Editor's Note.**—Two passages in Scripture bear directly on this point: Acts ii. 22, "A man approved of God among you by miracles and wonders and signs which God did by Him"; and Acts x. 38, "How God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power; who went about doing good and healing all that were oppressed of the devil; for God was with Him."]

To this agrees His own testimony—"If I cast out demons by the Spirit of God" (Matt. xii. 28). To question the ability of the Lord Jesus, as the Son of God, the Eternal, the creator and upholder of all things, to work miracles; to say that He, as Moses or any other servant of God, was incapable of doing such wonders unless endued with imparted power, is

nothing short of blasphemy. The subtlety of Satan's appeal to Him in the wilderness consisted in the fact that as *Son of God* He had power to "make these stones bread."

But the victory of the Lord Jesus was in His laying aside His essential dignity and power as a *Divine Person* and taking the servant's place as a *man* amongst men, depending upon His Father's care for bread, for strength—as in Gethsemane, when an angel appeared to strengthen Him (Luke xxii. 43), for power to work miracles (John xi. 41), and indeed for everything; thereby learning experimentally both obedience (Heb. v. 8) and faith (Heb. xii. 2), and becoming perfected by this experience for the ministry he was afterwards to enter upon as the merciful and faithful High Priest.

It is in this character that He is regarded and spoken of in Acts ii. 22 and x. 38, though at the same time and of the same person Col. i. 16, 17 was equally true.]

"HOLDING FAST."

QUESTION 316.—What is to be understood by Heb. iii. 14, "For we are made partakers of Christ, if we hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast unto the end"? Are we to understand that, though saved, we can be lost?

Ans. A.—The verse has only to be read carefully for its meaning to become apparent. "For we are made" (or, more literally, "have become"), &c., "if we hold fast the beginning of our confidence firm unto the end." It is not written: "we shall become partakers, provided that we hold fast," &c.; but, our perseverance in our first assurance now is the proof that we have indeed become partakers at some past date.

It is not a sufficient proof to another that I am a Christian, to show him a memorandum of the date of my conversion, and the text that was the means of it, if my present manner of life does not bear witness to the genuineness of my confession.

And God Himself never says that any one who "did believe," or "has believed," in Christ hath everlasting life. "Whosoever believeth, hath." Both words are in the present tense. A. P. M.

Ans. B.—All through the epistle the perfection of Christ and the New Covenant (chap. viii.) is being set forth. In verse 6 of this 3rd chapter, we read of "Christ as a Son over His own house; whose house are we, if we hold fast our confidence and joy of hope steadfast unto the end."

The main thought in both verses 6 and 14 is not to imply a fear of being lost unless we "hold fast," but a setting forth of Christ as the *One to hold fast to*. The exhortation is to cleave to Him whose excellency has been set forth as the only One who could furnish a true incentive to constancy, and reward the constant. "Partakers of Christ" here evidently refers to the full realisation of our hopes, which cannot be disappointed if fixed on Him. We may therefore read it as meaning, "We shall surely share the glory with Christ, if we continue steadfast unto the end, in the faith of the Gospel." A. O. M.

[**Editor's Note.**—Our "holding fast the beginning of our confidence steadfast unto the end" is not the cause, but the evidence of our "having become" partakers of Christ.]

SCRIPTURE TESTIMONY

AS TO

THE PROGRESS OF EVIL.

IN the fall of our first parents, we see sin in three distinct and principal elements.

And these have continued to characterise man ever since. Man gives ear to Satan; or, in other words, is led of the serpent; exalts himself to be as God; follows his own lusts, and is disobedient.

THE TESTIMONY OF "THE GARDEN."

Scripture gives us the development of this in principle all through, and shows that it will be so at the end. Man, whilst in the enjoyment of blessing, listens to, and trusts Satan. But mark the suggestion of the devil, "Ye shall be as gods." He can tell truth, if it subserve sin. If we have the truth, nothing can harm us; but Satan can tell truth, a great deal of truth, provided he can only win attention, by it, and so deceive. See his temptation of our Lord. There, he quotes Scripture, gives a promise of God, quite rightly applicable in a certain sense, had Jesus listened. The first Adam did so, and came by the ways of Satan, to know good and evil. But it was by disobedience, and he continued not with God. Satan told not all the truth—he did not say "you shall be a lost creature." Lust worked, disobedience followed; and, consequently, exclusion from God's presence.

TESTIMONY FROM CAIN TILL CHRIST.

But testimony for Christ has another element in it. It is not merely that man is a sinner; there has been the rejection of God in *grace*. What was the question when Christ was in the world? Not whether man had sinned; but *would man, a sinner, receive testimony for God in grace?* If you traced the history of man, from the beginning until Christ came, you would say, his mouth must be stopped. Satan's power over the heart is revealed throughout. Driven from paradise, instead of becoming better, Cain kills his brother. Then comes the deluge, sweeping away the whole race except eight persons, but afterwards, they are as bad as ever. Noah gets intoxicated, Ham dishonours his father, and after that, idolatry enters. Again, before Moses comes down from the mount, the

people have made a calf. Before the eight days of solemn purification are over, Aaron's sons take strange fire and offer it before the Lord. In short, in all God's dealings with Israel as a nation, this truth is strongly marked. The principle of the heart is wrong. Nay more, the nearer man is to God externally, the worse is ever the character of his guilt, if there be not living fellowship with Him. When Jesus came into the world, though He could get joy out of the Samaritans, and out of a poor Syrophœneecian woman, whose condition was as a "dog" in respect of Jewish privileges, "His own" were found full of pride of heart, and "received Him not." Judas was quite close to Christ, yet he betrayed Him. The development of evil is just in proportion to its nearness to good, if the power of good is not there. So with Christendom. The name of Christianity, where there is not the living power of it, is the very place in which the worst evil is to be looked for.

TESTIMONY OF THE CHIEF PRIESTS.

And observe, here, the awful manner in which conscience can deceive itself. "The chief priests took the silver pieces, and said, It is not lawful for to put them into the treasury, because it is the price of blood;" there had been no scruple in giving the money for that blood. The very same money wherewith they had bought Christ, they will not put into the treasury! What a picture of man's heart, of man's consistency—exact about external, ceremonial points, callous as to moral gravity!

TESTIMONY REJECTED.

But, as to the question of the reception of testimony. Into this world of sin and iniquity, however bad man might have been proved, it mattered not, the Son of man came down in *grace*. His testimony rejected—"Ye will not come unto Me, that ye might have life:" what is the consequence? "I am come in My Father's name, and ye receive ME not; if another shall come in His own name, HIM ye will receive." Here is a new form of evil Man shall set himself up, and be received, because he comes in his own name. And yet it is but the ripeness and development of his sin in Eden, the same in principle.

Man acts after his own will, though in reality he is the tool of Satan. The same thing shall come to pass again, testimony having been rejected, as it is said, "Because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved" (2 Thess. ii.), there will be a license, and more than a license too, for man to set himself up, to seek his own name—and "HIM *ye will receive.*"

TESTIMONY OF THE CROSS.

If you trace man's evil, you will find, it is true, a testimony to it bad enough, whatever restraints God, in His supreme power, may have placed upon it. But there has been restraint, especially since the flood. Government answered this purpose in the world, directly exercised first amongst the Jews, and afterwards extended to the Gentiles, in the four great empires, of which Nebuchadnezzar was the first head—the Babylonish, Persian, Grecian, and Roman. Passing over their general history, it will suffice to say, that the fourth of these empires had just come out in prominence, when our Lord appeared on the earth.—"There went out a decree from Cæsar Augustus, that all the world should be taxed." The result of this, as well as of religion in man, was the rejection of Christ. All joined together—the heads both of civil and religious power, to crucify Christ. The cry of the Jews was, "We have no king but Cæsar;" and Pilate, representative of Gentile dominion, knowing his innocence, acquiesced in their malice.

Another thing was brought out, upon the accomplishment of all this evil in man, a testimony unto the heavenly blessedness of those who believe in Him whom the world had rejected—"Blessed are they who have not seen, and yet have believed." There are those who believe the record given of God's Son, and eternal life belongs to them.

Well, now, if we find any religious form of evil, we find it here, in the profession of *Christianity*, not amongst the avowed haters of Christ. One special mark of the "perilous times" in "the last days," concerning which we have prophetic testimony, is the "having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof." The same thing in principle as amongst the Jews. The Pharisees were a

religious people; they had the "form of godliness," but Christ, the "power," they "denied" (Acts iii. 13). Wherefore the testimony against them, "Now have they both seen and hated both Me and My Father."

NATURAL RELIGION.

One great principle of religious forms of evil, is that they are always suited to the flesh. There is a religious tendency in man: he *will* bow down to something. You may find a hard spirit here and there, rejecting everything; but, as a general rule, man must have his *religion*. The "form of godliness" is just suited to this. Nature, through it, seeks to satisfy conscience, whilst at the same time man's will comes in, man is exalted. Whatever the flesh can look at, or do, or cling to, as man's works, ordinances, &c., &c.; all these things will be esteemed. If it be but a "form of godliness," though the strictest sect of the Pharisees—a great deal of truth may be held there may be intellectual clearness of doctrine and the like—all this is within the compass of the flesh, and will be accredited by it. But there is one thing the flesh can never do, it can never trust simply in the work of the Lord Jesus Christ for eternal life, and have "peace with God."

The Spirit of God is the "Spirit of truth" and the "Spirit of holiness." If truth (the form of it) comes to me without holiness, I cannot receive it as of the Spirit of God; and, *vice versa*, if there be apparent holiness without truth. There is always thus, for the humble believer, a corrective or countercheck, whereby he may detect the evil,—Satan's imitation.

(To be concluded in our next.)

DANIEL stands out as one who was faithful to the Lord in the midst of most difficult circumstances; whether in refusing the king's meat for three years, or in praying, yea, and giving thanks to his God, with a lion's den right before him. Yet, when he got into God's presence, all his comeliness was turned into corruption, and he retained no strength. Thus, when saint or sinner is really brought face to face with God, their language ever is, "Woe is me, for I am undone."

PROPHETIC PAPERS. No. 16.

THE BOOK OF THE REVELATION.—*Continued.*
CHAPTER XIII.

BY F. C. BLAND.

CHAPTER xiii. begins with another vision, viz., of “the dragon standing on the sands of the sea.” The expression is not “I stood,” but he (the dragon) stood upon the sand of the sea, and I (John) saw a beast rise out of the sea having seven heads and ten horns. Here we are introduced to the antichrist under the name of the beast described as above.

It may be well to mention that the word beast here in the Greek is a different word from that translated beast in the 6th chapter and other places; the one is ζῷον, a living creature; the other word is θηριον, a wild beast. The seven heads represent the plenitude or completeness of his power; the ten horns, the dynasties or kingdoms of the world which the ten kings will agree to give him, as we read further on. He is described here as embodying the empires that went before, of which the symbols referred to in Daniel are repeated here, viz., the Babylonian, Persian, and Grecian; while he himself is the revived head of the fourth, and the dragon gives him his power, and his seat, and great authority.

In Daniel viii., we read that his power shall be mighty, but not by his own power. In 2 Thess. ii., it is said his coming is after the power of Satan; and here it is said that the devil gives him his power, &c., &c. What the wounding of one of his heads may be, I am unable to say, but it would seem that as the seven heads represent the plenitude of his power, some check or wound is given to it, which he afterwards recovers from. We easily recognise him as the one spoken of in previous scriptures, both in the Old and New Testament.

In Isaiah x., where he is named the Assyrian, he is called, in verse 4, “the rod of God’s anger.” Probably Zenacherib furnished the immediate occasion for this prophecy; but the chapter goes on to narrate a darker fulfilment than the destruction of Zenacherib, when the yoke of Israel is removed because of the

anointing, and the Lord humbles the haughty one. That chapter in Isaiah which speaks of the antichrist, is followed by the introduction of “the root out of the stem of Jesse,” just as this chapter (xiii. of Rev.) is followed by the vision of the Lamb standing upon the mount Zion in chap. xiv.

In Isaiah xiv., he is again spoken of as the “king of Babylon,” and a reference appears to be made to Satan here too, under the name of “Lucifer, son of the morning!” Further allusion is made to him in chap. xxx. to xxxiii., and in other places in this prophecy of Isaiah, too numerous to mention.

We need not refer again to the book of Daniel, where in previous lectures we had such frequent reference to him. But I would just note that in the Psalms we also get references to him, as “the enemy and the avenger” (Psalm viii.); in Psalm xlv. 16, as “this strange God”; and in Psalm cx., as “the head over many countries.”

In the New Testament, the Lord refers to him in John as the one who will come in his own name, whom the Jews will receive. Paul speaks of him, in 2 Thess. ii., as “that wicked one”; and John, in his epistle, tells the little children that “the antichrist will come.” In Daniel, we are told that “the *king* does according to his will.” He arrogates to himself all worship. It is his image which we are told, both here and in 2 Thess. ii., is set up in the temple of God, and he is Satan’s vicegerant on earth.

It has been sought to show that the second beast in this chapter is the antichrist, and not the first; but the second beast is neither the wilful king of Daniel xi., nor is his image set up in the temple of God according to 2 Thess. ii., but on the contrary he causes all men to worship *the first beast* and *his* image. The second beast is the prophet of the antichrist; and as the Christ had His prophet or forerunner (John the Baptist) at His first coming, and His two witnesses as His prophets before He comes again, so Satan has here his king and false prophet, who does miracles to accredit his coming. He calls down fire from heaven as Elijah did, and does miracles like as the magicians of Egypt did in the days of Moses, and so he is allowed to deceive those that dwell on the earth, because God will send

them strong delusion that they should believe the lie.

All must receive his mark in their fore-heads or in their hands, or the very necessities of life will be denied them; and we have had an experience in Ireland lately of what a terrible use this can be put to in bringing people under the control of those who exercise it. Those who suffer from it in this country are its unwilling victims; but, alas! those who receive the mark of the beast in their foreheads and in their hands will be his deluded and devoted followers, being sent strong delusion to deceive them.

They receive his mark in their right hands and in their foreheads; the right hand indicating that all their energies and powers have been surrendered to him, the forehead that it is with their full intelligence that they yield themselves to him. Slowly and unconsciously, but surely, the hearts of men are being turned away from God and His truth. The plain statements of Scripture are first being weakened, then questioned, and finally denied. Satan, under the cover of religious activity, is writing the name of Christ on things that are his own; and when men have accepted them as "advanced truths," which really means that which is not to be found in the Word of God, he will draw near and write his name on men's foreheads, and on their hands, and claim them for his own.

Many a public lecturer on spiritualism, and many a writer on what is called "advanced science," is walking straight into the net, and leading poor deluded souls after him. But it is all foretold as the time when men will depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of demons, having the conscience seared as with a hot iron.

As to the number of his name, "666," it would be fruitless to speculate about it. It has been made to spell (according to the Greek numerals), the names of many people who have from time to time made a stir in the world, from Napoleon the first, and the Pope of Rome, down to British statesmen of the present day.

I would only suggest that when the time comes for the manifestation of the Man of Sin, there will be no difficulty in reading it. I do not think it will have to be discovered

by translating the Greek numerals into figures, for then it would be of no use as a warning to the poor and unlearned, nor a guide to wayfaring men; and so we may leave it without any attempt to interpret it for the present, knowing that when the time comes God will make the vision plain, "so that he may run that readeth it."

Chapter xiv.—What a relief is felt on reading the opening words of chapter xiv., as compared with the opening of the chapter we have been just speaking on. In one the dragon stood upon the sands of the sea (the sea probably symbolising nations in turmoil and confusion), this chapter opens with the words, "And I looked, and, lo, the Lamb (not a lamb) stood on the mount Zion, and with Him an 144,000, having His Father's name in their foreheads." It has been said by some that this is a different 144,000 from those mentioned in chapter vii., but I see no reason to think so. The number is the same, and those in chapter vii. are sealed with the seal of the living God in their foreheads, while here the mark on their foreheads is called "His Father's name."

The mount Zion here is, I believe, the veritable mount Zion at Jerusalem. A song is raised in heaven, and those on earth answer it; their hearts being attuned to comprehend it, and then to respond to it. This takes us for a moment to the next chapter, where we see upon the sea of glass those harpers with their harps. The apostle hears them harping in chapter xiv. He sees them standing on the sea of glass in chapter xv.

It was noted in chapter iv. that this sea of glass is seen empty. Here it is occupied by those having the harps of God. Doubtless they are those who were slain for the witness of Jesus, and for the testimony which they held, and have been caught up to God and to His throne: and before returning back to the 144,000 of chapter xiv., we would note the song which these harpers sing. It is the song of Moses (Exodus xv.), which is a song of deliverance, and is a Jewish song, the name of Moses giving it that character; but it is also the song of *the Lamb*, introducing into it the thought of atonement as well as deliverance.

The Paschal lamb in Egypt delivered from

death and judgment; but *atonement* had no prominent place in that deliverance. But Jews, who will be converted to God in the last days, will understand what atonement means, even though they may suffer death for the confession of it.

I have been told that if we take a number of tuning forks, each with a different number of vibrations in a minute, and put them standing on the end of a table, and another is taken to a distance and struck, the only one that will vibrate in response to it is the one amongst them which has the same number of vibrations as the one struck. It is in beat with it. And so these 144,000 Jews on earth have their hearts in tune to the song of their fellow Jews in heaven, and "no man else in heaven or on earth could learn that song."

I suppose the description of them in verse 7, where they are called "virgins," would indicate that they have kept themselves from all the apostate and idolatrous systems of the earth; and for this they are made the body-guard of the Lamb, and are the first fruits of the Jewish nation to God.

In the following verses, 6 to 11, we get the three angelic testimonies, all of them most remarkable, and we are able to identify the time when they take place as the middle of the 70th heptad, or at the end of the first $3\frac{1}{2}$ years.

The first is called the "everlasting Gospel," and it is an appeal to men to worship God on the ground of His creatorship. It was God's first testimony to man (Rom. i. 19 and 20), and it was that to which God invariably appealed when men went into idolatry and worshipped the creature instead of the Creator (see Isaiah, chapters xlv. and xlv., and two very remarkable verses in Jeremiah x. 10 and 11, where God is declared to be the everlasting God, and the Creator of the heavens and the earth.) Here it would seem as if men had given up Revelation altogether (as men are fast doing at the present day), and God again makes a last appeal to them, as He made to men at the first, to acknowledge Him as Creator; and so it is called the "everlasting Gospel."

The second angel declares that Babylon is fallen, which I believe to be the ecclesiastical

systems of the world, which the ten kings and the beast destroy (Rev. xvii. 16); and then comes the third angel, warning men not to worship the beast, neither his image. And this seems to fix the time of these testimonies at the middle of the week, or at the very moment when the image of the beast is set up, because there would be no meaning in warning men against a thing which was not yet in existence, nor would there be any use in warning them not to worship him or receive his mark, after every hand and forehead had already been branded for the beast! And so this testimony comes in as a timely warning at the moment when it is needed, not *before* the image of the beast is set up, but *when* it is set up, and not after they have already surrendered themselves into his hands, and been marked as his.

Then come two awful verses, which it will take some ingenuity of the annihilists to explain away, which tell us of the cup of God's indignation, of the lake of fire and brimstone, and of *torment day and night for ever and ever*; and again we have what another has spoken of as "God striking His notes in solemn octave." If the apostates "have *no rest* day or night," the martyred dead "*rest* from their labours, and their works do follow them."

How many are there who think lightly of the ulterior result of the deeds done in the body, who will shrink with horror and dread when they see their deeds following them? Sceptical and wicked books written, which have led men to depart from God, it may be years after the writers of them have been silent in the grave; wicked acts done and wicked words spoken, which may affect for evil those who are yet unborn.

But on the other hand, with what wonder and glad surprise will the overcomer find the fruit of his works following him, like Abel of old, of whom it is written, "He being dead, yet speaketh."

Then come two reapings, the reaping of the harvest and of the vintage; the first will be the harvest, and may answer to the same expression in Matt. xiii., when good and bad will be gathered, and each find their final destiny the one in the kingdom, the other in everlasting fire, where there is weeping and gnashing of teeth. The vintage

is something different, and refers to the judgment of the apostate followers of the antichrist by the Son of Man, those who in impious daring will be found arrayed against Him in that day, and whom He will tread down in the fierceness of His wrath when He comes.

We can hardly fail to identify this with the the scene of judgment in Rev. xix., as well as that in Isaiah lxiii., and many Old Testament scriptures besides.

Chapter xv.—The 15th chapter will need but little further notice than that already given to it in dealing with the chapter before. In verse 8, a prophecy is uttered in connection with the song of glory to God's name, namely, that all nations shall come and worship before Him, "for His judgments *are made manifest.*" There will be no longer any doubt that God Himself is acting in the scene, and that the judgments come direct from His hand. The seven angels who are to pour out their seven vials, are seen here coming out of the temple.

Chapter xvi.—The 16th chapter opens with the pouring out of the vials of the wrath of God upon the earth. The first vial is limited in the sphere of its action to the apostates, the worshippers of the beast, who have received his mark. The other six vials seem to be an intensifying of the plagues of the seven trumpets, and in a general way affect the same things as the trumpets do; the difference being that the trumpets only touched the third part of the things on which they had been poured out, whilst the vials affect the whole of them, with some variations, however, in the character of the judgments. For instance, under the fourth trumpet, the third part of the sun and moon and stars were darkened, and shone not for a third part of the day, and of the night likewise; but under the fourth vial, the sun is given power to scorch men five months. But, as remarked before, God's judgments harden men's hearts now instead of subduing them; and men blasphemed God, and repented not to give Him glory. Again, under the sixth seal and sixth vial, the river Euphrates is the sphere of the action of both; in the one, the four angels bound in the river, are loosed; in the other, it is dried up, "that the way of the kings of the east might be prepared."

What follows in the next two verses would lead us to suppose that these kings are apostate kings who are about to gather in Armageddon, and who are to be destroyed at the great day of battle of God Almighty.

Nations are often seen in Scripture as being moved by spiritual agency, and spirits are permitted to interfere more than we are apt to think in influencing their course of action (Daniel x. 13).

I would note here that the last *seal*, *trumpet*, and *vial*, appear to end with "voices, thunders, lightnings, and an earthquake," so that whenever they begin, they seem to synchronise at the end. The seals may cover the whole of the 70th heptad. Possibly the trumpets may begin in the middle of it, while the vials begin later on still.

We do not pretend to fix the exact time when each begins, though there have been many opinions expressed on the subject. But it is plain that they all end together.

THE BRAZEN SEA.

EXPOSITORY LECTURES on the TEMPLES of SOLOMON and EZEKIEL. By THOMAS NEWBERRY, Editor of "The Englishman's Bible."

WE shall now especially consider the brazen sea, and the truth connected therewith. First, we notice

THE LAVER,

which by the commandment of God was made in connection with the tabernacle in the wilderness. As we read in Ex. xxx. 17, 18, God commanded Moses to make a laver of brass, and his foot also of brass, and to put water therein, that the priests might wash their hands and their feet thereat (or literally therefrom) when they approached the altar, and when they entered the sanctuary. What is

THE SPIRITUAL TEACHING CONNECTED WITH THE LAVER?

I believe all these vessels are the embodiment of Divine thought connected with the person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ. As in the altar we have Christ our redemption, so in the laver we have Christ our sanctification.

"Who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemp-

tion" (1 Cor. i. 30). God is our sanctifier. One beautiful title by which God is made known in the Old Testament, though seldom noticed, is Jehovah Mekaddesham, which means, "I am Jehovah that doth sanctify you." All the Divine titles are explained and pointed out in the introduction to "The Englishman's Bible."

But how does Jehovah sanctify? He sanctifies in Christ Jesus through the truth (John xvii. 17). The Word of God is the means by which He carries on the work of sanctification in Christ Jesus. Eph. v. 26, "That He might sanctify and cleanse it (the church) with the washing of water by the Word." The direct agency employed by God in sanctification is the Holy Spirit. "God hath chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth." God sanctifies in Christ and through Christ, but the work of sanctification is effectually carried out by the Spirit of God. This truth we have beautifully set forth in the brazen laver connected with the tabernacle in the wilderness.

Brass is the emblem in Scripture of enduring strength, as gold is of Divine glory, and silver of redemption and the redemption price. The laver is of brass as well as the altar, because Jesus is not only mighty to save, but He is equally strong to sanctify those whom He has redeemed to God by His precious blood.

"His foot also of brass." What is the truth taught by this? The base or foot suggests to my mind Christ down here,

"Wandering as a homeless stranger
In the world His hands had made."

Whereas the laver exalted above shows Christ in resurrection and ascended glory. How does God by His Holy Spirit sanctify the believer? First, the Holy Spirit uses the life and example of Christ on earth, and brings to our remembrance what He was, and how He walked, and what He did. Christ having left us an example that we should follow in His steps. It is by the character and example, as well as the teaching of the Lord Jesus Christ, that God by His Spirit and through His Word, carries on the work of sanctification in the children of God. What an example Christ has left from the cradle

to the Cross! The example for the child; for He was a child once. Oh, how the precious against evil, he shall suffer persecution. But, Jesus can teach a little child of His how to live and how to walk.

"Gentle Jesus, meek and mild,
Look upon a little child;
Pity my simplicity,
Suffer me to follow Thee."

Christ is also an example for the youth in His subjection to His parents. The first thirty years of His life were spent in obscurity in the humble town of Nazareth, in a workshop with His reputed father, Joseph the carpenter. Oh, what an example to the ordinary toiling artisan, and to the daily plodding life of the one who is not called to appear publicly before men, but to live a quiet, simple, holy life in retirement and fellowship with God! What an example of every grace! When He revisited the place of His bringing up, Nazareth, He went into the synagogue, and as He had been accustomed in former times, He stood up to read, and there was given unto Him the book of the prophet Isaiah, thus teaching us that He had been in the habit of attending the synagogue of Nazareth. And, no doubt, from the charm, beauty, and accuracy with which He read the Hebrew Scriptures, when He appeared among them again they would say, "That is the One to read the Scriptures to us." Then when He comes forth in active service and testimony for God, O what an example! During the first thirty years of His life there was no opposition or persecution against Jesus of Nazareth though He walked the holy walk and set a holy example. But, afterwards, when on a certain occasion His brethren went up to keep the feast of tabernacles, they urged Him to go up to Jerusalem and there exhibit before the world those wondrous works which He had done in Galilee, His reply was, "My time is not yet come; your time is always ready. The world cannot hate you; Me it hateth." Why? While He was the lowly, blameless One, He was a favourite, but when He came forth in decided testimony for God, and against the religious evils of the day, then He says, "Me the world hateth, because I testify of it that the works thereof are evil." So, if anyone will live godly

in Christ Jesus and testify, not only by a blameless walk, but by his faithful witnessing "If we suffer with Him, we shall also be glorified together." The life of Christ, was His teaching lived out, put in practice, made manifest.

We get our motive from His Cross; our example and pattern in His life. "For the love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that if One died for all, then all died: and that He died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto Him who died for them, and rose again" (2 Cor. v. 14, 15). Our motive is in the Cross. Oh to feel that motive in its full constraining power in our spirit, soul, and body! But from whence do we get our power? From the risen Christ in heavenly glory. The apostle Paul says, "I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me." Thus following in His footsteps, constrained by His redeeming love, and strengthened with might by His Spirit in the inner man; Christ is made unto us sanctification. This is some of the truth taught us by the laver and its foot.

It was to be filled with water; and what does that water signify? This water probably came from the smitten rock. We have not only redemption by the blood, but we have sanctification in the Spirit of the Crucified One. And we have received the Spirit not merely from a crucified Christ but from a risen and glorified Christ.

THE BRAZEN SEA CONNECTED WITH THE TEMPLE OF SOLOMON.

1 Kings vii. 23-39 and 2 Chron. iv. 2-6. We find from these scriptures that connected with the temple of Solomon, in place of the one brazen laver for the tabernacle there were ten lavers of brass and ten bases under them. The lavers with their bases, we are told, were for the washing of the sacrifices; but the brazen sea was for the priests to wash at. The molten sea was placed on the east side, over against the south; five of the lavers and bases were placed on the south or right side of the temple, and five on the north. These ten lavers and bases are minutely described in the first book of Kings.

These lavers were provided for the cleansing of the inwards and the legs of the sacrifices

to be offered on the altar. The truth taught is expressed in that word respecting Christ, "Who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God" (Heb ix. 14). The dimensions of the laver connected with the tabernacle we are not told, but with regard to the brazen sea we have the description given in full. Ten cubits in diameter, from brim to brim, or, say, twenty feet across; thirty cubits in circumference; five cubits, or ten feet in depth; and a handbreadth in thickness. Thus being capable of holding a vast supply of water, sufficient for all purposes connected with the sanctification of the priests in their varied services. We read in Exodus xxx. 19 that the priests were commanded to wash their hands and their feet "*thereat*"—the Hebrew expression is "*therefrom*"—because the water both in the lavers and in the brazen sea was not to be defiled. The water wanted for purification was drawn out into various vessels which were provided for that purpose. The priests were to wash their hands and their feet whenever they approached either to the altar or to the sanctuary. We not only need the atoning blood of Christ, whereby we may approach unto God to worship Him acceptably, but we also need the sanctification of the Spirit in our worship, testimony, and service. It is as having the heart sprinkled from an evil conscience, by the cleansing of the blood; and the body washed with pure water, through the sanctification of the Spirit, that we have boldness to enter into the holiest.

The brazen sea, with its vast collection of water, presents to us the idea of an unlimited supply; for in Christ all fulness dwells. In John vii. 37, we read, "In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto Me, and drink. He that believeth in Me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. (But this spake He of the Spirit, which they that believe in Him should receive: for the Holy Ghost was not yet given; because that Jesus was not yet glorified.)" And it appears that this truth was set forth in that brazen sea. When Jesus ascended up on high, He received gifts for men. Being exalted to the right hand of God, He received from the Father the promise

of the Holy Spirit. Jehovah is the Fountain of living waters; as He said, "My people have committed two evils; they have forsaken Me, the Fountain of living waters, and hewed them out cisterns, broken cisterns, that can hold no water" (Jer. ii. 13). God, the Father, the source of all good, is the Fountainhead. But, "it has pleased the Father that in Him (Christ, the Son) should all fulness dwell." He is the vast reservoir. The Father, the source; in Christ all fulness dwelleth; and the fulness of the Father in Christ is communicated by the Holy Spirit sent down from a glorified Christ. The water supply of a town is usually obtained from springs rising at some distance off, and is conveyed to a reservoir. You are aware that it is only by making a connection by pipes into your houses, that you can avail yourselves of the supply. The springs may be abundant, and the reservoir full, and the pipes may be all right; but if you do not bring the water into your habitations, and then, as you want it, turn the tap, you will not be supplied. And so it is in spiritual things. God is the fountainhead of all blessing; and it has pleased the Father that all this fulness should dwell in Christ, that out of His fulness we might receive, and grace for grace. In vain it is for us, that God, the fountain of eternal, unchanging love, "so loved the world as to give His only begotten Son," if the Spirit of God does not take of the things of Jesus and reveal them unto us. It is not only from the Father, but through the Son, and by the Holy Spirit; hence that beautiful concluding benediction in 2 Cor. xiii. 14, "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all." Worship is to the Father, through the Son; but it is by the Spirit, "praying in the Holy Ghost." Worship goes up by and through Christ into the holiest of all, into the presence of God our Father. But the communion of the Holy Spirit is a silent thing carried on in the secret of the soul. "For we do not know what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit Himself maketh intercession with groanings which cannot be uttered" (Rom. viii. 26). The water in the brazen sea, as interpreted by Christ, signifies

the Holy Spirit from a glorified Christ sent down at Pentecost, remaining in the Church until that Church as the body and bride of Christ is made meet for Him to come and receive her to Himself.

What do the twelve oxen underneath the brazen sea represent? When the Spirit of God teaches us, He not only gives us the type in one place, but He explains that type in another. The apostle Paul, in 1 Cor. ix. 9., says, "Thou shalt not muzzle the mouth of the ox that treadeth out the corn." It is the ox in eastern husbandry that ploughs the ground whereon to scatter the seed; and it is the ox that brings home the ripened sheaves; and it is the ox that treads out the corn for food. The first may set forth to us the work of the evangelist ploughing up the uncultivated field, going out into the world with the Gospel, breaking up the fallow ground. The second, the work of the pastor, the one who garners the precious wheat. The third, the work of the teacher, going over and over the word, treading out the corn, and feeding as he goes. The evangelist, pastor, and teacher, I believe, are represented by these twelve oxen. They look towards the north, west, south, east, facing every direction, reminding us of Christ's commission to His disciples, "Go into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature." And not only carrying the glad tidings of salvation to the unsaved, not only ploughing up the fallow ground, but caring for the sheep and providing food for those of the household. But there is another truth. Christ says, "Out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water." The water was drawn from the brazen sea into vessels prepared to receive it, probably passing through the belly and out of the mouth of the oxen; so the evangelist, drawing down the living water from the risen Christ in glory, experiences its power and refreshment in his own soul. The pastor also, as he draws down the living stream realises in his own heart the power of the truth, and is able to help those in doubt, difficulty, and perplexity. And it is only as the teacher is in living union and communion with the Fountainhead, abiding in Christ and drawing from Him, that he can minister living truth for the need of the soul.

ON DISCIPLINE IN THE ASSEMBLY.

FROM NOTES OF AN ADDRESS BY THE EDITOR.

WILL you now look with me at another Old Testament scripture, which illustrates the spirit in which discipline must be exercised (read Judges xx.).

Here we find the congregation "gathered together as one man, from Dan even to Beersheba, unto the Lord in Mizpah."

This unanimity was perfectly right. It was God's appointment in cases of judgment that the hands of the witnesses should be first upon the condemned one, and then the hands of all the people. This we have referred to already.

It was a great gathering, comprising "four hundred thousand footmen that drew sword." But neither their numbers, nor their unanimity, nor their indignation against the crime that was the subject of judgment, proved that they were in fellowship with Jehovah. There may be a just cause, righteous indignation, oneness of mind, and a great congregation, and yet God may discern a condition of soul so contrary to His mind, that for His glory and for their good He cannot use them or prosper them in their course.

In verse 7, we have Israel called upon to give their "advice and counsel."

In verse 8, we have their instantaneous and unanimous decision.

In verse 9, 10, we have the mode of procedure they thought fit to adopt.

So far we do not read that God is consulted or waited upon. They do not seem to have suspected for a moment that with them there were evils as well as with Benjamin, about which Jehovah had a controversy with them, though long and patiently He had borne with their self-will, as every man continued to do "that which was right in his own eyes."

In verse 11, we find them acting upon their own counsel, "knit together as one man."

It is surprising how children of God will put themselves to inconvenience and trouble, and turn out to "oversight meetings," when there is some matter of judgment to be discussed, who would not trouble to cross their doorstep in ordinary matters of faith and love.

Observe the workings of the flesh in such things. Perhaps an "oversight meeting,"

regularly held, is attended by four or five brethren with love and godly care in their hearts; but some difficult case calling for discernment and judgment arises, and at once the number of so-called "overseers" is augmented to twelve or fourteen, some of the zealous new-comers being no more fit for such work than a child. These things ought not so to be.

In verses 13 and 14, we find that the tribe of Benjamin, by covering the guilty parties, made themselves partakers of the sin, and so exposed themselves to the same judgment.

The household of Achan perished with him, and we cannot doubt that they were cognizant of their father's guilt, for it was within his tent that he dug the hole and hid the accursed thing.

Those who refused to separate from Korah, Dathan, and Abiram, perished with them, and here we have the tribe of Benjamin sharing the guilt of this appalling crime.

Timothy is exhorted, not to be a partaker of other men's sins, but to keep himself pure (1 Tim. v. 22). And again we read, concerning one who brings false doctrine concerning the person of Christ, "He that giveth him greeting, partaketh in his evil works" (2 John ii., R.V.). In these days of abounding error, such scriptures have special claim on our attention.

Finding that Benjamin is prepared to fight, Israel now betake themselves to the house of God and ask counsel of Him: "Which of us shall go up first to the battle against the children of Benjamin?" Surely a right course to take, but the very nature of their inquiry betrays the condition of their soul. No mis-giving as to whether they were in a condition for God to be with them; no questioning as to whether they themselves were so clear before God as to be fit to throw the stone of judgment at their brother.

It is not first, "Lord, hast Thou a controversy with us to settle ere we can judge our brother," but simply, "Which shall go first?" Was their readiness for the conflict faith? or was it self-confidence and self-righteousness? Was it Divine energy? or was it the energy of forward and unjudged flesh?

But God often allows man to take his own way, and thereby to learn experimentally his

folly and his weakness, and so here the answer is "Judah first."

And now the sword must enter first into their own soul. Israel is smitten before Benjamin, and twenty-two thousand are slain. Solemn lesson for those who haste to judge evil in others without entering into judgment first with themselves.

Again they repair to the Lord—they weep—they ask counsel, and now they call Benjamin their "brother." There is no diminishing of their sense of the enormity of the sin of Benjamin as thus they wait before God, but there is a quickening of their affections, and a calling to remembrance of their relationship to the sinning tribe.

At the bidding of the Lord, again they go up to battle, and again they are defeated and eighteen thousand men that drew sword are slain. Was it that God was justifying Benjamin? Most surely not; but He was using Benjamin as His scourge for the time, to chasten a people who long had gone on in heartless neglect of their God. But Benjamin's time of judgment was coming, so soon as Israel had been brought to a fitting condition before God. Again they repaired to the house of God—they wept—they sat there before the Lord—they fasted until even, and offered burnt offerings and peace offerings. This is most significant—it is the owning that God had a controversy with *them* as well as with Benjamin, seeking in brokenness of heart restored communion with Him ere they attempt again to wield the sword of judgment.

And now what is their inquiry? No longer is it who shall go first? but shall I go at all? or shall I cease? The chastening has done its work; and now God can attach His power to their action, which He could not do before.

In how many little assemblies of God's children have difficulties arisen through sin of one kind or another, moral or doctrinal. Some have deemed the evil to be of such a nature as to warrant excommunication, others not convinced have sought to frustrate the attempted discipline, forming in their zeal *a party*, the sole uniting bond of which was opposition to those of a different mind.

The opposition is pressed by the one party and the other, finding their efforts to maintain

what they conceive to be the will of God frustrated,—finding their powerlessness to carry them out; finding, like Israel before Benjamin, that they are defeated,—resolve that, even though it result in the hopeless rending of the assembly and the setting up of another meeting in opposition, they will at all costs persist in their course. Whoever is in possession of the key of the hall maintains, in their own esteem, and in the esteem of many who are too blind to see further, the claim to be the original assembly, and the rest are judged as schismatics.

Both parties maintain that this is "faithfulness to the truth." Bitterness and wrath develop into settled antipathy, and each party greedily grasps at every evil thing that is heard or said against the other, and passes it on from one defiled lip to another, the scandal growing at every repetition, till the ultimate report bears no resemblance to the original. "Envy and strife" have resulted in "confusion and every evil work," and to the spiritually-anointed eye the brand of God's displeasure and judgment is stamped upon the whole as clearly as when Israel fell before Benjamin.

But, worst of all, where are the relentings of sorely grieved affections, calling the others in tender accents before the Lord, "My brother"? Where are the weeping eyes, the broken hearts, the fasting of self-judging, the pleading before God for grace to know and do His will in His way on the ground of the Great Peace Offering?

This is wholly lacking—it is *never* heard of—nothing is resorted to but hard and harder words, severe and severer judgments, misrepresentations of things said and done that are false and more false, all-night meetings for strife and debate, pamphlets issued to publish the shame of Israel in Benjamin and of Benjamin in Israel, and both before the world, that "the daughter of the Philistine may triumph over the wreck of the testimony that had at one time been raised for God and for His truth.

But in view of all the ruin and failure and sin, what is the Divine remedy? "Come and let us return unto the Lord: for He hath torn, and He will heal us: He hath smitten, and He will bind us up."

To such the needed light will surely be granted. "The meek will He guide in judgment, the meek will He teach His way."

"If in anything ye be otherwise minded God shall reveal even this unto you."

With self-judgment and humbling before God there will surely be a readiness to inquire into the Word of God, and the same light and knowledge of His will which puffs up the carnal and unbroken being humbly received, will be fruitful in blessing.

THE TRIAL OF FAITH.

FROM AN ADDRESS BY F. S. ARNOT.

"The trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire" (1 Peter i. 7).

MEN have false ideas of what is really precious in the sight of God. "That which is highly esteemed among men is an abomination in the sight of God" (Luke xvi. 15). It is only in the light of God's word that we can estimate or understand things aright. Men say, "Money maketh rich," but God says, "The blessing of the Lord maketh rich" (Prov. x. 22). If our citizenship is in heaven, let us dwell in spirit there. If we profess to be a heavenly people, then our companionships, enjoyments, and dress ought to have the stamp of heaven upon them.

God will try us in all our ways on the one ground that we profess to be His people. Trial brings out what we are, and it also manifests what God is. As we prove God, we learn experimentally what He is. You may have faith in your heart, but if you don't act upon it in any way you will not know what a treasure you have. God has tried His people in all ages, and He will try us too. God tried Abraham in many ways. He tried him first by giving him His word, and then in keeping him waiting long for the fulfilment of His promise.

The ten virgins spoken of in Matt. xxv. were tried most effectually. Supposing the bridegroom had come at once, their lamps would have been trimmed, and they would have been ready to go in with the bridegroom to the

marriage feast. "Whilst the bridegroom tarried, they slept." They were tested and found wanting. God has His own blessed, perfect ways of testing those who confess His name. If there is one thing we should desire more than another, it is that God might so try us that we might be brought into more real living, holy, and blessed fellowship with the Lord Jesus.

God tried these ten virgins by keeping them waiting. How hard it is for us to wait. How hard it is for the husbandman after he has buried the seed in the ground to have to wait till it grows up. How hard it is for us to be buried out of sight, so to speak, waiting the time when the sons of God shall be manifested.

God tries us by the gifts He bestows. We have all received Christ. Some have a fuller realisation of what Christ is than others. This is illustrated by the different offerings that God commanded His people to bring to Him. One brought a bullock, another a sheep or a goat, and another a turtle dove, thus showing forth our various apprehensions of Christ. To whom much is given, of them much shall be required. "What do you know?" "I know that Jesus loves me." That is enough to fill every empty vessel that can be brought to Him.

The Lord is trying us with what He has revealed to us of His Son. Having given us Jesus with Him, He doth freely give us all things.

The Lord in His wisdom has surrounded us with poor and needy people, to test our fidelity of heart to Him. Did you ever think what responsibility the knowledge of this solemn fact brings, that in Africa thousands of men and women are passing into eternity without the knowledge of the love of God in Christ? These things are intended to test the fidelity of the hearts of God's people. Christ says in Matt. xxv., "I was an hungered, and ye gave Me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave Me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took Me in: naked, and ye clothed Me: sick, and ye visited Me.

. . . . Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these My brethren, ye have done it unto Me." It is thus that our fidelity of heart to the Lord is tested by our surrounding circumstances. Christ did not come to this earth merely to manifest the wisdom

and power of God, He came to reveal the depth of the fulness of the heart of God to us.

Luke vii. 19-23. The Lord gave to John's disciple a perfect reply to his question. It is only this perfect reply that we can bring before God's people, or a poor questioning world without. Let us not be satisfied with the mere knowledge of the will of God. Let us seek to do it. How can we manifest before men that we are in living communion with a living Christ? Let us seek to testify before men of that wonderful, living, active, love of God. On all sides we are surrounded with the awful results of sin. That is intended by God as a means of trying our hearts. Let us so live Christ that the sweet savour of His name may be felt by those around us. If for His name's sake you have fed the hungry, or wiped the tears from the eyes of that poor orphan child, Christ will reward you for it.

In looking back over the time we have spent in His service, if in any measure we have realised the power and joy of God in our souls, may it encourage to more fidelity to Him. When Solomon had finished the building of the temple, his mind was not occupied with that wonderful structure; but he knelt and stretched forth his hands and lifted up his face in praise to God. May we be poured out in His service. Though He try our love in any way He pleases, may it only cause us to love Him more. "The Lord direct your hearts into the love of God, and into the patient waiting for Christ" (2 Thess. iii. 5).

PLEASING GOD.

ALTHOUGH all Israel were redeemed by blood, and brought out of Egypt to serve the Lord in the wilderness, and there, richly blessed with spiritual blessings, yet with the most of them *God was not well pleased* (1 Cor. x. 5, R.V.). So in this age, those who are "blessed with all spiritual blessing in the heavenly blessings," by drawing back, may, in like manner, cause God to say, "My soul shall have no pleasure in him." Enoch had this testimony, that he pleased God, and this because of his faith, for without faith A CHILD OF GOD cannot please Him. Faith, like love, is not occupied with itself, but with the living God.

Correspondence.

FRIENDLY SOCIETIES.

ESTEEMED BROTHER IN THE LORD,—I would like to add a few words to what has already appeared under this head. I was a member of a friendly society, but after I was saved I left it because of the habits of drinking, smoking, &c. I then joined the "Rechabites" (so called). Here there was neither drinking nor smoking. But I found that the rules of this society provided that, "Each member . . . shall not introduce any religious or political discussion, unless directly bearing on the interests of the order." You must not ask the one sitting beside you at the lodge meeting if he is saved, though you must call him "brother." I was exercised about this. Where there was no room for Christ and His Word, I judged I had no business to be, and out I came. I could not remain a member of a fellowship from which my Lord was excluded. John xiv. 23, 24, John xvii. 14-18, 2 Cor. vi. 14 to vii. 1, 1 John ii. 15-17, were to me plain and unmistakable in teaching. "UNTO HIM *without* the camp bearing His *reproach*," just means what it says. Let children of God see to it that coming *out* is real *heart* work, and they will not at any time be joining with worldlings in rejection of our blessed Lord. J. F. H. F.

ONE correspondent writes—"I think our brother, W. E. S., presses the point too far in quoting the ox and the ass (Deut. xxii. 10); for, taking this in the letter, it is wrong for a believer to work side by side with an unbeliever." But this friend overlooks the fact of the *Yoke*, which necessarily bound the two together in whatever course they pursued. Two may work side by side for years, the one honestly, the other "scamping" his work, and yet there may never have been a particle of fellowship between them, the honest work of the Christian being a constant rebuke to his ungodly fellow-workman. But if the two were *partners*, all is altered, for if the Christian shares in the gain resulting from the dishonesty of his partner, his testimony is gone; he is partaker of his sin.

It is the "fellowship" or "co-partnery" that is the evil thing, wherein the believer is in one way or another committed to the action of the unbeliever, and therefore disqualified from bearing an effectual testimony. The only sure and scriptural course is not to be *yoked* with the unbeliever at all.

To illustrate it again: a *depositor* in a bank is in no way responsible for or committed to the action of the manager, directors, or co-partnery. A shareholder is. When the City of Glasgow Bank failed, many Christians were ruined; such, doubtless, wished that they had never entered such a co-partnery. But in the sight of God, would it not have been far worse had the wicked deception prospered, and yielded to the shareholders profits to which they were not honestly entitled? In sharing the profits of wickedness, they share the sin that procured the profit. But, it is argued, being ignorant of the evil they were therefore not responsible. The answer is, has a Christian any right to be committed to any transaction which he does not know to be according to the will of God?—ED.

OBJECT TEACHING.

DEAR BROTHER,—With reference to the above subject, and the letter of "R. S." in March number of *The Witness*, will you permit a few observations in reply.

All "who revere God, or have at heart the interest of fellow-sinners, whether old or young," will readily admit that nothing calculated to create irreverence in connection with Divine things should be allowed, and, further, that the Holy Scriptures, as applied to the heart by the Spirit of God, are the means by which either sinners or saints can receive spiritual blessing.

Let it also be freely acknowledged that some may have been unwise in the way in which they have taken up illustrative teaching to the young and illiterate, at the same time remembering that the *misuse* of a thing is no proper argument against the *use* of it.

There are three mistakes into which, as it appears to me, your correspondent, "R. S.," falls, which, in the spirit of love and meekness, I should like to point out.

1st, *Confounding together things that essentially differ*. Illustrative or object teaching is not an "aid to the Gospel," much less a "substitute" for it, or an ignoring of the blessed Spirit's prerogative; but only a means of explaining and making clear to the youthful mind the precious Word of God, seeking to fix attention and awaken interest, and thus to reach the understanding, and through it, the heart, looking, all the while to the Lord to apply the Word, with Divine power, to the inner man.

"When any one heareth the word, and *understandeth* it not, *THEN* cometh the wicked one, and catcheth away that which was sown" (Matt. xiii. 19). Is not the preacher's first object to make his hearers "understand" what he has to say? and, according to the class and mental ability of his audience, so will he adopt his speech and illustrations. Who would think of addressing a gathering of children in the same way as one of adults, or a company of illiterate peasants as he would the graduates of a university? The Gospel is the same all through, the power of the Spirit is needed in each case, but the mode in which it is conveyed to the mind differs.

If this is not allowed, then, to be consistent, we should preclude all speaking and explanation in religious meetings, and confine ourselves solely to the reading of the Scriptures and prayer.

The "excellency of speech" and "wisdom of words," condemned in I Cor. ii., is quite another matter, and refers to the worldly philosophy and arts of rhetoric and oratory practised by the Greek orators.

The 2nd mistake is that of supposing that an object lesson is an appeal to the eye alone, and that illustrative teaching is confined to the use of a visible object. That the former is not the case, a moment's thought will show; the mind and understanding of man is as quickly reached through the *eye* as through the *ear*, and when both senses are appealed to at the same time, the impressions are often more vivid and permanent.

The second position is unreasonable, as all anecdotes and verbal illustrations, descriptions of places, scenes, and persons, calling up, as they do, mental pictures in the minds of the hearers, and stimulating the

imagination, are of the same nature and principle as an "object lesson," and equally good and useful if used within proper limits, and with due regard to the main result desired to be reached, which is the clear and intelligent understanding of the particular scriptural subject under consideration.

The 3rd mistake seems to me the most serious of all, and it is the spirit of judgment of "another servant" (Rom. xiv. 4), and the attempt to impose restrictions and burdens upon one's fellow-servants whom the Lord has received, and whose labours He has owned. No one wishes to force those beloved brethren, who have "weak consciences" in respect of object, or black-board, or acrostic lessons, to use them; but, on the other hand, they must allow equal liberty of conscience to others who consider such things to be lawful and desirable helps in Gospel work amongst the young, and whose desire for the good of souls and the honour of the Lord is as sincere as their own.

There is no book in the world in which objects and illustrations, presented to eye and ear, abound more than in the Bible, both Old and New Testaments—prophets, gospels, and epistles—and in none more so than in the last book, that of Revelation. Your space would not admit even an allusion to a few of them; but I earnestly submit that it would be for more spiritual profit, and furtherance of practical fellowship, if dear brethren like "R. S." would abandon the position of the critic, and let us know how they manage their Sunday-schools and children's meetings, and what means they find best to secure the attendance and attention of the young people at the meetings under their control.

H. W. F.

THOUGHTS SUGGESTED BY THE LAST QUESTION IN "THE WITNESS."

THE only basis-foundation for saints to build on is Jesus Christ.

The power to build is the power of the Spirit of God and the word of truth.

It would take all that is scriptural in all the assemblies of the saints put together to represent faintly what following the Lord fully in everything means, but the Lord knoweth them that are His. Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty to speak the truth in love, to declare the whole counsel of God.

If we preach Christ Jesus as Lord, we must not try to be masters, but servants of others for Jesus' sake, who prayed that they all may be one. Every one of us shall give account of himself to God. The Lord deals with assemblies also Himself (Rev. ii., iii).

A NON-COMBATIVE SAINT, LOVE.

Three Little Words—

"GOD IS ABLE." I would impress them upon you. We all have difficulties, each in his own sphere; *God is able*, no matter what the difficulty may be. If then God is able, we are safe in concluding He certainly WILL. This in all our walks of life is our marching order.

F. S. A.

Questions and Answers.

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

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.

We await replies to these questions:—

If one is excluded from an assembly on the ground of holding the doctrine of the non-eternity of punishment, and is afterwards received into another assembly, what ought to be the attitude of the former assembly towards the latter?

Is there any scripture to warrant the union of assemblies of a like mind to form a basis of acting independently from those they consider as not following the Lord fully?

What relation have the sufferings of Christ in the garden of Gethsemane to the work of atonement?

How can we expect the coming of our Lord at any time, in the face of Matt. xxiv. 14, when two-thirds of the inhabited earth have not heard the Gospel. See the commission, Mark xvi. 15; also Rev. xiv. 6.

What is understood to be the meaning of the words, "Not discerning the body"? 1 Cor. x. 1-29.

Please explain Col. iii. 18, last clause, "As it is fit in the Lord."

QUESTION 317.—What is the New Testament signification of the Old Testament type of the shutting up of the suspected leper (Lev. xiii. 21)?

Ans. A.—Perhaps it is by no means necessary to expect that every Old Testament type has its parallel in the New Testament. Law and grace have their contrasts, as well as their points of resemblance.

There has been a tendency, in some quarters, to go back to the Levitical types for arguments to justify a line of conduct that had no foundation in the New Testament. We must beware of this, and not press the types in their application to Church discipline beyond what they were designed to teach.

I believe all would agree that putting the leper "outside the camp" has its parallel in "putting away" the "wicked person" in 1 Cor. v.

It is also clear that "shutting up" the *suspected* leper is not at all the same as "putting outside" the *pronounced* leper.

Could we find in the New Testament such a thing as *suspending for a time* one who is suspected of

doctrinal or moral evil, we would at once say that was it. But the fact is, there is no such thing. So we must look somewhere else for it. Perhaps the nearest parallel to "shutting up" is in 2 Thess. iii. 6-15, specially verse 14, "*Note that man*, and have no company with him." Verse 15, "Yet count him not as an enemy, but admonish him as a *brother*," clearly proves that he was not yet outside, in the place of the "*wicked person*." But while he was inside, there was a separation from his company enjoined. He was in a measure shut up. Also, it is important to notice that while the *congregation* were commanded to put outside (Num. v. 3-5), it was the *priest* that was commanded to shut up (Lev. xiii. 21). Would not this teach that it is the business of those who have a special responsibility in the church to "note" and keep a special eye on one whom they had reason to suspect of being a spiritual leper, until they could either convict him or clear him of all suspicion.

There is no part of discipline more difficult to carry out than that in the passage quoted (2 Thess. iii. 6-15). And the Spirit of God has enclosed it between two gems, verses 5 and 16. We are so liable to attempt to carry out discipline, without the grace and Divine help which can alone make us successful. G. A.

Ans. B.—If Israel of old be taken as a type of the professing church, and if their experience is lawfully to be taken by us for ensample (1 Cor. x.), then a man suspected of leprosy, through showing certain eruptions on the flesh, is surely type of a professing Christian, whose *conduct* is *apparently* open to serious blame. The holy precautions taken in the supposed leper's case, are to find fitting counterpart now. And, as then all was done through and by the priest, who alone then, and after most careful scrutiny, was to decide, so now all must be by reference to Him who is High Priest for ever of the true Israel. We need the *waiting grace*, which, while it takes every care in a suspected case, NEVER hurries, and never pronounces judgment, until God has made the issue evident. A. O. M.

Ans. C.—Leprosy is always used in Scripture as a type of sin, and we may learn from the priests dealing with leprosy in the body under the law something of God's dealing with sin, and we may also learn how open or suspected sin should be dealt with by the church in individuals or assemblies. In chap. xiii., the treatment of suspected individuals is shown; in chap. xiv. 34-53, under the type of a house having, or suspected of having, the plague in its walls, the action to be taken in regard to an assembly is indicated. The careful examination directed by God to be made of the person or house suspected of having the plague, shows us how careful the church should be in the exercise of discipline. Nothing is to be done in haste; the shutting up of the suspected person for seven or more days, as required, and the closing up of the house, signifies the suspension or withdrawal from fellowship of a person or assembly which lies under suspicion. No brother or assembly should be dealt with in extreme discipline until their guilt has been established beyond doubt. The demolishing of a house found to be incurably infected with the plague teaches us a very solemn lesson regarding assemblies. The fact of the priest alone

having power to deal with leprosy seems to point out very forcibly that discipline should not be exercised without the guidance of the Great High Priest being sought, and His mind clearly manifested, before action is taken. The New Testament signification of the Old Testament type of shutting up the suspected leper is suspension from fellowship of a brother lying under suspicion of sin till his innocence or guilt be clearly established (see 1 Cor. v.), or until his repentance and restoration (see 2 Cor. ii. 6, 7; see also 2 Thess. iii. 6, 14, 15). W. D. B.

Editor's Note.—The types of the Old Testament have a most important use. They serve to illustrate and make plain New Testament doctrines and principles.

But they may also be seriously abused, and action based upon them for which the New Testament affords no warrant.

We believe that it is an abuse of this type to base upon it what is called "suspension of fellowship," seeing, so far as we know, there is no New Testament authority for such action.

The symptoms that suggested the suspicion of leprosy certainly indicated disease of some sort. Evil was present without doubt. The thing to be discerned was not, whether disease existed at all—that was evident—but the nature of the disease, whether it was leprosy or not; whether it involved putting outside the camp or not.

We have known this passage applied to one suspected of guilt in a certain matter, but against whom there was not evidence sufficient to convict, whilst he (the accused) denied the charge. The mistake here was in confounding things that differ. It was not, "he is guilty—that we are sure of—but the nature of his guilt is not clear to us"; then the shutting up of the suspected leper might have had some application. It was rather, "We are not sure whether he is guilty or not—whether he is falsely accused or not." Only imagine the suspending from fellowship of a "Joseph" because of the false accusation of such another as Potiphar's wife?

But as we are without New Testament warrant for "temporary suspension of fellowship," we believe, with our esteemed correspondent, G. A., that the type finds its counterpart in placing under special observation with a view to discerning the real spiritual condition of one whose ways indicate a failing of the grace of God, which might or might not necessitate his separation from the fellowship.

QUESTION 318.—Is it scriptural to appoint two or three brethren to see those that apply for fellowship, or should it be left to the guiding of the Spirit?

Ans. A.—It is unscriptural for an assembly to "appoint" anyone to any spiritual work whatever. To bring into fellowship is one of the most important parts of pastoral work. To gather the sheep is the work of a shepherd. He who gives the other gifts gives pastors as well. And every spiritual gift is to be exercised in responsibility to the Lord alone.

It would be unscriptural for an assembly to appoint one, or more, to the work of an evangelist. It is their privilege to recognise, and have fellowship with such; and so with the pastors and teachers.

It may be a scriptural and proper thing for those whom the Lord has called to preach the Gospel to wait on the Lord together in prayer, and arrange who shall take a Gospel meeting, or, if there are more than one, who shall speak first. So those into whose hearts God has put a care for His flock, and who possess the confidence of the church, are responsible to the Lord to do the work, and may confer among themselves, so that no one of the blood-bought flock may be overlooked or be neglected.

To "look out" men to "serve tables," as in Acts vi., or to "choose" or "approve" those who carry or remit the contributions of the saints, as in 1 Cor. xvi. 3 or 2 Cor. viii. 19, has no reference to the exercise of any spiritual gift. G. A.

Ans. B.—It is surely only acting "decently and in order," that the church should appoint brethren in whom they have confidence to inquire into the cases of those who apply for fellowship. The church will thus be certified, in each case, that due care has been taken. This in no wise need hinder any in fellowship who feel exercised from visiting such and assuring themselves.

Then, after due time and report rendered, can the church act as a whole, in receiving or otherwise. If such matters are left to what is called "the guidance of the Spirit," instead of taking that guidance from the Word, which directs the church to "receive to the glory of God," and to do "all things . . . decently and in order," it will often happen that nothing will be done. And the principle in this case will obtain in many other like cases in the interior arrangements of every true assembly of believers. A. O. M.

[**Editor's Note.**—The two answers given are opposed to each other on one point, viz., that of the church "appointing." As to this, we endorse the reply of our correspondent, G. A. We would only add that the "guidance of the Spirit" in no way sets aside godly conference and arrangement as to details of work.]

We most heartily endorse the remarks of A. O. M. as to the responsibility of the church to be satisfied that those proposed are fit persons to be received into fellowship. Whilst no restriction need be laid upon any, yet this visitation of applicants for fellowship is clearly work for those who have experience and discernment and the confidence of the saints. For inexperienced youths to intrude themselves into such service is unseemly and hurtful to themselves. Howbeit, testimony as to life and behaviour may often be of great weight coming from young companions; but, in such cases, we should judge it safe that such testimony be given privately to elder brethren, and by them communicated to the assembly.

Reception ought to be invariably on such testimony, that it is without hesitation, hearty, unanimous, and, we would add, joyful.]

We reserve replies to other questions till next month.—Ed.

Responsibility of Christians at Home to Labourers in the Gospel Abroad.

NOTES OF AN ADDRESS BY J. R. C.

Matt. ix. 35-38—"When He saw the multitudes, He was moved with compassion on them, because they fainted, and were scattered abroad, as sheep having no shepherd. Then saith He unto His disciples, The harvest truly is plenteous, but the labourers are few; pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that He will send forth labourers into His harvest."

HOW very easy it would be for the Lord to thrust forth into His great harvest-field hundreds and thousands without one prayer going up from the church to Him. But it is God's way to put the honour upon His redeemed family, of having fellowship with Him in His work. When God wanted a dwelling-place constructed wherein He might dwell in the midst of His people, He called upon Israel to be contributors to it and makers of it; and He took an offering from every man that gave it willingly with his heart, and from none else. He could have constructed that dwelling-place without the help of His people, but it is His way to have His people work in fellowship with and for Himself; and when we feel the burden of the work on our hearts, we only get relief by pouring it out before the Lord. It is He, and He alone, who can raise up, qualify, and send labourers into His great harvest-field, and for this He waits to be inquired of by His people.

Matt. xxviii. 18-20—"Jesus . . . spake unto them, saying, All power (authority) is given unto Me in heaven and on earth. Go ye therefore, and teach (or make disciples of) all nations: . . . and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the age." There the Lord vouchsafes the promise of His presence and power to accompany those who would go forth at His bidding to the ends of the earth.

Mark xvi. 19, 20—"After the Lord had spoken unto them, He was received up into heaven, and sat on the right hand of God. And they went forth, and preached every where, the Lord working with them, and confirming the word with signs following." Thus showing that from the right hand of the throne of the Majesty on high the sympathy

of the heart of Christ was toward those working on earth, in the midst of opposition and tribulation, declaring in His name the Gospel of the grace of God. And it is the same still: the Lord works with and through His servants, His power accompanying their testimony. He who is in fellowship with God will seek to work with Him, and to have the same work on his heart that is engaging the heart of Christ. All real fellowship must proceed from this. The first thing for us is to be in fellowship with the thoughts and affections of God. This work can only be done by the one who has learned the mortifying power of the cross of Christ. We can never have real sympathy with the heart of Christ if we allow self to grow up rank and unmortified in pride and self-will. It is the one who knows something of the power of the cross of Christ in his own soul, and the preciousness of His name, and who has drank in something of His compassion for the lost, that is in a fit condition to be a worker together with God.

There is one line of service, in connection with those who have gone abroad, open to us all. I use the word at home and abroad in their conventional sense. Our aged and esteemed brother, Robert C. Chapman, on one occasion said to a young man, "You are a foreign missionary, are you?" "No," said the young man. Our brother, Chapman, said, "I thought we were all in a foreign land and that we are all called to be missionaries." The young man saw what the dear aged servant of God meant. He looks upon himself, and every child of God, as a missionary sent into a foreign land as an ambassador of Christ to represent Him. In one sense, to the Christian there is no such thing on earth as "home and abroad"; but, setting that aside for the time being, we speak of two spheres, and we speak of those who have gone forth from their earthly home into a strange and distant land where there are few or none who can have any real sympathy or fellowship with them. We call that the "foreign field," or "abroad."

There is, as I have said, one responsibility that we all have; and a privilege too. If we see our responsibilities aright, we shall esteem them all to be privileges. That responsibility is to pray for those labouring in the Gospel in

far-off lands. There are some who ask your prayers; but, to be plain about it, what they really want is your money. Though that may be true of some, it is not the rule. The man of God will truly value the prayers of the saints, though they were never in a position to send him a penny. Let us get rid of the one thought while considering the other. We have seen that prayer comes in at the very outset in asking the Lord of the harvest to thrust forth labourers into His harvest. If that prayer has gone up to God, then let us thank the Lord for every one that comes forward with purpose of heart to go forth in His name as one who has been raised up by Him in answer to our prayer. If this be so, then surely these have a special claim upon our continued prayers and practical sympathy.

Turn to Acts xiii. 1-4—"Now there were in the church that was at Antioch certain prophets and teachers. . . . As they ministered to the Lord, and fasted, the Holy Ghost said, Separate Me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them. And when they had fasted and prayed, and laid their hands upon them, they sent them away." Observe the co-operation of the saints with God in this scripture. The Holy Ghost, doubtless by prophecy, pointed to those chosen of God to go on this mission. They fasted; for it was a solemn work, and they needed to have their souls brought into fellowship with God in the matter. They prayed for them; for they knew that it was in vain for them to go forth without the power of God with them, and they knew that God delighted to hear and answer prayer. Then they laid their hands upon them; showing by this act their full, hearty consent and sympathy with them in their work. They were sent forth by them, and sent forth by the Holy Ghost. Here is co-operation between God and His saints; the saints in fellowship with God acknowledging His call. It is the will of God that labourers in the Gospel go forth with the full, hearty fellowship of the church. If this Divine principle was more recognised by assemblies of God, there would not be any such thing as persons going out as labourers in the Gospel without the knowledge, prayers, consent, and fellowship of the saints who knew them, and among whom they had lived,

wrought, and borne testimony. So we have here an instance of the way in which God brings His people into fellowship with Him in His work.

Look now at Acts xiv. 25-27—"They went down into Attalia; and thence sailed to Antioch, from whence they had been recommended to the grace of God for the work which they fulfilled. And when they had come, and gathered the church together, they rehearsed all that God had done with them, and how He had opened the door of faith to the Gentiles." Observe how the fellowship is acknowledged throughout. Having been sent forth by the church, now they come back and make known to the church what God has done by them. When their mission had been accomplished they came back into the fellowship of the saints, to be refreshed and comforted by them, and to rejoice the hearts of those who had sent them out in fellowship with God, and who, doubtless, had remembered them before the Lord during their absence. They came back to unite with the saints in praising God for what *He had done with them*. Not as in the case of the apostles who had been sent forth by the Lord, who, when they returned, "gathered themselves together, and told Him both *what they had done and what they had taught*" (Mark vi. 30). Let us ask the Lord to give His servants, who have gone forth in His name to Africa recommended to the grace of God, grace so to serve Him that, if permitted to return and give an account of their labours, they may be able to tell what God has done through them to the praise and glory of His grace.

Turn to Rom. xv. 30, 31—"I beseech you, brethren, for the Lord Jesus Christ's sake, and for the love of the Spirit, that ye strive together with me in your prayers to God for me; that I may be delivered from them that do not believe in Judea; and that my service which I have for Jerusalem may be accepted of the saints."

"Though sundered far, by faith we meet
Around one common mercy-seat."

The apostle here claims from the saints at Rome that they would join their prayers with his prayers, that they may go up, "though sundered far," as one incense-cloud before the

face of God. Now, we have here certain "requests for prayer"; note them.

Pass on now to Eph. vi. 18, 19—"Praying, with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints; and for me, that utterance may be given unto me, that I may open my mouth boldly, to make known the mystery of the Gospel, for which I am an ambassador in bonds; that therein I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak." If Paul, with his great knowledge of the mysteries of God and the gift of tongues, needed prayer that utterance might be given unto him, do not those servants of the Lord who have gone forth to China, India, Japan, and Central Africa, much more need our prayers that utterance may be given to them to make known the Gospel in the different languages of those nations? How often do we hear prayer for those servants of the Lord, that utterance might be given to preach the Gospel in Japanese, Chinese, and in those curious unwritten languages of Central Africa, where every tribe has its own language? Then how much the Lord's servants need boldness to speak out the truth of God, no matter what the difficulties and hindrances that may confront them, that they may have boldness to speak for God.

Phil. i. 19—"For I know that this shall turn to my salvation through your prayer, and the supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ." Paul is counting on the prayers of saints at Philippi to turn Satan's efforts to hinder the Gospel into blessing to him. How many of us have sufficient humility thus to seek the prayers of the saints? There is the true-hearted servant of the Lord going forth with the Gospel, with his life, so to speak, in his hands, and instead of despising the prayers of the saints, he values them. Paul asks them to remember him in their prayers, and in answer to these the Spirit of Jesus Christ comes down, as it were, in fresh power and abundance into his soul. Thus he owns his dependence upon their prayers.

2 Thess. iii. 1—"Finally, brethren, pray for us that the word of the Lord may run, and be glorified, even as it is with you," &c. "That it may run," means to go from one to another. Too much may be made of what

are called missionaries. I believe there are nations and tribes in places, situations, and climates, that can only be effectually reached by those converted amongst them. The thought here is that the Word might not only be preached by the lips of the apostle, but that it might run from one to another. I have long felt a special joy when I heard of a Chinaman or African, &c., preaching the Gospel in their own tongue to their own countrymen. Like that Ethiopian eunuch who, after confessing his faith in Christ in baptism, went on his way rejoicing, doubtless to preach the Gospel to his own countrymen. I don't think it is the mind of God that foreign work should be carried on exclusively by missionaries from home. Let us look to the Great Head of the Church to raise up from amongst the nations and tribes in heathen darkness those who will be able to preach the Gospel to their fellow-countrymen in their own language; so that the word of the Lord may run, and be glorified. "Even as it is with you." In connection with that, read 1 Thess. i. 6—"Ye became followers of us, and the Lord, having received the word in much affliction, with joy of the Holy Ghost: so that ye were ensamples to all that believe in Macedonia and Achaia," &c. Having believed the Gospel, then from them sounded out the Gospel, so that the whole district heard it through them.

"And that we may be delivered from unreasonable (or absurd) and wicked men: for all men have not faith." There are absurd and wicked men that none but God can manage. When we encounter such, let us appeal to God to convince them of their sin.

1 Tim. ii. 1, 2—"I exhort that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for . . . kings, and for all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty." How often do we pray that kings might be controlled by God, and that His people thereby may live in godliness, honesty, and peace? I do not know anything more remarkable in all that wonderful history of our brother F. S. Arnot's travels in Africa than that the kings and chiefs were so favourable to him. Misidi, who rules over the Garen-ganze district, is rather an emperor than a

king, for he has rulers under him and tributary to him. It is wonderful how the hearts of these chiefs have been favourably disposed towards our brother; evidently God has done it. Now, that powerful chief, Misidi, has the power of life and death, as it were, in his hands; one word from his lips, and Arnot's head would be cut off. But that man is under the power of God. God has brought each one of us into fellowship with Him in His glorious work. Let us cry to Christ, who is on the throne of God, and in whom all power and authority is vested, to exercise that mighty power on behalf of His servants, and through them towards those in the grasp of Satan.

Seeing from these scriptures how dependent the Lord's servants are upon the prayers of the saints, do we not feel self-condemned as we think how little we have remembered them before the Lord? May God impress our hearts with the importance of this matter. May we be stirred up by God to pray for them regularly in our individual, family, and assembly capacity. How few generally come out to our weekly assembly prayer meetings; and sometimes there is difficulty in getting an hour and a half well occupied in prayer to God. Does this condition of things not indicate the low state of souls and the lack of real fellowship with God? The Lord's servants abroad, as well as at home, are often discouraged because of the difficulties and temptations that beset them. The world is against them, Satan hates them, and they have deceitful hearts within. Remembering these things, let us bear them up continually before the Lord in prayer.

To be concluded in our next.

[Nearly Ready, in Pamphlet form, for distribution amongst Believers. 1/ per dozen; 7/ per 100, post free.]

WITH CHRIST.

IN the Lord's prayer of John xvii., we find His desire is, that those given Him should be WITH HIM, to which the one walking in fellowship with Him echoes back, "having a desire to depart, and to be WITH CHRIST; which is far better" (Phil. i. 23). Then alone will both Christ (Is. liii. 11) and His bride (Ps. xvii. 15) be SATISFIED. F. W. F.

PROPHETIC PAPERS. No. 17.

THE BOOK OF THE REVELATION.—*Continued.*
CHAPTER XVII.

BY F. C. BLAND.

IN chapter xvii. there is brought into view for judgment something which is symbolised by a woman, who is described as arrayed in purple and scarlet colour, and decked with gold, and precious stones, and pearls, having a golden cup in her hand full of abominations and filthiness of her fornication. She is further described as committing spiritual adultery, which in Scripture means departure from God, with the kings of the earth, and it is said that the inhabitants of the earth have been made drunken with the wine of her fornication. She is described also as sitting upon many waters, which we are told, in verse 15, are peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues.

Then we are told that she sits on seven mountains; and, lest there should be any difficulty in identifying her as to her location, it is said in the last verse that the woman "is that great city, which reigneth over the kings of the earth." We have, then, this point to start with, that Rome can only be referred to, as it was she which at that time reigned over the kings of the earth. Pagan Rome it cannot be; for as the seat of Pagan worship, Rome has long since ceased to exist. But in the same place a system has sprung up which is the greatest masterpiece of Satan's production, which, while it professes to be the sole depository and expounder of the truth (the head of the system assuming the title of "vicar of Christ on earth"), has in every age proved herself to be the most determined opponent of all truth, and the most bitter and relentless exterminator of God's people that has ever existed on the face of the earth.

That Pagan Rome with its idolatry should seek to exterminate God's people was natural enough, and was no mystery; but that the system which calls herself "holymother church," and professes to be the sole expounder of Scripture, should be seen to be drunken with the blood of the saints and the martyrs of Jesus, was indeed a mystery. Pagan Rome

could in nowise answer to this description; she slew her thousands of martyrs, because she professed no belief in God at all, and might naturally have called Jesus accursed. But *Papal Rome has slain her millions, and all under the plea of zeal for God and His truth. Speaking with all reverence, one might say that this book of judgment would be incomplete in one of its most essential points if that which has for centuries been the bitterest and most implacable enemy of God's saints was omitted from the judgment.

The apostle says, "He carried me away in the spirit." It will be noted in chapter xxi. 10, that when he is taken to see the bride, the lamb's wife, the same expression is used; and this teaches us that we need to be "in the spirit" to discern that which is false, as well as to enjoy that which is true.

The surroundings of the woman would indicate the possession of earthly grandeur and prosperity, she being arrayed in all the pomp and ceremonial of a gorgeous ritual, instead of the simplicity which is in Christ; all that dazzled the eyes and appealed to the senses of man, and having earthly honours and titles conferred on her. Multitudes are being led away by the glittering ceremonial and sensuous worship of the present day; and they do not detect that it is apostate, because they are not "in the Spirit," for an "unction from the Holy One" is needed to enable us to "know *all things*."

Popery is not a mere system, it is a *power*; and when the devil could no longer oppose the religion of Christ by maintaining the heathen mythology, he invented the system which addresses itself to all that is sensuous in man, and that suits the natural superstition of his heart, mixing up with it just as much truth as gives it a claim to be founded on the Word of God. † "For in Popery every truth of God may be found, but found out of place; and misplaced truth is the most powerful engine that Satan uses, and his work is most efficiently done by misplaced truth.

"The fact is, man craves for something which he calls religion, and if he can find that which will in anywise satisfy the cravings of his conscience, and at the same time leave his soul in insubjection to God, he will have the desires of his heart.

"It was not the work of a moment, nor a scheme struck out by the wisdom of man, but it required centuries to complete it.

"It began in the apostles' days, and since then its steady progress can only be accounted for by its being under the guidance of a master spirit.

"It has every element of the natural heart most wonderfully woven into a religious scheme, so that it has in its principles a strong claim on man.

"It is this which gives it, as a system, great moral power.

"It has sought to adapt Christianity to existing circumstances; and, whilst it claims for *itself* the most unreserved subjection, it allows the most perfect liberty to man's self-will.

"It relieves him from the irksomeness of caring for his own soul, while it divests him of the thought of individual responsibility to God.

"Only let Popery be acknowledged, and it will interfere no further.

"Men are delivered to do all abominations, and to resist every other authority if they submit outwardly to this." Is it not, then, rightly called a "mystery"?

But we must be struck with the name "Babylon" being applied to this system; and here comes in a matter of the deepest intent and instruction.

It will be remembered that in chapter xi. Jerusalem is "spiritually called Sodom and Egypt," because in its moral characteristics it was like those places. Apostasy from God, and denial of His claims, were the characteristic features of them; and here this system, symbolised by the woman, is called Babylon, because as Babylon of old was opposed to God, and oppressed His people, so this which is spoken of here is also a systematised opposition to God, and the destroyer of His saints; the difference being that the word "mystery," as we have before remarked, prefaces the name here. Babylon in olden times was always opposed to Israel, and

* It has been calculated that Rome has put to death by the sword, by torture, and by flame, fifty-one millions of Christians.

† Article in *Christian Witness* on "The Increase of Popery," by J. L. Harris.

ended by taking them away captive with all that belonged to them. And now there are two things which take God's people captive and enslave them: one is superstitious religion without Christ, and the other is worldliness; we get the one in Rev. xvii., the other in Rev. xviii.

Israel and Jerusalem had a *past existence*; and in the present dispensation the name of Israel is still maintained and applied to us as "Israel of God," and Jerusalem which is above is called "our mother." Israel after the flesh will come again upon the scene; and so I believe there has been a similar continuity in the history of Babylon. And as the *principles* of opposition to God and His people has here been maintained, only under a different form, in each recurring dispensation, so the name Babylon is maintained, and is applied to the mystery of iniquity of the present time, during which the opposition is veiled under the semblance of religion, but will presently be revealed in declared and open opposition to God.

It would be quite outside the scope of this lecture to trace the principles of Babylonianism, running as a thread through the various dispensations, and to show how the mystic rites of *Babylon have been transferred to Rome; how Popery itself is but a remodelling of the superstructure, with the adoption of a few scriptural doctrines to entice and deceive, with the introduction of the names of Mary and Christ, instead of Astharoth and her son Tamnus, and with the images of the mother and son, which answered for both religions. The Pope took the place of the Pontifex Maximus; and priestly confession, sprinkling with holy water, the celibacy of the priests, and the eating of the "mola," or cakes, in honour of the Queen of Heaven, were all practised in Babylon, and were handed down to Rome. When this is understood, we get a clue to the use of the name "Babylon" here.

But Rome, as a system, is the *mother* of harlots, and so is looked at as representative of every earthly system that has the form of godliness, whilst denying the power thereof;

and not only those which are fundamentally wrong, and based on something else besides the truth, but those which may be doctrinally right, and which may have once manifested the power of God in them, but which may have lived on pretensions and become apostate, will all find their doom here. But there is another mystery in the chapter, and that is of the beast which carrieth her; and here we recognise the beast of chapter xiii., or the antichrist, who is described again as having seven heads and ten horns, symbolising, as we remarked before, completeness of power in himself, and his investiture with the power of the ten kingdoms of the prophetic earth.

Here we have again a continuity. The support of the church by the secular power, which probably began when the Emperor Constantine professed Christianity and took the church under his protection, has been continued ever since; but what we have chiefly to do with here is the final condition of things, when the "man of sin" will be seen, first supporting apostate religion, and then destroying it.

Superstitious religion in a carnal system is the very best stepping-stone to infidelity, for all false religions are sustained by the infidelity of the human heart. But by-and-by the antichrist will exalt himself above *everything that is called God*, and *every object of worship*; and so great will be his power, "whose coming is after the power of Satan," that the ten kings will give him their kingdoms and power, and will accept him to rule over them, instead of the One whose right it is to reign.

Do we not see everything around us preparing for this? Looking at the political aspect of things, we see kings and governments hardly able to rule their peoples; and the time is fast coming when they will gladly give their kingdoms to the beast, who, endued with satanic power, will be enabled to bring all under his control, and "the man of sin, the son of perdition," will take the place not only of being the head over many countries (Ps. cx.), but the place of God.

The nations of Europe are beginning to feel, as the French did in the days of the Revolution, that their false religion does not stand to them in their necessities, and they will cast it off and, as it is said, "they will

*Those who would care to search into this subject will find much to interest them in a little paper called "Babylonianism" (Id.).

eat her flesh and burn her with fire," an expression which describes well the excesses of vengeance of those past days, as also the scenes which will be enacted, only with more devilish fury, by-and-by.

There is also a continuity of the dynasties. They are successive. Five have fallen; these were probably the Assyrian, the Egyptian, Babylonish, Medo-Persian, and the Grecian, these being the great Gentile empires that we read of in the Old Testament. The first was probably Nimrod's, of whom it is said, *the beginning* of his kingdom was Babel. The expression, "*the beginning*," seeming to indicate that it was to have a continuance in principle, if not in fact. The one *that is* must be the Roman empire, and the one that is not yet come may, it is thought, be the Francic emperorship under Napoleon. About this, however, there appears to me to be some difficulty, as the Jewish nation was not on the scene, and Napoleon was in no prominent way brought into contact with the Jews (and certainly not as gathered in their own land), while all the empires that had a previous existence had definitely to do with the Jews, from the time they became a nation, and the eighth head will be the most intimately connected with them of all. The seventh head may therefore be, and probably is, still future; and when he comes, he "will continue for a short space," meaning that his existence as head of a dynasty will not be a long one. As to who the eighth is, there can be no doubt, nor yet of his doom; for it says, he "shall go into perdition."

The eighth verse describes him as having had a previous existence, but whether as an individual or as a dynasty, it is difficult to say, though his ascent out of the bottomless pit, and his being consigned to perdition again, would make it appear as if the expression referred to an individual.

The ten kings, it is hardly necessary to state, are those alluded to in Daniel ii. as the ten toes of the image, and in chapter vii. of the same book, as the ten horns; and chapter xvii., as we before remarked, closes with the statement that the woman is that great city (Rome), which at that time reigned over the kings of the earth. Therefore, whatever it be that is here judged will have its seat in Rome.

UNDENOMINATIONAL GROUND.

THOSE of us who would be faithful servants of the Lord Christ in these evil days need to be sure that the "ground" we stand on is indeed a Rock.

The Truth is being assailed not only by unbelievers from every quarter, but professed believers are assailing it in a manner worthy of the sons of darkness. This remark applies to almost every department of "the things which are most surely believed among us."

We wish to point out that there is only one ground of fellowship for the people of God revealed in Scripture—only one ground for those who desire to be well-pleasing to the Lord—and that is the ground of Truth (John xvii. 17). It matters not what popular church organisation may suggest or define; What saith the Scripture? is the only appeal. Our authority for this assertion is based on 2 Tim. iii. 16.

When we get a clear apprehension of this great truth and endeavour to practise it, we find ourselves at once outside the camp of the modern theories and popular opinions of Christendom. At present we wish to deal with "undenominational ground" in reference to Gospel preaching.

The old style of each denomination having its own "evangelist" is fast giving way to a new order of things, which has an attraction for the dear saints of God who are not settled and grounded in the Truth. We cannot shut our eyes to it. We refer to the undenominational movement. That is to say, there are some who have "severed their connection" with the church they once belonged to; and "come out" to what they term "*liberty*." They go anywhere and everywhere—will preach in any "church" or "place of worship" that can be secured—in short, they have set their sails to catch the prevailing wind.

They seem to have made a kind of "agreement to differ," and when on any particular platform take great care not to say anything that would "clash" with the order of things observed there. They are equally at home on any platform. They profess to be independent

of every "system of religion," whereas if the truth were told, they are dependent on all-bound hand and foot with the grave-clothes of popular sentiment!

Meetings are arranged in which the "ministers" of the churches play a conspicuous part. Great crowds are attracted, and sometimes numbers profess to find Jesus. And when the "independent evangelist" is about to leave the town, he calls the converts together for the purpose of addressing them. But instead of opening the Book he opened at the former meeting, and showing *from the Scriptures* the true place of the converts, tells them that he is entirely undenominational, and to prove it, says they may just "go to whatever church they think best."

This is a lamentable exhibition of weakness, surely! Why not open the Book as at the Gospel meeting, and point out, from chapter and verse, the exact position every child of God should occupy?

There are two reasons that suggest themselves as answers to this question. The first is that the preacher may not know what the Scriptures do say on the point. But it is there, nevertheless, and therefore he ought to know. The second is like unto it, viz., that he may know and yet fail to declare it. But whichever of these be the answer, the fact remains that no consideration is allowed to interfere with the popular current. How can we have fellowship with such preaching? How can we have fellowship with anyone on any ground except on scriptural ground? The only answer compatible with our position as being gathered unto Him is: we can have no fellowship with anything short of the Truth. For what does such preaching mean? It means an entire denial of the church of God as seen in the Scriptures—a denial of the responsibility that rests upon those whom God uses in conversion to follow up the Gospel, or to see that others follow it up by teaching them to observe all things whatsoever Christ has commanded (see Matt. xxviii. 19, 20; and 1 Cor. xiv. 37). Let us be clear as to this, beloved. Our God has distinctly marked out the path wherein we should walk; let us not turn aside from that path, but in the footsteps of Truth let us seek to honour the Lord Jesus, though we be despised for so doing.

"BE NOT AFRAID, 'TIS I."

[Lines written after a "light affliction."]]

'T WAS but a touch of sadness,
A pang of selfish grief,
A little moment's heaviness,
Through trial keen but brief.
But I felt the calm of Heaven,
And wiped the weeping eye,
When I heard the Master's cheering word—
"Be not afraid, 'tis I."

Oh! Marah's streams are bitter
Without the healing *tree!*
But with it they are sweeter far
Than Elim's wells could be.
We bless the Hand that causeth
The grief-embittered sigh,
When we hear the whisper of His love—
"Be not afraid, 'tis I."

The heart that knows no sorrow
Can feel no holy joy;
I would not have the gladness here
That never knows alloy:
For if Life's sea were waveless,
And mine a cloudless sky,
I ne'er could hear that word of cheer—
"Be not afraid, 'tis I."

O Lord, with chastened spirit,
I bow to Thy blest will;
I would be active, but Thy grace
Can teach me to "be still."
Calm, 'mid the world's rude tempest,
I on Thy love rely,
And hear Thy words above the storm—
"Be not afraid, 'tis I."

And if I pass Death's billows
Ere Thou shalt come again,
Oh! let Thy presence, Saviour dear,
Be all my comfort then.
I long for Thy returning,
But will not fear to die,
If Thou art near to whisper still,
"Be not afraid, 'tis I."

Oh! not in Heaven's glory,
Nor in its swelling psalm,
Shall be the holy secret of
The soul's eternal calm.
Its crowns would shine unnoticed,
Its harps untuned would lie,
If we could not behold His face,
And hear Him say, "'Tis I."

WM. BLANE.

THE BLESSING OF JACOB AND ESAU.

BIBLICAL SOLUTIONS. No. 7.

Heb. xi. 20. "By faith Isaac blessed Jacob and Esau concerning things to come."

Compare with the narrative in Genesis xxvii.

MANY have thought it strange that the Holy Spirit should bring before us, in the 11th ch. of the Epistle to the Hebrews, and as an example of faith, Isaac when he blessed his two sons. Indeed the patriarch's condition of soul, as presented to us in the story of Gen. xxvii. (to which most readers refer the words of Heb. xi. 20), is rather a warning for our avoidance than an example for our imitation.

From before the birth of the children Jehovah had made known to Rebecca (Gen. xxv. 23) that the elder should serve the younger, in words quoted afterwards by Paul in order to prove the sovereignty of God, and the divine purpose according to election, that stands, not of works, but of Him that calleth (Rom. ix. 10-13).

But it is written that "Isaac loved Esau" (Gen. xxv. 28), and the reason of this preference, as indicated by the scriptures, is, that "he [Isaac] did eat of his [Esau's] venison." From this it would appear that Isaac, towards the close of his outwardly irreproachable life, had allowed himself to be overcome, more than was right and seemly, by a fondness for dainty living. Nor is this very astonishing, seeing that, in all ages, persons of a pious and tranquil disposition are more likely to give way to an easy self-indulgence than to fall into the grosser sins to which more passionate natures are exposed. This comfortable sin, yielded to by Isaac, without probably any sense of wrongdoing in the sight of God, and pandered to by Esau, was about to have sorrowful and shameful consequences for the whole household concerned. Well may one exclaim: "Who can discern his errors? Clear Thou me from hidden faults. Keep back Thy servant also from presumptuous sins; let them not have dominion over me: then shall I be perfect, and I shall be clear from great transgression!"

On coming of age, Esau (becoming thereby the permanent type of those who prefer things seen and temporal to things unseen and eternal) despised his birthright sufficiently to

sell it for a mess of red pottage with which he might satisfy the craving of a moment.

Nor must it be supposed that, in treating thus lightly the promise of God, Esau intended to sacrifice his position as first-born son. His after-conduct shews that such a sacrifice was not in all his thoughts. But he did not believe that his father would ever disinherit him, and, like a "profane person" as he was, he expected to receive, from the weakness of Isaac, that which God alone could give.

For years he continued his manner of life as "a cunning hunter, a man of the field," seeking his own pleasure all untroubled by any remorse for the sin he had committed; and the only mention the scriptures make of him, between his fall and the day on which he found that God had taken him at his word, is where they record that he married two Hittite women "which were a grief of mind unto Isaac and to Rebecca." This further proof that he disregarded the gift and calling of God, is all we read about him until the day when he was rejected, and found no way to change his father's mind, or to inherit the blessing, "although he sought it diligently with tears." Alas! it is but too evident that he wept, even then, not because of his fault, but because of the punishment he had brought upon himself.

The determination of Isaac to substitute his own will for that of God, and to bless his favourite son, hastened the catastrophe. Thus we find him saying (Gen. xxvii. 2-4) "Behold now I am old, I know not the day of my death. Now therefore take, I pray thee, thy weapons, thy quiver and thy bow, and go out to the field, and take me some venison; and *make me savoury meat, such as I love*, and bring it to me, that I may eat; that my soul may bless thee BEFORE I DIE." We know from Gen. xxxv. 28, 29 that he did not die for many years after this date; but the desire to have his own way and to secure the blessing to his favourite, coupled probably with a haunting dread that God would in some way interfere if he did not make haste, seems to have made him restless and impatient.

God did interfere. The wicked thought of Rebecca, carried out with so much subtlety by Jacob, was overruled by Him; and Isaac, in his blindness, blessed first of all the son for whom God had reserved the place of supremacy.

Having blessed Jacob against his own will, and under the influence of the deceit practised upon him, where was Isaac's faith? Or rather: how, out of this sad manifestation of Isaac's self-will, Esau's profanity, and the craft of Jacob the supplanter, did God bring fruit unto His own glory and pleasing? What is there in this disgraceful family scene to render it worthy of the honourable mention of Hebrews xi.?

The reply is that Heb. xi. 20 refers, not to what we have repeated of the story of Isaac and his sons, but to that part of the story we have still to consider.

God had not forgotten Isaac and Jacob although they had lost sight of Him. Even while the patriareh believed that he had his eldest son before him, he seems to have felt under an interdict, and although, according to the magnificent words of Gen. xxvii. 28, 29, he bestowed on him much prosperity and dominion, yet he withheld the principal thing, THE BLESSING OF ABRAHAM to be transmitted from father to son!

The return of Esau, and the discovery of his error, are the means whereby his spirit is enlightened. He measures at a glance the depth of his fault, and is seized with a great and violent emotion (v. 33 and margin). It is only now that he accepts the will of God against which will he has heretofore struggled. Instead of trying to retract the benediction he had pronounced he confirms it. By the words: "Yea and he shall be blessed," he sets his seal to God's irrevocable decree.

The moment of insubjection is past, and God has restored his soul. He recalls Jacob (on whom the consequences of his deceitful conduct are beginning to weigh heavily) and blesses him in an eminent degree, and with the hereditary benediction. "God Almighty . . . give thee the BLESSING OF ABRAHAM, to thee, and to thy seed with thee; *that thou mayest inherit the land* wherein thou art a stranger, which God gave unto Abraham." This, at last, was THE BLESSING, the other was only a *blessing*. Gen. xxviii. 3, 4 explains Heb. xi. 20.

In the whole matter God shewed Himself full of grace towards His servants, and at the same time sovereign in His dealings with them.

Full of grace in restoring Isaac's soul, and in recording in New Testament scripture the happy result, namely that: "by faith Isaac blessed Jacob and Esau, even concerning things to come."

Sovereign, inasmuch as Isaac, notwithstanding his preference for Esau, had to bless him whom God had blessed; and inasmuch as the artifice of Rebecca and Jacob, far from being necessary to the accomplishment of that which God had foreordained, only brought upon themselves the chastisement of never being permitted to see one another again on earth.

A. P. MACDONALD.

SCRIPTURE TESTIMONY

AS TO

THE PROGRESS OF EVIL.

(Continued from page 50.)

BUT there is another thing testified of—the last form of wickedness—man's will exalting itself against God. The principle has been always the same, but now it will come out in full development. "The king shall do according to his own will" (Dan. xi. 36). Truth having been rejected, this is the result. There will be a public avowal of independence of God, man acting against God, speaking against God, but, at the same time, exalting himself to be as God (2 Thess. ii. 4). Herein Satan's agency will come out in manifest display. It is not merely the "form of godliness" (itself ensnaring enough, and liable to lead astray), nor yet even man's will alone; no, it is declared to be a display of the "working of Satan, with all power, and signs, and lying wonders," verse 9. Awful passage! And see what follows. When God's patience is exhausted, or rather has no more place, then He, yes, "God" Himself, "shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie," verse 11. "Because they received not the love of the truth that they might be saved." God says, "If you *love* a lie, you shall *have* a lie."

His dealing with the Jews, upon their rejection of Him, is the same in principle. "Make the heart of this people fat, and their ears heavy, and shut their eyes," &c. (Isa. vi.; John xii.; Acts xxviii. 26, 27).

But we find exactly the same testimony given about the profession of Christianity as about the profession of Judaism. The "mystery of iniquity" had begun to work in Paul's time; "doth already work," says he; it is followed by a "falling away," or apostasy; and consummated in the appearance of Antichrist—"that man of sin." Satan's power, seductive power, and man's self-will, in independence of God, will terminate in this. Man given up to the devil. But it will not be until the long-suffering of God has been tried to the uttermost; even as the sentence of judicial blindness on the Jews was pronounced seven hundred years before put in execution. At the present hour, that long-suffering has been eighteen hundred years running on; but when the testimony of truth has been fully rejected, the doom will come.

People may deceive themselves, and say that these things are not to be looked for in a Christian land. But it is just here, upon Christendom, that God's heaviest judgments will fall. After testimony, God gave over the heathen to a "reprobate mind" (see Rom. i.). The Jew, with his special light, is given over to blindness of heart. Where Christianity is professed, it is the same thing; a "form of godliness," "the love of the truth" not received, "pleasure in unrighteousness"—God gives over to "strong delusion."

TESTIMONY OF JUDAS.

Men love something. Trace the course of Judas. What was it that led him astray? He loved money, not so uncommon an evil. In this he was the world's *prudent* man—"men will praise thee when thou doest well to thyself." But observe the progress of corrupt nature; a little circumstance in John xii. 3-6 may help us to see the connection. Satan there suggests a way to gratify his lust. Well, he goes on, and what is his next step? Satan puts it into his heart to betray his Master. Judas, it may be, thinking that the blessed One would have been delivered in some way, as at other times, and that thus he would get his money, and yet save his character, consents. Man will excuse himself by any folly. Sin has its progress, with a defiled conscience. Hypocrisy now enters; he sits with Jesus at the table (goes on with religiousness) even

after he had sold Him. Mark, too, it was "after the sop" that Satan *entered*, never nearer to Christ in form. Now he is hardened, against even the relentings of nature, he goes out and betrays the Son of Man with a kiss. Here, then, is the progress of corrupt nature towards this fearful consummation—first, lust; secondly, a means of gratifying it in his office of bearer of the bag; all this goes on along with religiousness, in the very company of Christ, from day to day; thirdly, he is led to the ultimate character of his crime, at a time and in circumstances of most blessing to a true disciple; fourthly, the heart is hardened, so that the betrayal takes place even with a kiss, the token of affection. Sinning and religiousness go on together. Again, we say, and here we have an illustration of it, that where the power of godliness is not, nearness to godly things is only the more dangerous.

Well, we have the solemn declaration that such shall be the history of Christendom. "Three unclean spirits 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" (Rev. xvi.)—that day, when the long-suffering of God shall have closed, and shall have no more place: when, in fact, a longer delay would become the allowance of unrighteousness. Judgment will then be according to this nearness. Its full tide will roll in upon Christendom.

CONSUMMATION OF EVIL.

We speak not of the judgment of the dead, but of the living. Where, then, is the resource from this dreadful progress and consummation of wickedness, in the place where righteousness is expected? It is not in man's will; for through that he is the slave of Satan. Nor in forms of religiousness; Satan can enter in with the sop. Neither the one nor the other will keep him out. Man's natural power, his capacity to do great things, may be vaunted on the one hand; and on the other, a reliance upon ordinances and observances be insisted upon. For a time, these may seem the most opposing schools; but a connecting link will be found in man's corrupt nature, managed by the craft of the great enemy; and at last both will subserve his purposes, who is to "exalt

himself above all that is called God, or is worshipped; so that he as God, sitteth in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God." Where then is deliverance from the evil? where is the escape? The answer is most simple: In the fellowship of God's love.

The place of special privileges unheeded, and of special light, will be the place of special judgment.

A word in passing: Satan does not come all at once and say, "I seek to turn you from God." He usually works by introducing that which would lead away from simplicity of reliance on the death of Christ,—some "form of godliness,"—and so ensnares.

How are we to detect all this? In the first place, the believer must be set in heaven (not in body, but in spirit), in the presence of God Himself. That is *now* his true place. "The way into the holiest of all was not yet manifest, while as the first tabernacle was yet standing." God was not, so to speak, then revealed in His own full estimate of good and evil. But now the holiest is open. The veil is rent. "The true light shineth." There is nothing between us and God. All is worthless that cannot stand in the light of His holiness. There were many things before which God did not approve, but which He permitted. (*Jewish divorcement, for instance, Mark x. 5.*) But at the death of Christ the full light of God's holiness against the darkness of man's fully developed sin was brought out. The veil was rent from top to bottom.

THE CLIMAX OF SIN.

Divine goodness had come into the world, and displayed itself with every witness. What had man shown himself to be? A hater of divine goodness, in deliberate judgment. The full evil of the world, and the full grace of God, in the accomplishment of righteousness for us, both came out at the Cross. All the pains God had taken to reclaim man, as culture to a good-for-nothing tree, only resulted in his bearing more bad fruit, until the deliberate evil of his nature in hatred to God was shown in the death of Christ. This was the climax of his sin. But here also was shown God's perfect love. Man's hatred to God—come in goodness, is one side of the

Cross, and the other, God in his highest act of love towards men in vileness.

God's own holiness has now come completely out. Since the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ, it is no longer a question of coming up step by step to God. If man stands before God at all, he must stand in contact with the full light of His holiness. How did that light burst forth? In the absolute putting away of the sin of every believer, and that by the worst act of man's sin. The very sin that was detected by the light, that would have hindered the soul's approach, was put away through the blow that brought Jesus to the death; and now the sinner stands in the absolute and full enjoyment of God's love. Such is His goodness! Trusting to the perfect work of Christ, the more the searching eye of God rests on me, the more, as it were, does He discover the perfect value of the blood of Christ. The clearer the light, the more is it to show that not a spot or stain is on me. What does He see? The efficacy of the blood of His own provided Lamb—that which hath put away my sin, manifests its being utterly, and for ever, put away; yea, has burst forth and shone in putting it away.

HERE, THEN, IS THE SAFEGUARD.

It is the knowledge of God's full putting away of sin,—peace through the blood, I can have no thought of getting up to God, &c., when standing where Himself has brought me, even in His very presence.

We are called unto holiness; but what character does Christian holiness take? Not the character of our own nature at all, nothing is recognised as of us. It is "that we might be partakers of His holiness." Man's nature has been proved to be incorrigibly bad—it has hated and crucified Christ, God cannot own it, He seeks nothing from it. He has satisfied Himself in the Cross about our evil; and now He says, "Be partakers of My good." Here again is a safeguard for the saints at the present hour. Those who, through the teaching of the Spirit of God, have learned this great and blessed truth, and through grace walk in fellowship with God, will be preserved from all attempts at creature holiness. They say, We want nothing before God, but only to glorify Him in our bodies. They are in Christ

before God, and they know it. Nothing else is wanted; nay, God would repudiate anything else. It would be to call in question the sufficiency of Christ. Faith rests where God rests. What we have to do is to glorify Him by our life down here. But our walk down here is, nevertheless, not our standing before God in righteousness, though it be a testimony in man's sight to it.

Reader, have you rested where God rests? What does God think about Christ? Does your soul say that is sufficient? God rests in Him as having made peace through the blood of the Cross. Is that peace consciously yours?

Salvation is the guard set up of God against the deceits of Satan. S.

Correspondence.

"BIBLE SEARCHING" and "OBJECT TEACHING."

To the Editor of *The Witness*.

MY DEAR BROTHER, — I have read with interest the letters of your two correspondents, "Enquirer" and "R. S.," in recent numbers of *The Witness*, on the subject of "Object Teaching," "Bible Searching," and kindred modes of instruction, which they deplore as being prevalent among those who labour among the young. As it has been my privilege for a number of years to share somewhat in this department of the Lord's service, and occasionally to use some of the forms of instruction referred to, I would therefore offer a brief contribution further on the subject.

I heartily endorse the remarks of your correspondents on the necessity of guarding against making a "profane" use of the Word of God—a practice which (if it exists) I am happy to say I have never witnessed in connection with Sunday-schools conducted by believers who are gathered unto the Name of the Lord Jesus, and the same applies to "making a pastime" or "undermining the authority" of God's most holy Word. If these terrible evils exist in the circles where "Enquirer" and "R. S." move, they do well to challenge them; but as these things, together with the reference to "unions" and "associations," must be matters of purely local interest, they do not contribute in the least toward an answer to the question before us. Indeed, one wonders where, in the long letter of "R. S.," the answer lies. It seems rather to be a general declamation against a long catalogue of things he has been "exercised" about after "many years observation," the drift of which is to circumscribe the methods of the Lord's servants to what he would use. All other modes of communicating Divine truth are characterised as using "expedients," "accompaniments to the Gospel," and "aids to the Holy Ghost," appellations that we neither admire the grace nor the wisdom of using toward fellow-servants. But the questions of "Enquirer" are important, never-

theless. He asks, "Is the system of Bible Searching for words calculated to instil reverence into young minds for the Word of God?" To this we cheerfully answer, "It is," in the highest sense, and that for the following reason. It is the "system" that God has appointed. It is written, "Search the Scriptures"; and the word rendered "search," here, signifies "to trace, to follow," hence to trace a name, a person, or a word throughout Scripture. It has been a joy to us to see the increasing interest in this very use of the Holy Scriptures within recent years among the young, and to hear of deepened love for the Book of God as the result. Nor are we afraid, as "R. S." is, that this "familiarity" will "breed contempt," an adage which he confessedly borrows from the world, and which has no application whatever in the things of God. To increase familiarity with the Book and the Gospel of God, is the teacher's aim. He desires to be able to say concerning every scholar under his care,—"From a child (literally, a babe) thou hast known (the word signifies, "to know, because I see") the Holy Scriptures" (2 Tim. iii. 16); and if, in order to cause those little ones to see that they may know, he uses "Black-board," "Bible Searchings," or "Object Lessons," we would ask "R. S." to give a scriptural reason why he should not? Nothing less than this will suffice to show that it is unlawful to use them in a godly way, and for the purpose we have named. We entirely agree with "Enquirer" that "it is a mistake to suppose these things are aids to the Holy Ghost." We never so supposed; we never heard of anybody who did. We humbly seek to cause the children to "understand the reading" (Neh. viii. 8), to "diligently whet" the Word of God unto them (Deut. vi. 7, margin), and look to God to convict, regenerate, and convert them. In speaking to grown-up persons, who come more or less to listen, it may not be necessary to use such auxiliaries, although, personally, we have frequently been helped by such representations of typical truth as our aged and esteemed brother Mr. Newberry's model of the temple. The construction and use of all such "R. S." condemns, on the ground that unless God sets a man apart for the purpose, his model will misrepresent Divine realities. We never heard anyone who used a model profess to "represent Divine realities" by it; to presume such a thing would be sacrilege. The divinely-given type alone can do this, the Holy Spirit thereby pointing to Christ and heavenly things; but the model may serve to assist us to comprehend the typical things, under the shadow of which the heavenly substance lies. In speaking to a class, or a crowd, of volatile, restless children, whose attention has to be secured and sustained while they are being instructed, we are thankful to use every lawful requisite that will secure the use of the eye, the ear, and the mind, and assist in elucidating the subject. This is just where "R. S." and others, who judge of these things by "observation," fail to see the need of such help. If they were actively engaged in the midst of the work, toiling on from one year's end to another among the same children, it would, doubtless, tax their gifts and abilities, as it does the best of us, to keep the attention of those whom we desire to profit by our words. Thus, while avoiding all that would tend to levity, vulgarity, or entertainment, or in the smallest degree approximate to the methods of the world, let not

those who toil among the young be deterred from using freely, in a godly and reverent manner, such helps as are approved by God, and have been so abundantly blessed by Him.—I am,

Yours ever in the Lord,

JOHN RITCHIE.

Questions and Answers.

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

Several replies have been received to the following interesting question. We hope to insert next month.

Is there any scripture to warrant the *union* of assemblies of a like mind to form a basis of acting independently from those they consider as not following the Lord fully?

Replies are invited to the following:—

What relation have the sufferings of Christ in the garden of Gethsemane to the work of atonement?

Please explain Gal. vi. 6, "Let him that is taught in the word communicate to him that teacheth in all good things."

NON-ETERNITY AND THE RELATION OF ASSEMBLIES.

QUESTION 319.—If one is excluded from an assembly on the ground of holding the doctrine of the non-eternity of punishment, and is afterwards received into another assembly, what ought to be the attitude of the former assembly towards the latter?

Ans. A.—On this solemn subject a few remarks of introduction are necessary.

In Heb. vi. 2, the doctrines of "eternal judgment" and the "resurrection of the dead" are placed on the same level; therefore precept or example teaching us how to deal with one will keep us right in dealing with the other.

I Tim. i. 19, 20, compared with 2 Tim. ii. 17, 18, show that those who had departed from the faith on the resurrection were by Paul delivered unto Satan, and their place was therefore outside. Compare I Cor. v. 4, 5, 13, with I Tim. ii. 20. These men were *confirmed* in the evil doctrine. I Cor. xv. 12, shows that in the church at Corinth there were those who were saying, "that there is no resurrection of the dead." Paul did not command the church there to put them at once outside. He patiently instructed them. I Tim. ii. 25, 26, appears to me to have a special

reference to those whose faith had been overthrown by Hymeneus, and such like teachers. These were to be "meekly instructed." No doubt if they had not bowed to the truth, they would have been delivered unto Satan, as well as Hymeneus and Alexander.

Cases of doubt as to eternal judgment are sometimes rendered incurable by being rashly dealt with before, so to speak, the grace and truth of God have got time to act on the conscience through the understanding.

With this preface let us look at the question itself.

Why did the assembly receive the put away person? Was it through ignorance? If so, then they need first to be patiently taught. Was it because they believed the case had not been scripturally dealt with? If so, then the guiding brethren of both assemblies, by coming together and waiting on God about the difficulty, and carefully looking into the facts of the case, might all be brought to one mind. If the assembly received the person because of sympathy with, or indifference to, the evil doctrine, they need to be remonstrated with (that is, if they are not already confirmed in such a practice). In such a case, those who would seek to act for God and His truth need much grace lest they be induced to act rashly because *their judgment* has been set aside, and *not solely for the glory of Christ*. We do well also to remember that the judgment of one assembly cannot be binding on another, unless it is the judgment of the Lord Christ. And, on the other hand, the action of an assembly should never be set aside without the clearest evidence that it was wrong, and also endeavouring to get them to revoke it themselves.

One thing is clear, whatever steps may be godly and scriptural in the various phases and stages of such a case, if an assembly persist in retaining one denying the doctrine of eternal judgment in their fellowship, not only ought the assembly which put away that one, to cease all fellowship with such an assembly, but every one who fears the Lord ought to come out of it, and all who would "earnestly contend for the faith once for all delivered to the saints" (Jude 3), will in like manner be separate from it. G. A.

Ans. B.—Would not much depend upon *how* the one excluded came to be received by the other assembly? For instance, were they fully aware of the facts? or had they been deceived by the excluded person? And if the latter, the question would arise, How came they to be deceived? Did they neglect the Divine principle of "two or three witnesses," and receive him upon his own unconfirmed testimony? If so, they have themselves to blame; but this should not make them indifferent as to the consequences of their neglect. And if there remained any sense of what was due to the Lord, they would humble themselves before Him, and seek His grace to be faithful to Him and to the excluded one, by reversing their own action and confirming that of the first assembly, provided always that there exists no room for calling in question their action in excluding him—*i.e.*, that there was not the slightest doubt as to his holding the doctrine. This done, there would of course be nothing to hinder the continuance of fellowship between the assemblies. But if, on the other hand, the person so excluded were received by the other assembly with the full knowledge of the facts, such assembly thereby makes itself a partaker of the

sin of the excluded one, and places itself in the same position of exclusion. But here again there doubtless would be room for the application of the word: "Of some have compassion, making a difference" (Jude 22). It may be that the leaders failed to acquaint the assembly of the facts of the case, and thus have forfeited their title to commend to, or to receive from, the first assembly, or any other gathering of believers who desire to hold fast the name and faith of Christ; and personally would, without doubt, be in the same position as the excluded one, and by their unfaithfulness have placed the entire meeting in the position of suspected persons, needing careful examination before being admitted to the Lord's table. Still, grace on the part of the first assembly, or of any others cognisant of the matter, would not refuse *an individual believer* simply because they came from such a meeting, if, after careful inquiry, it were made perfectly clear that such an one had been kept in ignorance, and was himself quite prepared to be faithful to the Lord. No doubt loving and faithful warning would be due to the suspected meeting as to the conduct of their guides; but if all remonstrance fails, and those who "speak perverse things" are preferred to the plain Word of God, it is clear that all true ground of fellowship is gone, and that nothing remains but to leave them to the judgment of the Lord.

G. A. S.

P. S.—The Lord alone can give the needed wisdom and grace to be tender and considerate of the weak on the one hand, with faithfulness to the truth on the other. We are cast upon "God and the Word of His grace."

Ans. C.—The former assembly being presumably the more spiritual of the two, should humble itself because of sin in the latter, and seek mercy of the Lord for their brethren and for themselves (Dan. ix.). Then, "in the spirit of meekness" (Gal. vi.), let them approach those in error, seeking lovingly to instruct them, "if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth" (2 Tim. ii. 25). A lofty and censorious attitude should be carefully avoided, for it will but widen the breach and cause sorrow upon sorrow. Face-to-face dealing should be resorted to, unless distance prevents it; but if writing become necessary, let it be "out of much affliction and anguish of heart with many tears" (2 Cor. ii. 4). If the adoption of this attitude in this spirit fail to set the latter assembly right, or to cause the spiritual to leave it, the case must be desperate indeed, and fellowship will become impossible; for how can two—whether individuals or assemblies—walk together except they be agreed?

R. L. S.

[**Editor's Note.**—We believe that the deliberate reception into an assembly of one known to hold the doctrine named constitutes that assembly (to use the language of the type) a *leprous house*. Corinth had well-nigh become such, but through the faithful ministry of the apostle it was restored.

No true shepherd would commend any of the flock he cared for to such an assembly, nor could a letter of commendation from such be received as of any value.

It would therefore follow that any coming from it would have to be dealt with as to their own sound-

ness in the faith; and, if found to be personally free from the error, instructed as to the guilt of association with those holding it.]

THE GOSPEL AND THE LORD'S COMING.

QUESTION 320.—How can we expect the coming of our Lord at any time, in the face of Matt. xxiv. 14, when two-thirds of the inhabited earth have not heard the Gospel? See the commission, Mark xvi. 15; also Rev. xiv. 6.

Ans. A.—The difficulty in the mind of the inquirer arises from a two-fold misapprehension: firstly, he does not appear to seize the peculiar position of the disciples, nor the nature of their questions, which give rise to the Lord's replies in Matthew xxiv; and, secondly, he fails to distinguish between three kinds of testimony, each essentially different in character, viz., "This Gospel of the kingdom" (Matt. xxiv); "The Gospel of the grace of God" (Acts xx.); and "The everlasting Gospel" (Rev. xiv.).

Let it be carefully noted that in Matt. xxiv. the Lord is speaking to Jewish disciples, in Jewish circumstances, and half the difficulty is gone; and certainly it seems almost impossible to read the chapter attentively without seeing that the Lord's instruction apply specially to those who will be in Judea, and that the "coming" referred to is not the coming of the Lord for His saints, as in 1 Thess. iv., but as the Son of Man, to whom all judgment is committed. Much of the Lord's discourse here would be quite unintelligible if this is not seen. Of what value, for instance, would the counsel to "flee into the mountains" be to saints in London, and what need would there be to pray that their flight be not on the Sabbath-day, if it were not that those addressed are looked at as still under law? And what possible resemblance could there be between the judgment described in verses 27, 28, 37 to 41, and the Lord himself descending for His saints, who are caught up to meet Him in the air? The whole of the Lord's discourse, however, is perfectly plain, and will undoubtedly be of immense service to those for whom it is intended, if we bear in mind that those He was immediately addressing are viewed as in the position and circumstances of the Jewish remnant of the latter day. Hence the declaration that "This generation shall not pass till all these things be fulfilled." Apply the word in a moral sense, and connect the then living Jewish disciples with those who will be in analogous circumstances in the latter day, and there is no difficulty whatever.

"This Gospel of the kingdom" announces the coming of the King, and, broken off by His rejection, will be resumed hereafter, when the present testimony of "the grace of God which bringeth salvation" shall have run its course.

"The everlasting Gospel" calls upon men to "fear God and to give glory to Him, for that the hour of His judgment is come." All mankind are exhorted "to worship Him who created the heaven and the earth and the sea." It is "the everlasting Gospel" because it calls for that which is due to the Creator from everlasting to everlasting, whatever may be the various manifestations of Himself, whether as Elohim, God

Almighty, Jehovah, or "the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ," or as "the most high God, possessor of heaven and earth"; but it is neither "this Gospel of the kingdom" nor "the Gospel of the grace of God."

"This Gospel of the kingdom is to be preached in all the world for a *witness* unto all nations, and then shall the end come," *i.e.*, the end of the Jewish age, preceding the age of the Messiah.

God has now "visited the nations to take out of them a people for His name" (Acts xv.). They will be translated to heaven, and when the Lord comes to rule in righteousness they come with Him (Col. iii. 4). (Rev. ii. 26, 27). But it is not "the Gospel of the kingdom" or "the everlasting Gospel" that gathers the joint heirs, but "the Gospel of the grace of God."

G. A. S.

[**Editor's Note.**—That the heavenly company, the church of the firstborn, will be gathered out from all nations we do not doubt (Rev. v. 9), a "kind of first-fruits" from every field; and it may be that the indifference of the church to its responsibility to carry the Gospel to "all the world" has tended to defer the fulfilment of her proper hope—the advent of our Lord. But as the answer given above clearly shows, the verse referred to in Matt. xxiv. does not apply to the present time.]

ON DISCERNING THE BODY.

QUESTION 321.—What is understood to be the meaning of the words, "Not discerning the body" (1 Cor. xi. 29)?

Ans. A.—This quotation is from the revised rendering, which, with good authority (*viz.*, that of the Sinaitic, Vatican, Alexandrine, and other MSS.), omits from the verse the words, "Lord's," "unworthily," being also dropped as an evident interpolation, borrowed from verse 27, where it still stands in the R.V. Thus, verse 29 is made to read: "For he that eateth and drinketh, eateth and drinketh judgment unto himself if he discern (or discriminate) not the body." Where we get, as in the institution of the Lord's Supper, recorded by the first three evangelists, and here in 1 Cor. xi., the words, this is *My* body, "or, *the body and blood of the Lord*" (verse 27), it is, of course, the Lord's personal body which is referred to; but if we find *elsewhere* such expressions as "the body of Christ," and "the body" without anything to qualify it, it is invariably the mystical body which is the subject. See, for example, chap. xii., which is full of this line of truth, "one body," and "the body," and the "whole body," occurring many times. Verse 27 reading, "Now *ye* are the body of Christ, and members in particular."

In the Lord's Supper, therefore, not only is there the remembrance of Him, and the showing of His death (though these are *first*), but a witness to the unity of those partaking as members of the one body. This is borne out by a reference to chap. x. 16, 17. "The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ? For *we*, being many, are one loaf, *one body*, for we are all partakers of that one loaf."

There was among the Corinthians most unworthy, riotous behaviour in connection with their professed eating of the Supper, so that the apostle declares, "When, therefore, ye assemble yourselves together, it is impossible to eat the Lord's Supper; for, in your eating, each one taketh before *other* his own supper, and one is hungry, and another is drunken." The Lord was being thus grievously dishonoured; and to add to their sin, schism and faction were being introduced, the Church of God being thus despised, and its unity practically denied. Verse 27 ("Wherefore, whosoever shall eat the bread, or drink the cup of the Lord unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord") applies to the former. Verse 29 (already quoted), in the judgment of the writer, applies to the latter, "if he discern not *the body*," being understood to mean the mystical body of Christ. Compare verse 30, "For this cause many are weak and sickly, and not a few sleep" (*i.e.*, the sleep of death), with chap. iii. 1-5, where carnality and abnormal babyhood are attributed to jealousy and strife, and setting up men as heads of parties. The comparison seems to strengthen the above view.

D. R.

Ans. B.—The expressions used in this chapter—"the Lord's Supper," "the Lord's death," "the cup of the Lord," and "the body of the Lord"—all refer to the one theme, *viz.*, the proper celebration of the memorial feast, here termed "the Lord's Supper." The conduct of the Church, in unworthily and improperly observing it, called for the strongest reprobation. They are shown its true meaning, and the special revelation given to Paul about it, and they are warned that failure to observe its true import, *viz.*, "discerning" that it was truly a setting forth, in the broken bread and in the cup, a memorial of the broken body and blood of the Lord, would bring upon them the judgment of the Lord. Thus, "not discerning the Lord's body," means failure to truly show forth the dying of the Lord Jesus, in the breaking of bread, and looking upon it as a common meal.

A. O. M.

[**Editor's Note.**—We give two diverse views of this passage. The reply by our correspondent, D. R., is interesting, but we do not consider that the omission of the words, "the Lord's," from verse 29 necessarily alters the sense of it. The expression, "the body and blood of the Lord" having already been used in verse 27, renders it, to our mind, unnecessary to repeat it in verse 29, which is evidently a further pressing home upon the conscience the warning of verse 27, rather than the introduction of another thought. But whichever be the true sense, surely the practical bearing of it is the same. The believer is called to look deeper than the shadow, and to discern beneath it the blessed reality. The observance of the command brings judgment rather than blessing, if it be done in a carnal way; whether it be after the unruly manners of the Corinthians, as described in verse 21, or simply a cold formality that obeys in outward act, but fails to discern the spiritual significance of the ordinance.]

THE WAYS OF GOD ;

Or, The great Master Worker, His instruments,
and His workmanship.

“Stormy wind fulfilling His word.”—Ps. cxlviii. 8.

THERE is strength and power in the inanimate creature, before which the wisdom and strength of man are alike futile. But God has measured the strength and power of every creature, not only by His omnipotence, but by His love also. “I am persuaded,” says the apostle, “that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor *any other creature*, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus.” Blessed thought! every creature may try to effect this separation, but none shall prevail. But is not the thought, while equally blessed, yet more wonderful to conceive that every creature has its distinct mission, either in judgment or mercy, or in mercy on the one side and judgment on the other? “For thus saith the Lord God, How much more when I *send* My four sore judgments upon Jerusalem: the sword, and the famine, and the noisome beast, and the pestilence”; all these creatures have their distinct mission from the Lord to fulfil His word. So also the stormy wind, the most uncontrollable element, has its mission from the Lord to fulfil His word. Does Jonah fly from the presence of the Lord? God knows how to arrest him, and to get glory to His own name; and in the result to show mercy even to Jonah. “The Lord *sent out a great wind into the sea*, and there was a mighty tempest in the sea, so that the ship was like to be broken” (Jonah i. 4). But it was not broken; that was not the mission of the great wind; it had respect to Jonah, and to him alone, and it fulfilled the word of the Lord. But God had other creatures at His command in reference to Jonah. “Now the Lord had *prepared* a great fish to swallow up Jonah” (verse 17). And, again, after Jonah’s disappointment, because that mercy rejoiced against judgment, and that the Ninevites were spared on their repentance, “the Lord God *prepared* a gourd, and made it to come up over Jonah, that it might be a shadow over his head, to deliver him from his grief” (Jonah

iv. 6). Then, again, “God *prepared* a worm when the morning rose the next day, and it smote the gourd that it withered. And it came to pass, when the sun did arise, that God *prepared* a vehement east wind; and the sun beat upon the head of Jonah, that he fainted” (verse 7, 8). “The great wind,” “the fish,” “the gourd,” “the worm,” “the vehement east wind,” had each of them a distinct mission from God, and fulfilled His word.

Does Jehoshaphat, after his signal deliverance, join himself with Ahaziah, king of Israel, who did very wickedly, and do they make ships in Ezion-gaber? “Then Eliezer the son of Dodavah of Mareshah prophesied against Jehoshaphat, saying, Because thou hast joined thyself with Ahaziah, the Lord hath broken thy works. And the ships were broken, that they were not able to go to Tarshish” (2 Chron. xx.). The stormy wind fulfilled His word.

If “Euroclydon” rages in the Mediterranean, it fulfils its mission in bringing honour to the Lord’s prisoner, the only one calm and collected in the midst of danger, and for whose sake all that sailed with him in the ship were spared (Acts xxvii. 24).

But if God “commandeth and raiseth the stormy wind, which lifteth up the waves of the deep” (Ps. cvii. 25), He also stilleth the noise of the seas, the noise of their waves, and *the tumult of the people*” (Ps. lxxv. 7): and intelligent creatures, in their passions and interests as uncontrollable by human power as the waves of the sea, have their mission. And God can say to the one or the other, “Hitherto shalt thou come, but no further: and here shall thy proud waves be stayed” (Job xxxviii. 11).

If it be marvellous in our eyes that things unintelligent and inanimate have not only their mission, but are made subservient to God’s purpose of blessing His people, for “not even a sparrow falleth to the ground without our Father,” our admiration becomes deeper when we find the opposition of human passions, and complication of human interests, made to serve a definite end, and to go straightforward to that end. Such appears to be the instruction to be drawn from the symbol of the Cherubim, as seen by the prophet Ezekiel. Such controlling and directing power is also presented

to us in "the lamb as it had been slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God sent forth into all the earth" (Rev. v. 6)—full power for order and control under universal superintendence.

(To be concluded in next number.)

Responsibility of Christians at Home to Labourers in the Gospel Abroad.

SECOND PAPER.

WE come now to another aspect of fellowship in the work. Turn to 2 Cor. viii. 5—"First they gave their own selves to the Lord, and unto us by the will of God." Whatever may be done in the way of fellowship with the Lord's servants, in their work for Him must be the outcome of hearts truly devoted to the Lord. As our brother Arnot said, the other day, "I don't want anything from you, but what is done under the constraining power of the love of Christ." Chapters viii. and ix. of 2 Cor. give us a great deal of practical instruction as to our privilege of helping on the Lord's work. This responsibility is seldom spoken of. Those who are directly dependent upon the Lord for their supplies are naturally slow to speak on this subject; for that reason, I speak the more freely on their behalf. God has given us the privilege of using in His service what the Lord calls "the mammon of unrighteousness"; the thing the world highly esteems, but which is, because of its all but universal abuse, "an abomination in the sight of God." "Abomination" is the Old Testament name for an idol. To worship an idol was to worship an "abomination." In the New Testament, covetousness, or the love of money, is said to be idolatry (Eph. v. 5). But God has given us the privilege of using this mammon of unrighteousness for His glory; yea, of turning that very thing which is abused and idolised by the world into a means of service to the Lord. I commend these two chapters to your careful and prayerful consideration.

Turn now to Phil. i. 3-5—"I thank my God . . . for your fellowship in the Gospel from the first day till now." He desired it; he had had it, and he rejoiced in it. That is the sort of fellowship that God

would have between the churches and those that have been sent forth by them; between those who are gathered together in Divine fellowship and those who have gone forth in the name of the Lord to other places—the fellowship of life and love, so helpful and blessed.

To see the character of this fellowship, turn to Phil. iv—"I rejoiced in the Lord greatly, that now at the last your care of me hath flourished again; wherein ye were also careful, but ye lacked opportunity." Notice it was their *care* of him. May that word be in each of our hearts. It was something like the case of our brother, F. Arnot, with whom we could not communicate for a very long time owing to the inaccessibleness of the regions in which he was labouring. The Philippian assembly had not the facilities of transit, parcel post, &c., such as we have now-a-days. This church might have long been desiring an opportunity to communicate with the apostle. But they were waiting on God till He opened up their way, and the apostle, meanwhile, was learning lessons of patience and of the grace of God. Man comes in with his officiousness and his meddling, and institutes societies that regularly send on supplies, so that there need be no such thing as this trial of faith—this testing time—given to lead to exercise of heart and the development of the grace of patience and trust in God.

"Not that I speak in respect of want." Only fancy the apostle saying that the saints had neglected him, and that he was in want through their neglect. He was not even like Agur, who said, "Give me neither poverty nor riches" (Prov. xxx. 8). The apostle had got further than that; he could say, "I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content. I know both how to be abased, and I know how to abound," &c. The apostle had times when he suffered hunger, and times when he was in want, but he did not regret that. He says, "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me." To be hungry and to suffer need only gave occasion for the more fully proving the power of Christ to sustain His servant.

"Ye have well done that ye did communicate with my affliction"; or, "Ye did well to have fellowship with me in my affliction."

"No church communicated with me as concerning giving and receiving, but ye only." I wonder how many assemblies represented here are accustomed regularly to communicate in a similar way with the Lord's servants labouring abroad. Perhaps there are some represented here that have never done so at all! I have known such a thing. I know servants of God abroad who, if they were here, would be asked to help in the Gospel, or minister the Word to God's saints, and such an amount of work required of them that they could not possibly overtake it; and yet they will be months abroad, and those assemblies whom they thus served at home seem utterly to forget them, and fail to communicate with their affliction. I don't refer to individuals who thus communicate, but to the fellowship of assemblies.

"I have all, and abound: I am full, having received from Epaphroditus the things which were sent from you, an odour of a sweet smell, a sacrifice acceptable, well-pleasing to God." Think of the Holy Spirit of God using such words concerning the gifts of the Philippian church. It pleased God; it was a sweet savour to Him. Do you and I get the joy and comfort of this in our souls as we communicate with the Lord's servants? Had our sisters who made up lately various articles of clothing, &c., for India and our brother Arnot—had they the joy in their heart of knowing that they were pleasing God in this service? God is not hard to please, though you and I are apt to think He is. The love of Christ working in our heart, and constraining to such service, is just to Him the very sweetness of the savour of the sacrifice of Christ. It is like what we read of in the anointing of the priesthood. When Aaron was anointed with the holy anointing oil, the oil ran down his beard to the very skirts of his garments. It was given to him, so to speak, "without measure." But that very same oil was sprinkled on Aaron's sons; and though there was not the same abundance on them as on the high priest, yet, from the garments of his sons was wafted the same odour as from Aaron himself. God looks upon this service as a sweet savour, even like the sweetness of the sacrifice of Christ. Is it any wonder that we should look upon

this matter of communicating with the Lord's servants as an honour and privilege, rather than as a duty and responsibility?

3 John 4-8—"I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in truth. Beloved, thou doest faithfully whatsoever thou doest to the brethren, and to strangers (that is, the brethren who are strangers): who have borne witness of thy charity before the church: whom if thou bring forward on their journey after a godly sort (worthy of God), thou shalt do well; because that for His name's sake they went forth, taking nothing of the Gentiles. We therefore ought to receive such, that we might be fellow-helpers to the truth" (that is, "fellow-helpers *with* the truth"). In what way? In any way that God gives us the opportunity; bringing them forward, it may be, on their journey, or otherwise furthering them in their work and testimony. Thus may we be fellow-helpers with the truth. And who is it that we are thus to help? Those who have gone forth for *the name*, "taking nothing of the Gentiles." There are three things in Scripture—"the Jew, the Gentile, and the Church of God." When Paul went to Thessalonica, he went as the Lord's servant, and would not be chargeable unto any of them. He says, in writing to that church, "For ye remember, brethren, our labour and travail: for labouring night and day, because we would not be chargeable unto any of you, we preached unto you the Gospel of God." Paul would have nothing from those he went to serve. He never preached the Gospel, and then asked for a collection. That was not his way. He made it clear that he was an ambassador for Christ, and that he was no man's servant.

In the temple of God, in the service of God, giving and receiving was perfectly acceptable to the Lord. The Lord Jesus sat by the treasury and approvingly noted the gifts that were poured into it. But when He saw them bargaining, buying, and selling—bargaining for a pair of turtle doves for sacrifice—He overturned the tables of the money-changers, and said, "Make not My Father's house a house of merchandise." This is an abomination to God. He says to His people in Malachi i. 10, "Who is there even among you that would shut the doors for nought? neither do you kindle fire on Mine altar for nought."

The service of Jehovah was made a matter of bargaining. What a dishonour to the name of the Lord. Giving and receiving is perfectly right and pleasing to God; but bargaining, buying, and selling, in connection with the service of God, is hateful to Him. May God make us clear about these things; they are practised on every hand, and if we are to glorify God in our service to Him, we must be prepared to maintain the truth at all cost, and shake ourselves clear of all such unscriptural ways. Let us be jealous of anything that would come in between the soul of the Lord's servant and his direct responsibility to the Lord Jesus Christ. I don't care what it is. I don't care whether it is the mandate of a so-called "*General*"; or the order of a missionary society, or, that which is harder still to get rid of, the fear of being judged by brethren.

What joy it gives us to see that band of ambassadors for Christ going out with our brother Arnot to Africa, each one in direct responsibility to his Lord—going out at the call of God to serve Him, not depending on subscription lists, to which converted and unconverted alike are invited to contribute. They are "taking nothing of the Gentiles"; let us thank God for this. In the meetings lately held in the Waterloo Rooms, and in the Christian Institute, there was not one single allusion to the question of funds, and in this I rejoice. Is it that money is not needed? No, indeed. There is a great deal wanted; but God has a way in which He will be served, and it is our privilege to serve Him in His own way. Whilst the Spirit of God is stirring the hearts of His people throughout the world to herald the preaching of the Cross, Satan is also working. His way is not always openly to oppose, but to pervert and to introduce elements which mar the work, which corrupt the minds of the servants of God from the simplicity which is in Christ; and so the issue, instead of being separated, godly, scripturally-ordered assemblies, is even in the virgin soil of far-off lands a reproduction of the sectarianism of Christendom.

Only recently, one who offered himself to a well-known "society" to go out as a "missionary," was accepted, but found that ere he could be incorporated with the mission,

he must sign a document, binding him to fall in with whatever form of church organisation was already existing in the town to which he should be sent. If Presbyterian, then he must be the same. If Congregational or Baptist, he must be prepared to fall in with either. This is what is called "undenominational," but it leaves no room for one who has learned that, in the important matter of the order of the house of God, as in all else, there is but the one authoritative appeal—"God and the Word of His grace." Such an one will never consent to sign away his liberty to be subject to the Lord alone. It may be asked, "With whom, then, are we to communicate?" I reply, with those who, "for the Name, have gone forth taking nothing of the Gentiles"—who are subject to no authority, and dependent on no society, but who look directly to the Lord for their marching orders and their supplies. "We then ought to receive such."

Take heed, lest in what is called the breadth of your sympathies and the liberality of your heart you defraud not those who, by the simplicity of their faith, and the scripturalness of their ways, have the first, if not the only, claim upon your help.

I wish to speak a little on the question of assembly contributions to the Lord's work. I believe it is pleasing to God that saints act in fellowship, putting their contributions together, so that it comes from an assembly or church, and not from an individual. I believe it is a dangerous thing when the supporting of the Lord's servants falls into the hands of individuals alone. Individuals are apt to become masters, and may even unconsciously exercise an unwholesome influence. It seems to be the scriptural order that the churches should unitedly and in fellowship remember labourers in the Gospel and send help to them (see Rom. xv. 26; 2 Cor. viii. 1; 1 Cor. xvi. 1-3).

Another thing, I believe God would have His servants *directly* communicated with. Now, just a word in passing upon the little paper called "Echoes of Service." A most valuable paper, and one that I would recommend you all to get regularly. It is the only means by which most of us can hear from many of the Lord's servants who have gone

forth in this scriptural way. I don't mean to say that it is perfect. Names may at times appear in it that would be better not. But, in the main, it is a paper that affords information as to the Lord's servants, who, as far as we know, have gone forth directly responsible to Him. It is conducted by two esteemed brethren, Dr. M'Lean and Mr. Henry Groves. Things have been said, and, I grieve to say, circulated in print, damaging both to the little paper and to the wisdom and grace of those dear brethren, who have devoted their time, strength, and ability, to this service. They communicate with those who have gone forth in simple dependence on the Lord. They write to them, and forward whatever funds may be sent for the purpose. If, as in the case of our brother Arnot, it is no use sending him money, then cloth, or some other article, that can be exchanged with the natives for food, must be purchased and sent out. This must needs to be done by somebody; and these two esteemed brethren have been doing such work as this, important and laborious, freely for years. They are not "directors" of a "missionary society." They are men who would be the last to attempt, in any way, to intervene between the Lord and His servants, or to exercise any control beyond that which the weight of their godliness and experience gives to their advice and counsel.

Let us thank God for such, and pray that they may have all needed help, and grace, and wisdom, for so responsible a work.

At the same time, it would be better, and would tend to promote genuine interest and fellowship, if the saints would take a little trouble, and, as far as possible, *communicate direct*, and write a little letter of encouragement to those servants of God. You do not know how it cheers and encourages those who are labouring in distant and lonely parts to receive a loving letter, and all the more cheering if, in a time of need, it encloses a love-gift from the saints. It will cause a song of thanksgiving to ascend to the throne. This is a little service that some of our dear young brethren can do. In this way we can help on the work of the Lord, and thus linking the work that is abroad and at home together, manifest that it is one work—"the work of the Lord."

THE CENTRE OF ATTRACTION.

HOW changed everything has become since the day we trusted in Christ, and were born of God! Old things are passed away: behold, all things are become new. We now see Christ in everything. Is it the past?—We see but One there, and that is *Christ* in the great transaction of Calvary. Is it the present?—"We see Jesus," as it is written: with faith's eye we behold Him at the right hand of God for us. Is it the future?—It has but one object, and that is *Christ*: we wait for the Son from heaven. We look around: we behold creation groaning and travailing in pain. What does it need? It needs only its absent Lord, it waits but for *Christ*. We see the world's crowds rushing here and there. They seek for joy, but they seek in vain; for they seek everywhere but in *Christ*. How strange it seems to us who are *in Him!* With feverish anxiety they run, perchance, for the latest news about some of the world's great men, or the world's great events. But all the while we muse on the rejected One and what the world did with *Him*. And "some new thing," next day, has the world rushing off elsewhere to kill time's little hour. How different with us who are *in Him!* This world seems a different world now, since the happy day when we found that we were in *Him*.

"Brighter suns above me wheel;
Brighter stars around me shine;
All around I only feel
I am His and He is mine."

Mine for ever! O haste, thou happy day, when I shall behold Him! The world speaks of its coming man; but I only know One who is coming, and that one is *Christ!* The world advertises its great days; but I only look for one great day, and that is the day when I shall see *Him* as He is. The world has its banquets; but they have no charm for me, for He has bidden me to the banqueting-house, and His banner over me is love. The world has its reformation schemes, and its plans for improving the poor lost ones; but we have only one remedy, and that is *Christ*. We have only one story to tell, and that is the story of *Christ*. And we never tire of telling about *Him*. The world thinks it so strange. They can't understand it. But how *can* they, seeing

the things of God are spiritually discerned? And when the din of nations is heard around, it causes us no alarm—no impatience to learn the world's affairs; for we know that God is overruling all for the glory of One, and that is *Christ*. And, in this little while, if we testify, it is of *Christ*; if we shine, it is for *Christ*; if we are ambassadors, it is of *Christ*; if we are epistles, it is of *Christ*. If we are gathered together, it is only *unto Christ*; for the Holy Ghost gathers to none but *Christ*, and shows us nothing but the things of *Christ*. And thus we long to know *Him*, and to please *Him*, and to be with *Him*; “for of *Him* and through *Him* and to *Him* are all things: to whom be glory for ever. Amen.” M.

EPHESIANS.

WE might put as the sum of the teaching in this epistle, “*made perfect in One.*”

And this, not only in regard to our *position* as saints, but in respect of our armour. The epistle begins with God. It tells His eternal thoughts, His purpose, and of the One who accomplished His will. The first chapter ends with the man Christ Jesus on the throne of God, and the last chapter gives saved sinners access to the armour by which He overcame. Phil. ii. 5; Rev. ii. 27; Eph. vi. 11-18. The epistle is addressed to the saints in Ephesus, and *generally* to the *faithful in Christ Jesus*. We are blessed with all spiritual blessings *in Christ*. These are summed up as:—

1st. Brought to God *in Christ*—and *in Him*, holy, and without blame (verse 4). The manner and cost of this place, we learn in Col. i. 22, “In the body of *His flesh* we are presented holy and unblameable and unchargeable in His sight.” To this place, where is fulness of joy and pleasures for evermore, we were chosen before the world began. God's eternal purpose was to bring us to Himself (Rom. viii. 29, 30; Heb. ii. 10; Heb. x. 5-7; 2 Tim. i. 9).

2nd. We are predestinated unto sonship through Christ Jesus, *to Himself*. God is our Father; *we* His sons. And this was the good pleasure of His will, in order that He might in us reveal the glory of His grace—in that, when we are finally like Him (1 John iii. 2) His grace may be praised.

3rd. We have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins; and the measure of that forgiveness is the value of the ransom—it is *according* to the *riches* of His grace. God was rich: He had means to meet the need of every living thing (Ps. civ. 27); but not till the precious blood was presented (Heb. ix. 11, 12), was God “rich in grace.”

4th. We are not only given the Son's place, but *are taken into His confidence*. The Lord Jesus knew His Father's heart, and in John xiv. 2 says, “If it were not so, *I would have told you.*” Then in John xvi. 13-15, and 1 Cor. ii. 9-12, we are assured further on this point. Thus, in the grace of our God, we are treated as full-grown sons—beloved sons, to whom He can unfold His thoughts and purposes. Are we *willing* to learn? If so, he that is *willing* to do His will shall *know* of the doctrine.

God's purpose is to head up all things in Christ (verses 9, 10). Christ is the Man of God's purposes; let the potsherds of earth strive as they may, no man but Christ will ever meet the need of the world. He alone is the “Joseph” who has laid up for the world's need; and while we pray for the powers that be, let us act in the spirit of these verses till He come. But not only are things on earth to be headed up in Him, but things in the heavens. He must put down *all* rule, and *all* authority that is not of God.

Verse 11 links us with Christ. We have obtained an inheritance in Him; we are joint heirs with Christ (Rom. viii. 17), and are associated with Him in His glorious reign. “Know ye not that the saints shall judge the *world*” (1 Cor. vi. 2) and *angels* (verse 3). We come forth to make war in Rev. xix. 11-14 (connect verse 8). We with Him, and as one with Him, are the means by which God is revealed to all intelligent beings (Rev. xxi. 9, 10, 11, 22), and to all eternity, the channel of blessing to His creatures (Rev. xxi. 3); so that, when in ages to come, *He* shall be admired in us (2 Thess. i. 9), it shall be unto *the praise of His glory* (Eph. i. 12-14). T. C.

“MORE light, Lord, more light,” cried a brother in the prayer meeting. “But are you obeying the light you have?” said another brother, putting his hand on his friend's shoulder. And so it is, except we are walking in obedience to the Lord by the light He has given us, we need not ask for more. T. W.

PROPHETIC PAPERS. No. 18.

THE BOOK OF THE REVELATION.—Continued.
CHAPTER XVIII.

BY F. C. BLAND.

IN chapter xviii. we have still the name of Babylon used, and here all seems to be connected with commerce, that which contends with false religion for supremacy over the hearts of men. The very expression, the "almighty dollar," is an acknowledgment of the sovereignty and potency of wealth in the affairs of men.

The woman of chapter xvii., and the city of chapter xviii., remind us of the vision in chapter v. of Zechariah, where the woman is seen sitting in the midst of the ephah. The woman, which typifies the system, is the prominent object in the vision at first, but she disappears in the ephah, and is suppressed by the talent of lead upon the mouth of it; and so here the woman, or system, of chapter xvii. appears first in all her prominence and grandeur; but she is destroyed, and gives place apparently to the vast system of commerce and luxury which will become (indeed, is fast becoming) man's God, and which is in turn to be destroyed by *sudden judgment*.

There can be no doubt that chapter v. of Zechariah indicates that an abode is to be found for the ephah in the land of Shinar, and that whatever it be, it is to have a resurrection there "upon its own base."

That the expression refers to a transference of the commerce of the west to the east seems plain, and that two powers, symbolised by two women, will be the means of its transference is plain also.

That Babylon will be rebuilt again there cannot, it appears to me, be a shadow of doubt, from Old Testament prophecies (Isaiah xiii. and xiv., and Jeremiah l. and li., besides many other scriptures). Whether it will be again the centre of that which will be the subject of God's judgments by-and-by, I am not able to affirm. But it is remarkable that as a city (Rome) is spoken of as being identical with the place and centre of apostate religion, another city, whatever one it may be, is identified as the centre of commerce which has thrown off God and professes to do without Him.

Whatever it is that is destroyed, it affects the *whole world* of commerce—not one place only—and all who make their gain and living by trade; and it must be noted that the judgment is *sudden*, and comes *direct from the hand of God*.

There is no record of ancient Babylon being so destroyed. The destruction of Sodom was sudden, in one day; that of Babylon was slow and gradual, its decay having occupied more than one thousand years. It was taken by Alexander the Great, who so far from destroying it, purposed to make it his metropolis. From his days it became *gradually* (not suddenly) of less importance, until about the sixth century it had almost entirely disappeared, and it is certain that the Talmud of Babylon was compiled there by Jewish Rabbis about the fifth century.

There are many prophecies in the Old Testament about the Jews in connection with Babylon which have certainly never had any fulfilment; for instance, "Israel taking those captive, whose captives they were, and ruling over their oppressors"; and further, there are events which we are told will take place (as the expression is) "*in those days and at that time*," when Babylon is to be destroyed; for example, Israel and Judah will go together weeping, and asking their way to Zion (Jeremiah l. 4); and again, in Isaiah xiv. 3, 4, it is in the day that Jehovah gives Israel rest that the king of Babylon is to be destroyed.

If we have the destruction of the antichrist foretold in Old Testament Scriptures, and the fulfilment of these prophecies again spoken of in the book of the Revelation; then, if we find the destruction of Babylon foretold in the Old Testament, and the destruction of a city called Babylon also recorded in the Apocalypse, it seems to me not an unreasonable conclusion, but one to which we are shut up, that both are alike fulfilments of events which have certainly never yet been accomplished. We must remember that these judgments take place within the compass of the prophetic earth.

We cannot tell, in these days of lightning progress, what sudden development of any one city or region may take place, which would fit it to be the subject of what is described here.

It has been contended that this is only intended to symbolise *the principles* of apostasy and worldliness, and possibly it may be so; but this does not appear to me to satisfy the fulfilment of the plain statements of scripture, and it appears also to be far more probable, that as apostate Christianity is identified with a city, which is Rome, commerce, and the pursuit after wealth and luxury in forgetfulness of God, will have a city for its centre also, and that city may be Babylon of the Old Testament restored.

It must be remembered that the church of this dispensation is outside of the scene, and that the coming of the Lord for His saints need not be delayed one day for the fulfilment of any prophecy relating to the earth.

A reference to our lecture on chapter xi. will give our reasons for this, and will show, as I think it clearly does, that the testimony and worship of this dispensation must be taken out of the way, to make room for the temple worship of the Jews again with its daily sacrifice, and that the testimony to our heavenly hopes and heavenly inheritance must give place to that which will be sent to revive proper *Jewish* hopes, and to turn the hearts of the earthly people to the promise that David's Son is to sit upon David's throne, and to reign in Jerusalem, and before His ancients gloriously.

ELEMENTARY ARTICLES, No. 1.

THE SIN OF SECTARIANISM.

SPIRITUALLY-MINDED Christians of all denominations are often heard deploring the divided condition of the Church, and the consequent weakness, emulation, and animosity engendered thereby; but the great sin of sectarianism has not been realised and denounced by the Church at large to any appreciable extent. Occasionally attempts have been made to bring Christians together by means of unions, conferences, &c., and much individual blessing has resulted from such gatherings, but no sectarian bonds have been severed, the representatives of each denomination have returned to their own sphere, to work in the same groove, to teach the same doctrines, and to promote the same

party interests as before. No sectarian names have been abandoned, no unscriptural doctrines or practices given up, none of the barriers that separate Christian communities have been taken down; the sin of sectarianism still remains.

Let us notice three heads under which this evil is especially manifested.

1st. IN ITS UNSCRIPTURALNESS:—Whatever is opposed to the plain teaching of God's Word must be sinful, and sectarianism is certainly one of those things which are everywhere spoken against. Unity, and not division, is the grand idea that God presents in His Word when speaking of Christian fellowship. He gives us the figure of a body with its many members, a temple with its living stones, a house with its four walls enclosing all the inmates, &c. Christ died to "gather together in one the children of God that were scattered abroad." He also prayed that there might be a manifested oneness witnessing to the world of His own mission and the Father's love (John xvii. 22, 23). Paul exhorted that there should "be no schism in the body," "that all should speak the same thing, being perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment" (1 Cor. i. 10), and much more to the same effect. On the other hand envying, strife, divisions, and a carnal walk, are the fruitful outcome of a party spirit; one saying, "I am of Paul; and I of Apollos," &c. (1 Cor. i. 10-13; iii. 1-4); while those who cause divisions contrary to the doctrines of the apostles are to be marked and avoided (Rom. xvi. 17, 18). We thus learn that sectarianism is condemned by the Word of God, and is consequently sinful, as much as lying or drunkenness; and in Galatians v. 20, divisions are classed with these sins as works of the flesh (see R.V.). If sectarianism were only brought into the light and judged, it must be confessed and abandoned by every conscientious loyal-hearted child of God, just as any other sinful habit of our past life. Departure from God's order as taught and practised by the apostles and early Christians, has resulted in all the confusion and divisions that now exist amongst the people of God. The sin of Jeroboam has been repeated by the leaders of Christendom in subverting the

hearts of God's people from the true centre—Christ and His name (Matt. xviii. 20), and attaching them to human institutions with unscriptural names, many of which are “teaching for doctrines the commandments of men.”

2nd. IN ITS UNCOMELINESS :—If it is “good and pleasant for brethren to dwell together in unity,” it must on the contrary be painful and sad to see them divided. Just as in earthly families where parental authority is not duly exercised, or its claims are not responded to, discord and confusion prevail, and instead of being attracted by that which is “pure, lovely, and of good report,” we are repelled by the frequent dissensions and domestic unhappiness that exists amongst them, so the Church in its present divided condition has become so unattractive and unlovely that it fails to gather within the circle of its fellowship many of those who are truly born of God, while many others are stumbled and driven away by the internal dissensions from being any longer identified (*i.e.*, outwardly) with that which has so grievously failed and dishonoured the Lord. And thus again the sin of sectarianism is painfully demonstrated by the general uncomeliness of that which should be a united testimony for God in the earth, and a power to attract the weakest saint, and excite the admiration of an unbelieving world.

3rd. AS A STUMBLING-BLOCK TO THE WORLD :—Christians have sometimes attempted to justify sectarianism by asserting that a multiplicity of sects tends to advance the Gospel, and to promote the conversion of sinners; but how can that which is the product of discord, the parent of division, and the emblem of strife—that which is unauthorised by God, and condemned by His Word—be used to produce any such result? We find it was when the early Christians were united together with one accord that multitudes were added to the Lord, both men and women (Acts v. 12, 13), whilst in modern times earnest inquirers after truth are greatly stumbled by the numerous sects into which Christians are divided; and not being able to distinguish the true from the false, frequently turn away from all, and in many instances become avowed sceptics. Oh, that God might arouse His people to the enormity of this sin,

and lead them to ask for the “old paths,” to come out from all the “isms” of men, and gather together and work together upon a *purely scriptural and consequently unsectarian platform as in the beginning*, that in fellowship with all saints they might with “one mind and one mouth glorify God,” and as a united phalanx of Christian soldiers under the command of our great Captain, “stand fast in one spirit with one mind, striving together for the faith of the Gospel.”

Perhaps it may be objected that such a picture as the above is very far from realisation; but remember, dear Christian reader, that does not relieve you from the responsibility of personally doing all in your power to bring it about; nor from the sin of perpetuating sectarianism and division in association with any of the systems of men with which you may be identified. In many towns there are now gatherings of saints meeting simply in the name of the Lord Jesus, seeking to carry out New Testament order in their ordinances, worship, and ministry. Let it be your aim to seek out such, and in fellowship with those who “call on the Lord out of a pure heart,” purge yourself from all that is dishonouring to God and contrary to His Word, that you may “be a vessel unto honour, sanctified, and meet for the Master’s use” (2 Tim. ii. 19-22).

J. H.

THE DEATH AND BURIAL OF THE LORD JESUS.

NOTES OF AN ADDRESS ON JOHN XIX. BY THE LATE WM. LINCOLN, LONDON.

IT is usual to combine the seven cries of the Lord Jesus upon the Cross, the seven utterances that we have recorded, and to speak upon them all together. I cannot but think that it is better to keep to the way of the Spirit of God, and to keep them assorted. There are *three* in this Gospel of the Son of God; one which was previous to that bitter cry of “My God! My God! why hast Thou forsaken Me?” and two which were subsequent to that.

“After this, Jesus knowing that all things were now accomplished, that the Scripture might be fulfilled, saith, I thirst.” If we

consider these cries, we can see that there is a marvellous majesty in them; and therefore it is no wonder that we find them in this Gospel of His Divine Majesty. "Knowing that all things were now accomplished." He could look through Leviticus, the Psalms, Isaiah, or any part of God's Word which spoke of His sufferings, and see that all now had found its perfect fulfilment. But the cry which now escapes His lips manifests how that which He had endured had dried up His human spirit. Ah, souls in hell will cry, "I thirst," but will never know the wrath of God so as to drink it up as Jesus did. Think of the Fountain of Living Water crying, "I thirst." Said He, "If any man thirst, let him come unto Me and drink"; but now Himself cries, "I thirst." And presently, when He is upon His throne, we read that from it shall flow "a river of water of life." Who can tell how the wrath of God must have dried up His spirit. So much more is there implied than is found in the words themselves.

And then again, "**When Jesus therefore had received the vinegar, He said, It is finished.**" Again is there majesty displayed. Putting His own imprimatur upon His own work. Not asking, "Will it do?" or having the consciousness simply of having pleased God, as we have. And often is this the expression of Deity in scripture; when the earth was created, when the tabernacle was finished, when the new heaven and the new earth are brought in, we hear that it is very good, that the glory rests upon it, that it is done. And so here again. And then think how everything recorded in scripture as to our security hinges upon this statement; it is the foundation truth of all truth, and our souls love to meditate upon it. If we have any consciousness of sins forgiven, here we have the reason; if we know that there is not a spot upon us for God to see, if we are to have any joy in heaven, if we are to be radiant with beauty there, here we have the reason. Nay, as it were, here is the moment to which God must have been looking forward when He gave us to His Son, that we might be brought to glory; the laying the foundation of all the new creation work of our God. Christ had dug deep down, and laid that foundation upon a rock,—*the Rock, Himself.* Looking at it in

another aspect, we may regard the words as a sigh of relief that at last that mighty work which must, as a man, have weighed down His spirit, was done. "Who, for the joy that was set before Him, endured the Cross, despising the shame." And now there was nothing for Him but in triumph to ascend to His Father, to have His sheep given to Him, and to rejoice over them with singing. But I ask you to notice the selection that the Spirit makes in assorting these cries. It is the same one that we have in both Matthew and Mark, His official gospels, showing that it was only in the cause in which He stood that He uttered this cry.

"**And He bowed His head, and gave up the ghost.**" Here was the climax of the sufferings of Jesus. Even when He said, "It is finished," it was not actually so, until He had expired. And not merely, as we have it in Luke, "He expired," but here in this Gospel it is, "He delivered up His spirit." As if it were a free act on His part; He delivered up His spirit when He pleased. And we must not make so much of the sufferings of Jesus, or of the pouring out of the wrath of God, as to forget that the crowning act of all was when He delivered up His spirit and died.

"The Jews therefore, because it was the preparation, that the bodies should not remain upon the Cross on the Sabbath day, (for that Sabbath day was an high day,) besought Pilate that their legs might be broken, and that they might be taken away." Here we see how God watched over the dead body of His beloved Son, and made careful provision as to what should and what should not be done. And we may be sure that in like manner God watches over the dead bodies of His saints now, and will gather together their dust by-and-by. "Then came the soldiers, and brake the legs of the first, and of the other which was crucified with him." In their brutal mirth, taking pleasure in wreaking their spite upon the crucified men. We see why they could not break *His* legs—"For these things were done, that the scripture should be fulfilled, A bone of Him shall not be broken." The allusion, you are aware, is to the paschal lamb; and here, therefore, we see that God the Holy Ghost gives a distinct hint that Christ is

the true antitype of the paschal lamb, and that when the blood was sprinkled upon the door posts it was not because of any value in these lambs, but because they pointed forward to this Lamb, the Lamb of God. Upon verses 34 to 37 we have an inspired commentary in 1 John v. 5, 6. You can see that the allusion is very plain, for in verse 35 it says, "And he that saw it bare record, and his record is true: and he knoweth that he saith true, that ye might believe," immediately after the account. Here it is, as I may say, the Spirit of God pausing in the midst of this thrilling narrative, to point out this and say, "That is to make you believe."

But now a difficulty arises. On comparison of the Epistle with the Gospel there is an apparent discrepancy. It is evident that when the blood and the water came out from the side of the Lord it manifested that He was dead. But if we look at the epistle of John the two are cited in proof that He is alive. "And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in His Son." The witnesses are cited in the Gospel in proof that He died; in the Epistle, that the life is not in us but in Him. It seems to me that the answer is at hand. We know who Jesus was, as He said, "I am the life"; and that when He died He could not be holden of death but burst its chains. It is a matter of Divine revelation, and of our faith in that revelation, that He is alive now. I know He died, I believe in Him risen, and there is my life. Putting these two together, I see first, that the blood and water, by the testimony of the apostle and the Spirit, show me that He did die; but He laid down His life that He might take it again. I am sure, on the warrant of God's Word, that He is not dead now, and there is my life; God tells us Christ is risen. As sure as the water and the blood and the Spirit prove that He died, I know that He did not die for Himself, but for me; and I know, upon the warrant of God's Word, that He is alive now, and there is my life. It is written that I may believe; and I do believe.

Then, further, we read, "And again another scripture saith, They shall look on Him whom they pierced." God allowed the one but not the other. These words are referred to in Revelation i., "Behold He cometh with clouds;

and every eye shall see Him, and they also which pierced Him." Primarily, no doubt, they refer to Israel, but we too had a hand in that piercing of Him. It is a solemn thing, that which you and I did when it came within our reach, we took a spear and stabbed Him to the heart; when you sinned in your folly and wilfulness, that was what you did. Thousands of hands, so to speak, held that spear which went into His side, and the blood that tinged its top was the blood to put away our sin.

"The very spear that pierced His side,
Drew forth the blood to save."

It was not love overpowered, but love overpowering the sin by the blood which cleanses. When my sin has murdered Him, there is the blood to cover it, and to wash it out. But there is a more awful sin yet which is being committed. Rejecting a humbled Christ is not so awful as rejecting a glorified Christ, and that is the sin of the men of this age. God is sincere in inviting sinners to accept His mercy; but when that mercy is refused, and sin persisted in, judgment must come.

Then follows an account of the interment of the Lord, and there are several little touches connected with it which are very striking. One we have in verse 38, when we find Joseph of Arimathea asking for and taking away the body of Jesus. There are always timid disciples; some are naturally more so, and hide their convictions longer than others. But the way of God is to allow circumstances to transpire which compel such to speak out sooner or later. So was it with Joseph; he might keep his convictions to himself for awhile, but when Jesus died he could keep them to himself no longer. And this throws light upon an obscure passage in Luke ii. 35, "That the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed." The humiliation, the suffering, the Cross of Jesus, acted as a moral probe to test those who were upon the Lord's side. Another point is the coming with him of Nicodemus (verse 39). Nicodemus was a timid disciple too. He came first to Jesus at night, an evident mark that he was afraid to avow himself as on the Lord's side. What do we learn, then, from these two timid disciples? One thought I have suggested; a second is that union is strength. The Lord sent out His

disciples two and two; and oftentimes do we find that the disciples in twos dare to do that together which they would not do alone. And here the Lord used these two timid ones to make them together two bold ones. And if there was a beautiful spot in this earth at this moment, where was it in the eyes of God? Surely this spot where Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus were. And what a beautiful action of the Spirit to bring these two disciples right under the very eye of God. Once Nicodemus had had his eye directed to Christ, but He does not appear to have looked then; then in chapter vii. we see him in the great council. He was not a separated man then, he had had enough conviction in his soul to make him speak out somewhat; but if he had been thorough he would not have been found in such a place. He was not a real disciple in John iii.; he was not a separated disciple in John vii. But here, at last, at the Cross, we find him a full avowed disciple of the Lord Jesus.

I want now, without remarking upon it, to attach the beginning of chapter xx. to this chapter xix. For scripture never stops at the death of the Lord Jesus; whenever the Spirit speaks about the death of the Lord Jesus, He always adds a word about the resurrection. Only one passage that I think of that is an exception, "I, if I be lifted up, will draw all unto Me. This He said signifying what death He should die." Therefore we find that chapter xx. at once goes on to tell us of His resurrection. We believe in a Jesus who died and was buried; but we know that He is risen, and is upon the throne of God. So we read of the Lord's way, first with an individual; and mark whom the Spirit chooses—Mary Magdalene. We only come in through infinite and sovereign grace. Mary Magdalene takes the same place in the gospels as Onesimus in the epistles of Paul. Nay, who was the first person who entered into the paradise of God after Christ? Neither the beloved John, nor Enoch, but a thief. You are all sinners saved by grace; never forget that. Then, having begun with the individual, He gathers the disciples round Him, with Himself in the midst. I do not think that John xx. is much known; for I look at it and see a number of saved sinners gathered round

Him, with Himself in their midst, the centre and object of their worship, He who was pierced for them. Have Christians now learned that fundamental, Divine, simple truth, that they are to be gathered not to a principle or a doctrine, but to a living Person, who was sent by God to die for sinners?

NEW METHODS.

(Part of a Letter.)

"DEAR SIR,—That a great change has come over evangelistic enterprise none can deny. So great, indeed, is the change, that some of us who have been nearly all our life engaged in the work now hardly know where we are. The preaching *used* to be the *sole* attraction. Judging from the announcements placarded on all our walls it is *now* one of the *least*. *Choirs, solos, cornets, stringed bands, organ recitals, and I know not what besides, are the baits held out.* The Bible is being shelved, and simple exposition giving place to smart anecdotes and the relation of 'past experiences,' which were better forgotten as they have been forgiven. The great aim seems to be to make a service '*bright*' and '*pleasant*,' rather than *soul-searching*. 'A happy evening' is about the last thing an unconverted soul needs, and about the last thing he would get were Paul the preacher. There is all too little mention of the sinfulness of sin and the righteousness of God. *Pleasing* the people has taken the place of *warning* them. The result is that the taste of the masses has become vitiated. They have drunk of the wine of sensationalism until a service with no other attraction than '*the Book*' seems *flat* and insipid. Like dram-drinking, the dose has to be perpetually increased or it loses its effect. At the present time there is a dead indifference among the people which, in my judgment, the rank sensationalism of the past few years is largely accountable for. We *must get back to simplicity* of method, or there will be evil times ahead. *The Bible* MUST BE MORE HONOURED, and reliance placed alone on the Spirit's application of the Word. The *clap-trap* of the day is degrading the work of Christ and demoral-

ising the people. It gives the infidel ground for saying—as one did to my knowledge lately—“*Their Christ is played out.*” This remark was made as he pointed to a flaming bill outside a mission-hall announcing some special attractions. That some churches and chapels are little, if any better, in no wise affects the question. It only makes the matter the more serious.

“*More Bible teaching, more prayer, more reverence, more simplicity, more Puritanism, more going outside the camp to a rejected Christ—these are the great needs of to-day.*”

“The Lord bring again to the front apostolic methods and apostolic doctrine; then shall we have apostolic success.”

CHRIST IS ALL.

WHAT though this earthly house of clay
Sink into ruin and decay,
Though health and vigour pass away—
Christ is my *life*.

What though fond dreams of youth are fled,
The light that shone upon my head,
Extinguished and for ever dead—
Christ is my *light*.

What though bright hopes now withered lie
Like Autumn leaves, all sere and dry,
Or meteors vanished from the sky—
Christ is my *hope*.

What though rude billows round me roll,
His voice the tempest can control;
They ruffle not my tranquil soul—
Christ is my *peace*.

What though dear friends I once caressed
Within the silent grave now rest,
The valley's clods above them pressed—
Christ ever *lives*.

What though perplexing paths appear,
God's Word, a lamp, makes all things clear;
Onward I pass, nor evil fear—
Christ is my *way*.

What though the darkness deeper grows,
All hell more active to oppose
God's truth; in this I find repose—
Christ shall *appear*.

A. W. P. S.

Correspondence.

OBJECT TEACHING, &c.

To the Editor of *The Witness*.

AT least some good should result from the correspondence on this subject, as all who have written admit the danger of going too far, and I think it can scarcely be denied the tendency is in that direction.

With your permission I should like to briefly notice a couple of points in your correspondents' letters. *First*, With regard to “judging one another.” Such a thing, all will admit, is entirely contrary to the teaching of the Word. But are we doing this in simply calling attention to subjects like the above, without the most remote reference to individuals? I think not. Is it not rather desirable that there should be a healthy exercise of mind about things in which there is admittedly a danger of being carried too far? Surely it is incumbent on us to seek to help one another *in a loving, brotherly spirit*. With regard to Bible teaching, I fully agree with your valued correspondent, “J. R.,” that we should encourage the dear little ones to search their precious Bibles, not as they would ordinary lesson books, *but with becoming reverence*. *Second*. Now, referring to object lessons, magic lanterns, acrostics, &c. Where, since Pentecost, when the Holy Spirit came to lead God's children into all truth, do we find a single word to justify the use of such things? And surely, with an open Bible and the blessed Holy Spirit to apply it, these “helps” are not needed. “PREACH THE WORD,” is the apostle's direction to Timothy; and I believe it is of immense importance, in these last days, to see to it that we have scripture principle, precept, or precedent for what we do, and not to introduce merely natural expedients. It can scarcely be questioned that, on all sides, this tendency prevails.

Perhaps enough has been said to cause those whose minds are exercised, to search the Word diligently for themselves (Acts xvii. 11). ENQUIRER.

[IT appears to us some of our correspondents forget that teaching may be conveyed through the eye as well as the ear, and that objects, figures, and words are, after all, representations of ideas. All who have to do with the instruction of the young must be familiar with the fact, that the youthful mind has a peculiar aptitude for taking in instruction by the eye. To avail ourselves of this inlet, for Scriptural teaching, cannot, so far as we can see, be in itself wrong; but whenever the real object of Scriptural instruction becomes subordinated to entertainment, the evil principle has come in, and here, we believe, lies the danger.—Ed.]

ON “DISCERNING THE BODY.”

MY DEAR BROTHER,—I was going to send you an answer last month to the query on the subject of “The Body,” in 1 Cor. xi. 29, but time failed. As, however, the question is an interesting one, perhaps you may think it worth while to insert another contribution.

Is it not something like this? Every coin of the realm bears the effigy of the Queen. To deface or mutilate such a coin is to offend against the law, and

to incur the prescribed penalty. The apostle's argument is that the bread and the cup are, as it were, the effigy of our blessed Lord, and whoever treats the emblems disrespectfully, or, in other words, unworthily of Him whom they represent, is guilty of an offence against His Person and must be chastened accordingly; because they fail, through their negligence or thoughtlessness, to discern the real meaning of the symbols, or to discriminate between that which represents the Lord's body and a piece of common bread. The teaching of the passage is extremely solemn, and has a voice for every child of God in our assemblies; for there is, alas, too much danger amongst us of becoming careless in our calmness, and irreverent in our boldness, as we surround the table of the Lord. R. L. S.

SUMMER HOLIDAY WORK AMONG THE VILLAGES.

ACCORDING to our usual custom, we hope to go forth during the summer months visiting from house to house, distributing Gospel books, and preaching the Gospel in the open air, as we have opportunity, in some of the more needy parts of the country where such effort is seldom made. We heartily invite the fellowship of young men and others, of wise and willing heart (Exod. xxxv. 2), who are of good report among the brethren (Acts xvi. 2), in whose fellowship they are to share in this happy work.

During the past *ten* summers a number of young men have given themselves, during their holiday time, to this service, which they have found to be a happy and profitable way of spending their leisure hours. Some of our helpers of those years have been sent forth by the Lord of the harvest to occupy more important places in His service. Charles A. Swan is in Garenganze; Fred. S. Arnot and Archibald Munnoch are on the way thither; Hugh B. Thompson, of Armagh, is going to Central Africa this month; and Donald M'Lean has gone to India. We do not grudge our fellow-helpers for those needy lands, but we trust in God that others may be raised to fill their places. There are hundreds of young men to whom a share in this work would be a lasting blessing, and whose way would doubtless be made plain to share it were they only exercised before the Lord about it. It has been suggested that a succession of visits should be made during the present summer, to different parts, at various times, so as to allow brethren to share in some part of the work who get their holidays at different periods. On the last week of June, and onward, the villages of Northumberland will be visited; about the middle of July, a part of the North of Ireland; and in August, possibly the island of Arran, off the west coast of Scotland. In all these parts there is a wide field for such service, which, by the Lord's good hand upon us, we hope may be reached. Brethren desiring to share in the work, in any of these places, will kindly communicate with us as early as possible, stating where, when, and for how long they hope to go.

Yours in the Gospel of Christ,

JOHN RITCHIE.

Braeside, Kilmarnock, May, 1889.

Questions and Answers.

Replies are invited to the following:—

Lev. x. 16—The sin-offering, when the blood was not brought within the holy place, was eaten by the priests. What does this teach us? Would Gal. vi. 1, 2, or James v. 19, 20, correspond thereto?

Can it be correctly said that all unsaved persons are without God and without hope in the world?

What are the "greater works" referred to in John xiv. 12? and does this promise refer only to disciples in apostolic days or to believers in general?

Has an assembly of God's saints any authority from the Word to appoint elders or Gospel preachers?

"GETHSEMANE" OR "CALVARY."

QUESTION 322.—What relation have the sufferings of Christ in the garden of Gethsemane to the work of atonement?

Ans. A.—There seems no evidence from scripture that the sufferings of the Blessed One in the garden of Gethsemane were in any sense sin-atonement or vicarious. Hebrews v. 7, 8 shows the agony endured and the deliverance promised. While, in Gethsemane, the *anticipation* of the Cross, with all its awful and, to us, unknown sufferings, wrung from Him such agony and blood-like sweat, what must have been the Cross itself! The work of atonement is always connected with His death on the Cross. That precious life is yielded up a sacrifice unto God. Beyond this we cannot go; nor dare we pry into mysteries unrevealed. A. O. M.

Ans. B.—In the dark Gethsemane scene our adorable Saviour is taking a survey of the darker scene through which He must shortly pass in making atonement for sin, and He is filled with agony at the awful prospect. Here He looks into the bitter cup; on the Cross He drinks it. Here He submits to the halter, like the victim led up to the tabernacle door; on the Cross He pours out His soul unto death, and thus, but not otherwise, makes atonement; for it is written: "It is the blood that maketh an atonement for the soul"; "And without shedding of blood is no remission"; "To give His life a ransom"; "Christ died for our sins," &c. R. L. S.

[Editor's Note.—The tendency to connect the atoning work of Christ with His agony in the garden, probably is to some extent due to the prevalent idea that the sweat, "which was as it were (or, like unto) great drops of blood," was really blood. It is very commonly referred to as the "bloody sweat." For this there is no warrant whatever in the words of scripture. Poets and inexact preachers have connected

the *shedding of blood* with the garden, the crown of thorns, the stripes, the nails in His blessed hands and feet; but the *Word of God* makes no mention of *blood* except on the *one* occasion (John xix. 34), where it is the conclusive evidence of death.]

COMMUNICATING WITH TEACHERS.

QUESTION 323.—Please explain Gal. vi. 6, "Let him that is taught in the word communicate to Him that teacheth in all good things."

Ans. A.—"Communicate" means here "to share in common," *i.e.*, to give of one's earthly goods. It is used in a similar sense in Hebrews xiii. 16, "But to do good and to communicate forget not; for with such sacrifices God is well pleased." "For," saith the scripture, in 1 Cor. ix. 7-15, "even so hath the Lord ordained that they which preach the Gospel should live of the Gospel." A. O. M.

Ans. B.—In our schools and colleges those who are taught are obliged to pay fees to their teachers. In the church there is no scale of pay according to which those who are taught are compelled to remunerate those through whom they receive the knowledge of God and His Word; but their obligation to minister to the temporal necessities of their spiritual instructors, not sparingly, but generously, as indicated by the words, "in all good things," is none the less real. Read 1 Cor. ix. and Phil. iv. R. L. S.

[**Editor's Note.**—We fully endorse the foregoing replies, so far as they go; but we think it would be a mistake to limit the "all good things" to the supply of temporal need. Some labourers are so situated that their temporal needs are fully supplied apart from any such "communication" on the part of those to whom they minister. But *all* will value help in prayer, help in the communication of edifying or elucidating thoughts on scripture, or a word of encouragement by the way. Surely, if it is right to acknowledge such service by contributing to temporal needs, it cannot be wrong to acknowledge it by kindly and encouraging words.]

THE UNION OF ASSEMBLIES.

QUESTION 324.—Is there any scripture to warrant the UNION of assemblies of a like mind to form a basis of acting independently from those they consider as not following the Lord fully?

Ans. A.—This question raises the whole subject of church government, and would require almost a volume to fully answer it.

There is no scripture that I know of to warrant the formation of a union of assemblies for any purpose whatever; and no such union, formed by man, could ever be a scriptural basis of action in the things of God.

There are two reasons for saying so. *First*, Such a thing is not to be found in the Word of God. There have been persistent attempts to teach such a principle from the Word; but the way in which scripture has been wrested in doing so, is a clear proof that such a union is unscriptural. The other reason is, that a union of assemblies, such as the question seems to me to imply, would necessitate a *supreme church court on the earth*. This court of appeal might exist in the person of one

gifted, strong-minded man, or in the form of a few such men acting in fellowship; but it is clear to me that a corporation of assemblies could not exist without such a court. Acts xv. may be adduced by some as a precedent; but there they had apostolic gifts in the persons of living men, and we have no such men now. If we had, by all means let us appeal to them.

But, while I have no hesitation in answering the question in the negative, still, the difficulty faces us—What are we to do? In the midst of the increasing confusion is there no remedy? I have no hesitation in replying, None but the LIVING GOD and His Word. The wonderful movement of separation from the bondage and pollutions of sectarianism, which began nearly sixty years ago, began, and has been carried on, by the power of the truth of God; and the positive gathering of the separated ones unto the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ has been by the same power. Many have professed such a separation who never really experienced it, and many are mixing up with pollutions they once would not have touched. But, however painful such a condition of things may be to those who really desire to carry out scriptural separation, and to maintain godly discipline amongst the separated saints, they must not fall back on a human expedient in order to be able to cope with the increasing lawlessness. Let the faithful fall back on the only and never-failing remedy, namely, the ministry of the whole truth of God, in the power of the Holy Spirit. And if they find any part of the truth of God shut out from our periodicals or platforms, as a brother said to me the other day, "they must just find new ones." Let us cry to God for a fresh supply of a powerful, positive ministry; not a ministry that talks on *about* separation, but a ministry that will bring saints into the presence of the Lord, and let them see things as He sees them, and then we will not need to map out so many assemblies from so many other ones.

There is no doubt the "Lord knoweth" those assemblies that are His, as He knows the individual souls that are His; and, among the confused mass of meetings which claim to be churches, He alone has a right to say what is a "church of God," and what is not. What we need is more light as to what a church of God is, and more grace to carry out the light we have. It is deeply solemn to refuse to own a meeting of saints that claims to be a church; but it is as solemn to own that to be a church which never was of God, or to go on helping to perpetuate that which the Lord has judged and set aside.

Every truth has two sides, and so has the truth of separation from ecclesiastical pollutions; and we are so apt to run away with the one side or the other. Should confusion go on increasing, until a fresh "departure" *must be made for the truth's sake* (and such a thought will force itself upon the godly observer of the times), let the truth of God do the work. Should it ever become necessary for faithful souls to come out from the corruptions of *non*-sectarianism, let it be at the call of the Lord Himself.

Let those who long to see the saints all of one mind, and the churches all acting in harmony, see to it that that oneness is not forced on them by a sort of church authority, but let it be brought about by the Spirit of God through the truth. The only oneness which is

scriptural must be by all "holding the Head"—by all being controlled by ONE WILL; any other oneness is, in its nature, *sectarian*. G. A.

Ans. B.—Nothing in Scripture is more clearly taught than the *fellowship of assemblies*: 2 Cor. viii. 1, 2, 23, and 24; Col. iv. 16; 1 Thess. ii. 14; and the seven churches of Rev. ii. and iii.—the Lord in the midst of the seven, and the Spirit speaks to "the churches." So there is no such thing as "independency"—which would be sin. In each assembly there would be the children, young men, and fathers of 1 John ii., 12, 13; so that no standard of attainment would ever be reached simultaneously by all. Hence the room in each assembly for Phil. iii. 12-16.

But in these scriptures it is assemblies or churches of God that are named. Now the thing to be desired is this knitting into the same oneness the assemblies of God of to-day, and not that which, when tested by the standard of the Word of God, does not bear any *trace* of a likeness to the Divine pattern, even though they have open ministry and break bread each Lord's-day; which open ministry is often an opportunity for one to do his own will, which he could not get in the sect, and, having "broken bread," can go where they like the rest of the day or week. Any fellowship with this element of lawlessness would be an ungodly association. It is not some assemblies acting independently from other assemblies—this would indeed be schism; it is those which are assemblies of God ceasing to own, or have any fellowship with, those which, however loud in their profession of being gathered to the Name of the Lord, in works deny this. By their fruits ye shall know them. To go into what is an assembly would be foreign to the question. G. R. G.

Ans. C.—We live in the "miry clay" period of the history of the fourth monarchy of Dan. ii., and the brittleness of the clay finds its answer, in part, in the breaking up of society into cliques, corners, coteries, guilds, rings, unions, &c.; and the people of God are in danger of breaking up into sects and federations, which, after all, are but spiritual "rings" of the most carnal type.

The churches of the apostles' days held fellowship one with another, and, although some of them, like Corinth, were not over-spiritual at times, there is not even a whisper of the formation of a "ring" of spiritual churches for the purpose of ignoring those that were carnal.

The union of assemblies, on the basis of like-mindedness, in a certain restricted line of things—which line of things actually amounts to a creed, even though it be unwritten—is of the very essence of sect-making, and will, sooner or later, produce carnal results. Every known sect has arisen in this very way.

The truest union is that which flows naturally and easily from a healthy spiritual condition, resulting from a firm holding of the Head and a careful walking with God in the power of the Holy Ghost. It is like the drawing together of several bales of goods from the different parts of a ship's hold, by means of a number of grappling irons suspended from a single ring at the end of a single chain hauled up over a single pulley.

The upward movement is at once accompanied by a drawing together of the bales from their different quarters, until they all appear to be united into one. And so will it be with saints and assemblies who are living in the heavenlies.

By all means let us hate and reject every form of error, but let us be careful to distinguish between the error and erring. In preaching the Gospel we assert the love of God to the sinner and His hatred to sin. With the assemblies let us walk by the same rule; and we can do this without budging an inch from the position which Scripture defines.

Let us candidly confess that the desire for a defensive alliance of assemblies is produced by the consciousness of our weakness, without due knowledge of its cause. There was once a power in the church which repelled, while it attracted, so that "of the rest durst no man join himself to them" (Acts v.); and if the saints nowadays would humble themselves before God, and seek a return of that power, even in the measure in which it was manifested forty years ago, the union of the godly, for which all of us must long, would soon be brought about. R. L. S.

[**Editor's Note.**—We insert three replies to this question, which give the gist of all we have received.

That assemblies, acting in subjection to the Head, carrying out the truth, and that in the Spirit of Christ, will be, as a necessary consequence, in genuine fellowship with each other will not be disputed. To aim at this is the business of every assembly. But, as assemblies, like individuals, differ in their spiritual condition and attainment from carnal to spiritual, from infancy to maturity, from comparative ignorance to being "enriched with all knowledge," the danger in both cases is *drawing lines* which are designed to exclude a certain class of individuals or assemblies, for whose exclusion there is no clear, definite scripture warrant.

We have not the slightest doubt that there are meetings so fundamentally wrong in doctrine, or so absolutely dominated by some influential individual, that they are really nothing more nor less than little sects—as much to be separated from, in order to being subject to the Lord, as any of the larger "denominations."

But all such cases have a history. The development of the evil was gradual, and, as a consequence, the disintegration of the fellowship between them and other assemblies is also gradual. Some individuals, and some assemblies, are much slower than others to perceive the true position, and for such there must be a tarrying. Nothing is simpler, easier, or more carnal than by mutual consent to agree to a mutual recognition of assemblies—drawing a definite line, excluding such as are not considered up to a certain standard, adherence to which will be more rigidly enforced and more implicitly submitted to by the carnal than the spiritual.

Better far, what may be pointed to by others as confusion and disorder, and be really felt to be so by those who endure it, than a hard and fast cordon, inclosing that which will necessarily arrogate to itself, sooner or later, all the powers and rights of the Church of God, in its original glory, ere yet Satan had accomplished its dismemberment.]

BEGOTTEN OF GOD; OR, EVIDENCES OF THE NEW LIFE.

BY J. HIXON IRVING.

THE new birth is a reality and a necessity. A reality, because it is the work of God, and all His works are perfect; and a necessity, for the lips of Eternal Truth have said, "Ye must be born again"; and hence, no new birth means no portion in the kingdom of God now, and no place in the kingdom of heaven in the future.

The evidences of the new birth are internal and external: the evidence of the experience and the evidence of the life. The former is for the comfort and strength of the believer, whilst the latter is for the conviction of the world and the honour of God.

The evidence of the heavenly birth dwelt upon by the apostle John in his first epistle, is the life evidence chiefly; and this he beautifully and impressively brings out in a six-fold way in connection with the phrases, "Begotten of God," and "Begotten of Him" (see R.V.).

Thus in his epistle we find a six-fold proof of the new life, and a manifold illustration of what is meant by "*walking in newness of life.*"

For the sake of clearness, we will specify the proofs, as follow:—

- I. THE BELIEVING LIFE (1 John v. 1).
- II. THE RIGHTEOUS LIFE (1 John ii. 29).
- III. THE LOVING LIFE (1 John iv. 7).
- IV. THE VICTORIOUS LIFE (1 John v. 4).
- V. THE HOLY LIFE (1 John iii. 9; v. 18).
- VI. THE KEPT LIFE (1 John v. 18).

I. The Believing Life.

"*Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is begotten of God: and whosoever loveth Him that begat, loveth Him also that is begotten of Him*" (1 John v. 1).

The work of the new birth is the work of the Triune God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. In its conception and initiation, it is the work of the Father; in its procuration, it is the Son's; and in its execution, it is the Spirit's.

In imparting new life to the dead, the Father and the Spirit work together on the stable ground of atonement made for sin by Christ, without which atonement there could be no

"washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost." It is therefore planned by the Father, procured by the Son, and executed by the Spirit, so that all creature power, merit or works are entirely excluded. "Not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God." Of course, in ascribing the new birth or impartation of new life to God alone, we do not forget that (where the Gospel is preached) apart from faith in God and His Christ there can be no such thing; to hint at such a thing would be in manifest contrariety to the word of the Lord in many places; for example, "He (Christ) came unto His own things, and His own people received Him not; but as many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them that believed on His name." Faith, therefore, goes before the new birth as the new birth follows faith. The act of faith in Christ which (in normal cases) precedes the new birth, afterwards becomes characteristic of the life; it extends itself into a fixed habit, and is a strong proof of being begotten of God.

In the moral world, acts good or bad form habits of a like character, and habits make character; even so, in the spiritual world, the act of faith repeated gives birth to the habit of faith, and thus the believing character is formed and fixed.

Thus we see faith is not alone a single act, but a course of life: not simply an attitude of the soul, but a fixed habit, stamping the life as a believing one. That is the evidence of being "begotten of God" referred to in the verse: "*Whosoever BELIEVETH that Jesus is the Christ is begotten of God.*" When conduct and character are marked by faith there is the most manifest reason for believing in the heavenly origin and destiny of such.

Need we to be convinced of this? Then look at a typical Christian; is he kept from falling into sin? Then what is the keeping power? Faith! Does he live a life of separation—God-fearing separation from the world that lieth in the wicked one? What, then, is the separating power? Faith! Does he work for his Father, God, and work he will, what then is the character of his work? It is a work of faith.

Is he often in conflict with spiritual foes in the heavenlies, what is the nature of his

weapons? The word of faith, the sword of faith, and shield of the same material.

In one sentence, we may say the one begotten of God, born of the Spirit, and brought forth by the Word, stands, walks, runs, and lives by faith, so that his whole life is more or less a "life of faith on the Son of God."

The truth then enunciated by the apostle in that passage is this—"the believing one is begotten of God." The dark converse of this proposition is equally true—"the unbelieving one is *not* begotten of God." Which art thou, dear reader? Look at that scripture once more, and then at thy life, and see how they correspond. If thou dost behold the heavenly lineaments of faith, even though they be much fainter than thy desire, yet give God the praise, for thou art His workmanship—His child. But if thou art unable to see anything in thy life, or find anything in thy experience which would warrant thee saying, "I am begotten of God," then believe that "Jesus is the Christ," and thou shalt become a new creature in Him.

II. The Righteous Life.

"If ye know that He is righteous, ye know that every one also that doeth righteousness is begotten of Him" (1 John ii. 29).

Four times in this epistle do we meet with the qualifying term "righteous," as applied either to the Father or the Son; for example, "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just (righteous) to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (1 John i. 9); then, again, "If any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the Righteous" (1 John ii. 1). Here we get a view of Christ as the Helper, Comforter, and Advocate of the failing child of God. Blessed fact! we have, as believers, One at the right hand of the Father who said, "Because I live, ye shall live also."

In the third instance He is set before the mind more in the way of the model of the righteous life. "He that doeth righteousness is righteous, even as He is righteous" (1 John iii. 7). He is the exemplar of all believers, and all begotten of God will more or less imitate His example, and walk as He walked.

In the passage quoted at the head of this chapter, it is not Christ but the Father that is referred to. John looks at the Father and Son as so essentially one, that, from the use of the pronoun merely, it would not be clear which person he meant. Here "born of Him" shows that he thinks of the Father, or of the Deity in its oneness: not specially of Christ.

The proposition contained in this passage is very simple—"The righteous are begotten of God." Not begotten because they were righteous, but righteous because begotten. Righteousness is not the cause but the effect of regeneration; therefore, in whomsoever we behold a spark of true righteousness, there is life from God dwelling in the soul.

A pure stream must have a pure spring, and good fruit a good root.

Now, where there is derived life from God, the ruling desire will be to put on the new man, "which after God is created in righteousness and holiness of truth," and consequently there will be a righteous life, an undeniable proof of being "begotten of God." But whatever the profession men may make, the attainments they may lay claim to, the position they may enjoy in the religious world, if there be not a corresponding righteousness of life it is a proof they are not "begotten of God," for, "Whosoever doeth not righteousness is not of God, neither he that loveth not his brother" (1 John iii. 10).

Whilst in all that believe there is more or less of failure, through the presence and power of sin, the allurements of a guilty world, and the temptations of a wily foe, Satan, yet the failure is not habitual but occasional, though that is no light thing looked at in the light of God; whilst, on the other hand, their righteousness does not consist of an occasional or isolated act, but is the habit of the life. Just as we have seen, faith becomes a fixed habit, even so righteousness does the same.

The life of the righteous might be summed up as follows:—He desires to please God, to follow the example of Christ who went about doing good, and to walk in the Spirit. He separates himself, in obedient God-pleasing separation, from the fellowship of the unrighteous. He clothes himself for conflict in

the heaven-provided armour of righteousness. He yields the faculties of his mind and the members of his body—which were once used in sin's service—as instruments of righteousness unto God. He sits, in a teachable spirit, at the feet of the Divine Teacher to be instructed in the word of righteousness. He is in measure filled with the precious Spirit-produced fruits of righteousness. His hope is the hope of righteousness, for which he through the Spirit by faith calmly waits; and lastly, he looks forward to obtaining, when this fleeting life is past, “a crown of righteousness which fadeth not away.”

The *root* of the righteous life is not the old nature, but the new; the *power* of it not the strength of the will, but the energy of the Spirit; the *pattern* of it, not man at his best estate, but the Lord our Righteousness; the *guide* of it, not the ever-changing opinions of men, but the eternal, unchanging truth of God; the *object* of it, not the praise of man, but the glory of God; the *hope* of it, to be perfected in the likeness of the glorious Lord; the *end* of it, everlasting blessedness in the presence of God. “Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled.” “Blessed are they that are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.”

(To be continued.)

THE DOCTRINE OF THE RESURRECTION.

THE SUBSTANCE OF AN ADDRESS BY J. R. C. ON THE FIRST EPISTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS.

Chap. xv. 5, &c.

Continued from Vol. XVIII, Page 184.

AS already noticed, the doctrine of the resurrection had been called in question among the Corinthian believers. To establish it against all controversy is the object of this chapter. The way of the apostle, under the guidance of the Spirit, is first to show proof of the great fact of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus. Other arguments follow; but this is the cardinal point to be assured of, and thence he begins by showing upon what abundant evidence the fact of Christ's resurrection rests.

(1) There is the evidence of Peter; (2) of the twelve apostles, that is including Matthias (Acts i. 26); (3) of “above” (or more than) “five hundred brethren at once.” And observe that at the date of the epistle the majority of these were still living, and could have been brought forward as witnesses to the fact of having seen the Lord after that He rose from the dead; (4) He was seen of James—when or where we are not informed, but evidently on some special occasion; (5) again, He was seen by all the apostles; and (6) by Paul himself on the road to Damascus: as of one born out of due time (or prematurely), who thus saw Him in His glory before His glorious manifestation to the rest of His saints.

Thus this grand fact upon which hinges the entire truth of the Gospel is established by such abundant evidence that it cannot rationally be gainsaid.

Infidels may cavil as they will, but must confess that any other fact attested by such evidence would be accepted as undeniable; and it is interesting to see what care the Lord took to establish in the minds of His disciples the fact that His was a literal resurrection. Thus He not only showed Himself to them, but allowed them to examine the marks of the nails in His hands and feet and to feel His body, convincing them that He was no phantom, but the same Jesus whom they had before known and trusted and loved; and, as it were, to dispel every wavering thought, He took from them the piece of broiled fish and honeycomb and ate it in their presence (see Luke xxiv.).

The fact of the resurrection of Christ being thus established, all the other facts and doctrines of the Word of God are established with it. There is no conceivable way of accounting for the incarnation, life, death, resurrection, and ascension of the Son of God, except upon the grounds given in Scripture. This, the most stupendous of all miracles being proved, it is futile to question the facts of other miracles recorded in the Scriptures. The resurrection is the key to the whole position; if that be admitted, it is folly to deny the rest.

And here the apostle breaks off for a little to speak of himself as “the least of all apostles”—elsewhere he calls himself “less

than the least of all saints," and, finally, "the chief of sinners."

We cannot doubt that in each instance he had before his mind the terrible sin of which he had been guilty in persecuting the church of God. Many a man has looked back with horror to the deeds of the days of his unregeneracy, but I doubt if any ever was so humbled and broken about his former life as Paul. He saw that the sufferings he had inflicted upon the saints had been felt by Christ Himself, as he heard His voice, "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou Me?"

This revelation of the oneness of Christ and His people is stamped upon all Paul's life and teaching. So if anyone wounds or stumbles a weak brother he is said to "sin against Christ" (1 Cor. viii. 12). It is this that gives character to every kind of evil that is done to a member of Christ. Yet how little is this understood, and how seldom remembered! If it were really learned, how much more tenderly would every child of God be regarded, dealt with, and spoken of!

Then in **verse 10** we have an instance of what is by no means infrequent in the apostle's writings, *viz.*, his boasting of what grace has done whilst esteeming himself to be nothing.

There was doubtless a special reason for his assuming this tone in writing to the Corinthians, for evidently among them his apostleship had been called in question, and his instructions made light of. Therefore, again and again he refers to the character and fruit of his ministry as evidence that it was Divine, and challenges those who attempted to supplant him to produce any such credentials.

But whether it was he or other apostles, the gospel they preached was essentially one. The death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus was the *grand foundation* of all. It was this and nothing else that had been preached to them and believed by them, and which had transformed their whole life, proving itself to be the power of God unto salvation.

Having thus established the great fact of the resurrection of Christ, the apostle goes on to ask, "**Now if Christ be preached that He hath been raised from the dead, how say some among you that there is no resurrection of the dead? If there be no resurrection of the dead, neither hath Christ been raised: and if Christ hath**

not been raised, then is our preaching vain, and your faith also is vain." He thus shows the enormity of the error, the deadly character of the leaven that had been introduced among them. Perhaps, like some in these days, they thought it a light matter to speculate about such truths as "resurrection and eternal judgment"; but the apostle shows at the very outset that the error is a direct attack upon the very essentials of the faith, a denial of the efficacy of that redemption work which is the foundation of the whole fabric of grace.

Life and incorruption are brought to light through the Gospel (2 Tim. i. 10); but where is the life, and where the incorruption, if Christ be not raised? Of what use is the preaching of a dead Christ, and of what value is the faith that apprehends so worthless a creed? And yet there are those in our day who speak of the Gospel as though it were merely a code of morals taught by one called Jesus, who lived 1800 years ago, a system of doctrines to be accepted with certain reserves,—*purser*, it may be, than the teaching of Buddha or Confucius or Mahomet, but only differing in degree and not in essence from these.

Alas, that such teaching should be acknowledged as Christianity and confounded with the glorious Gospel of Christ.

Further, the apostle argues—"Yea, and we are found false witnesses of God; because we have testified of God that He raised up Christ: whom He raised not up, if so be that the dead rise not."

The resurrection of the Lord Jesus is in Scripture invariably attributed to the power of God the Father. There are passages which seem to teach that He rose by His own power, but a more exact translation harmonises them all.

For example, in this chapter, **verse 12**, "that He rose from the dead," is in the Revised Version more correctly, "that He hath been raised from the dead." So also in **verse 4**. As instances of this see Acts ii. 24, 32; iii. 13, 15; iv. 10; v. 30; x. 40; xiii. 30; Rom. vi. 4; 2 Cor. iv. 14. That he had power to lay down His life and power to take it again cannot be questioned (see John x. 18); but the passages referred to above show how the matter is stated in the Scriptures. And it is most important. For being the act of God—

being in Rom. vi. 4, "by the glory of the Father"—it is God's testimony to His infinite satisfaction with the atoning work of His Son. The universal testimony was—Man slew Him; God raised Him. Man condemned Him; God justified Him. Man despised him; God glorified Him.

So the argument proceeds "**And if Christ be not raised your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins.**" If the Surety has not been liberated it can only be because the claim has not been settled. If Christ hath not been raised, then sin has not been atoned for. The guilt we believed had been cancelled remains upon us still; the penalty must yet be borne; our faith, with all the peace and joy it brought us, was a delusion. We are yet in our sins!

"**Then they which are fallen asleep in Christ are perished.**" They have died with all the load of unforgiven sin upon them, and without the hope of resurrection!

If such were the truth, how dreadful, how miserable our position! Nothing could afford a reasonable ground for such a life of self-denial and suffering as that which Paul and many more had lived, and which is indeed the normal life of the Christian, but the resurrection hope, the eternal glory, the unfading crown: "**If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable.**"

HEATHEN IGNORANCE AND SCRIPTURE TEACHING.

BY A RESIDENT IN JAPAN.

IN the eighth chapter of the Acts of the Apostles, the Holy Spirit has briefly recorded a dialogue, the significance of which may well be pressed by workers in heathen lands upon believers at home. "Understandest thou what thou readeſt? And he ſaid, How can I, except ſome man ſhould guide me?" The Ethiopian who had ſufficient knowledge of God to come to Jeruſalem to worſhip, was perplexed as he read the Scriptures, and to his deſire for ſome man to guide him God reſponded by ſending Philip to him. Inſtead of an Ethiopian, let us take a Japanese who has been reading one

of the gospels for the first time, and to the question, "Understandest thou what thou readeſt?" he replies, "It is very difficult." Let us put ourſelves in his poſition for the moment. He has grown up in ignorance of the fact that there is an active, intelligent Creator of all things. He ſuppoſes that injuries done to his fellow-men will be puniſhed in one of his future ſtages of exiſtence, unleſs counter-balanced by other meritorious actions; but of the doctrine of another bearing for him the puniſhment due to himſelf, he knows nothing. He is entirely ignorant of the fact that to one ſpecial nation a Divine revelation was made concerning a coming Meſſiah, and that in due courſe this Meſſiah was born, and lived, and died, and roſe again, and that He will yet reappear on this earth in glory. Of the reſurrection of the body he has no idea, but he ſuppoſes that men die in order to be born again, probably in the form of one of the lower animals, and that this continuous alternation of life and death goes on unceasingly for an indefinite period. Looked at from the human ſtandpoint, is it not well-nigh impoſſible for ſuch a man to clearly underſtand even the ſimpleſt of the gospels? Who were the Jews and the Phariſees? Who was Pontius Pilate? Is the Gospel narrative history, or fable, or allegory? In what land did theſe events tranſpire, and did they occur long ages ſince, or in recent years? That the Holy Spirit is not expected to teach history and geography and chronology is ſhown by the multitudinous Bible dictionaries, annotated Sunday-school leſſons, and other helps that are ſo largely uſed, even by thoſe who have been familiar with the Scriptures from their early days.

The matter has been forced upon my attention by my having to conſtantly read the Scriptures with young men and youths, the moſt of whom have never before handled a Bible, and who are entirely ignorant of its contents. I have lately come, incidentally, upon two teſtimonies that have a bearing on the ſubject. Mr. George Borrow, author of "The Bible in Spain," ſpeaks of "the inexpediency of printing Teſtaments, and Teſtaments *alone*, for Catholic countries," and ſays, "the Catholic, unuſed to Scripture reading, finds a thouſand things which he cannot poſſibly underſtand in the New Teſtament, the foundation of which is

the Old; . . . though an English labourer may read a Testament and derive from it the most blessed fruit, it does not follow that a Spanish or Italian peasant will enjoy similar success, as he will find many dark things with which the other is well acquainted and competent to understand, being versed in the Bible history from childhood." Mr. James Gilmour, of the London Mission, Peking, in his very interesting account of missionary travels in Mongolia, says, "In selling Bibles in China, for the most part, the reader takes his purchase and disappears, and the colporteur or missionary hopes the best from the transaction; but if, as in Mongolia, the missionary or colporteur had the opportunity of sitting with the purchaser for half an hour or a whole hour, and helping him to read his book, it is just possible that by-and-by the earnest Christian evangelist would hope more for the spiritual enlightenment of the man who bought a 'Peep of Day,' for example, than of the man who bought a Gospel or even a New Testament. . . . It is known and admitted that there are instances of men converted from heathenism to Christianity, men who never met a Christian, and who never handled a Christian book except the Bible; but these men are very rare, and in the general circulation of the Bible it would very much increase the number of those who get to understand the sacred Word if it were accompanied by treatises and explanatory tracts."

If even the Lord's people need God-sent teachers to open up to them the Scriptures, and if believers constantly seek for such teaching in books and magazines and oral addresses, is the need of the heathen, who know not God, less than that of those who may be said to have breathed a Christian atmosphere from infancy? When certain negroes in Jamaica began to read the law of Moses, they thought to please God by retiring into the bush, there to offer to Him sacrifices of cocks and hens; and even in Christian Britain is not the veil still upon many hearts when Moses is read? Is there not a worship that delights in incense, and garments, and instruments of music, and an order of priests—things taken partly from Jewish and partly from heathen ideas?

What, then, should be the attitude of the Church towards the heathen world? Should

it not pray for, and expect, and encourage the going forth to heathen lands of those whom God has separated to Himself for such a work? Furthermore, should not those sent forth be men and women who are apt to teach, and who are ready to declare the whole counsel of God to those to whom He sends them. If people imagine that what dwellers in dark lands require is "the simple Gospel," to use a common phrase, and not "advanced teaching," I venture to think that God has shown Himself to be of a contrary opinion. It was to men yet suffering from the deep taint of heathen impurity that the laws for the ordering of God's churches were delivered. It was to men who had been walking in the lusts of Gentile uncleanness that the believers' position, as buried with Christ in baptism and raised with Him to sit in heavenly places, was made known. It was to men who had "turned from idols" that the mystery of Christ's coming for His people was revealed, and the prophecy of the destruction of antichrist confirmed. In what respect do the men of Japan and China and India differ from those of Corinth and Colosse and Thessalonica? Their sin is equal; their need of a Saviour the same; and surely the teaching necessary to a walk well-pleasing to God in the one case, is a necessity in the other case also.

Ignorance of or indifference to so much of the teaching of God's Word has made professing Christianity a honeycombed mass that will crumble beneath the tread of antichrist. When the war of 1870 began, the French officers had maps of the enemy's country but not of their own, and so, being ignorant of the territory it was their duty to defend, they were beaten back at every point. It is said that when there was a dispute as to whether the Oregon territory should belong to England or to the United States, the British Commissioner appointed to discuss the question at once yielded up the territory on being told that its rivers furnished no fly-fishing, a district that did not furnish this sport not being worth contending for, in his opinion. A more fatal ignorance and a more culpable indifference is too often exhibited by professing Christians, who not only seem helpless before assailants of the Word of God, but who yield up large portions of it at the false representations of

their specious adversaries. I have heard a prominent missionary declare to men who had come to Japan as Gospel labourers—and the declaration was received by them without a word of protest—that “the Old Testament was worthless, save that it contained a thick stratum about Christ,” and that the miracles of Joshua’s staying of the sun’s course, and of Jonah’s being swallowed by the sea-monster, “were not worth two cents.” A short time ago I was told by a professed Christian (a Scotch professor), who still speaks of the Scriptures as the Word of God, that Bible Christians make a fetich of the Bible; that the New Testament writers were in error when they spoke of early events recorded in the Old Testament as if they had been actual historical occurrences; and that the apostle Paul had the ideas of a Mohammedan regarding women.”

By refusing to accept as actual occurrences the incidents recorded in the earlier books of the Old Testament, we of necessity put our Lord, and the eight or nine persons whose writings form the New Testament, in the position of persons who were either miserably deceived as to those supposed past dealings of God on which they based their teachings, or who were themselves the willing instruments of grossly deceiving other people. The Jews clung passionately to the Scriptures, and never do we find Christ joining issue with them on this point. On the contrary, He frequently refers to the facts received equally by Him and by them, to give point to His teachings and weight to His warnings. The blood of Abel was to come upon that generation. The carelessness that prevailed on the day that Noah entered into the ark, and the destruction that followed, were yet to be repeated in the history of the earth. Fire and brimstone were rained upon Sodom in the day that Lot went out of it, and similar judgment should again be witnessed. A serpent had been lifted up in the wilderness, and so should the Son of Man be lifted up. As Jonah had been three days and three nights in the belly of the sea-monster, so should the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth. It is impossible to allegorise such statements. The blood of the Righteous One has been and yet will be on the Jews in a manner fearfully literal. The Son of Man was not lifted up in

some mere mystical sense, but He was raised aloft on an actual beam of wood. His burial in the earth was as real an entombment as any that has ever taken place. The world is as heedless of Divine warnings of coming destruction now, as it was in the days of Noah; but those who believe the Scriptures believe that as “the world that then was, being overflowed with water, perished, so the heavens that now are, and the earth, by the same word, have been stored up for fire, being reserved against the day of judgment and destruction of ungodly men” (2 Peter iii.).

Each of these shadows has been, or will yet be, followed by a very literal substance. But it is the substance which casts the shadow, not *vice versâ*; and it is the shadow which takes its shape from the substance, not *vice versâ*, and Christ takes these shadows as the earnest of coming substance. To argue from a non-existing shadow to an actual substance is not the logic that God, at least, uses. People of Christ’s day accepted the shadow but rejected the substance. People of our day reject the shadow *because it is too true a representation of the substance*—that substance which some still profess to believe in, but which Satan is rapidly preparing them to set aside. There were Ritualists and Rationalists in our Lord’s day. The former professed to have great reverence for the Scriptures, but Christ charged them with making the Word of God of none effect by their tradition. The latter greatly erred, as Christ told them, because they knew neither the Scriptures nor the power of God. The words spoken in this connection have now as much application, unhappily, as they had eighteen centuries ago. Christ rebukes the Sadducees for their refusal to believe in the resurrection from the dead, arguing that they should have gathered this truth from the words used by God when He spoke to Moses from the burning bush. The argument would have been baseless, and the rebuke in this form grossly unfair, unless Christ had Himself believed in the reality of the burning bush, and had Himself believed in the verbal accuracy of the Divine utterances recorded in the book of Exodus. He himself teaches us that if people reject the testimony of the Old Testament Scriptures, then they must continue in a state of hopeless unbelief. In the history

—not “a parable,” as some would like to make it—of the rich man and Lazarus, in Luke xvi., He puts into the mouth of Abraham the solemn statement, “If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded though one rose from the dead.” A practical proof of the truth of this statement is found in the fact that when Lazarus had been raised from the dead, the chief priests, instead of believing in Christ, “consulted that they might put Lazarus also to death” (John xii. 10). “For had ye believed Moses, ye would have believed Me. But if ye believe not his writings, how shall ye believe My words” (John v. 46, 47). In this display of extreme reverence for the earliest of the Old Testament Scriptures, and in this uncompromising assigning of them to Moses as the man through whom they were written, Christ is followed by Paul and Peter and James and Jude, whose epistles confirm, in more or less detail, the histories of, amongst others, Adam, Eve, Cain, Abel, Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Lot, Isaac, Esau, Jacob, and Joseph, just as recorded in the book of Genesis. The apostle Paul, in Galatians iii. 16., even lays stress on the fact of a word in Genesis being in the singular, not in the plural: “He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ.”

As before the rising flood of unbelief the land marks of traditional Christianity are sinking, it is of the first importance that those who in foreign lands teach others, should themselves be whole-hearted believers in the entire Word of God, and should themselves be intelligent students of it, for it is to those only who walk through the length and breadth of the land that God gives it in possession. But is it not also needful that such men should instruct others in the truths committed to their stewardship? God has revealed no lower standard for converts from heathenism than that given by the Holy Spirit in the Acts of the Apostles and the epistles. Men are born again, in whatever land, not merely that they may, as individuals, escape the ultimate doom of hell, but that they may be to God a peculiar treasure, both for time and eternity; they have been delivered out of the power of darkness, that they may be translated into the kingdom of the Son of His love. On those who are well

instructed in the Word rests the privilege and the responsibility of teaching to others the laws of Christ's kingdom, and in the preaching of the apostles Christ was not set forth as a Saviour only; they preached “another *King*, one *Jesus*,” who was also the ordained *Judge* for that appointed day when the world should be judged in righteousness (Acts xvii.). Those whose own lives have been made bright and strong and steady, through God's grace, by such truths as election, and eternal security, and baptism, and church fellowship, and Christ's coming for His people, should never be satisfied with “a gospel” which is shorn of most or perhaps all of these things. Such a shorn Gospel is preached by men, some of whom may have much faith and zeal and piety; but that God owns the preaching of Christ by such men is no excuse for the hiding of the truth by those who have been taught better: “These ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone.”

Let the churches at home think upon the millions held fast in Greek and Romish bonds, and on the hundreds of millions, sitting still in heathen darkness, upon whom the Sun of Righteousness has never shined. The receipt of a “missionary letter,” or even the going forth of a missionary brother, should not be the rare event that it is in so many assemblies; and those who do go forth should feel that they are only the outposts of God's army, that they are still in touch with the hosts behind them, and that they are bound by tender ties to those who have commended them to the work, and to that grace of God which alone can keep them.

W. G. S.

THE LORD'S TABLE AND THE LORD'S DAY.

“Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the *old* paths, where is the *good way*, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls” (Jer. vi. 16).

IT is to be feared considerable confusion, both of thought and practice, exists as to the first day of the week, the Lord's day; the worship and service of God as connected therewith, the Lord's Table and the Lord's Supper; and yet each of these distinct scripture expressions is full of deep meaning. And before I proceed further with this subject I

would remark that the ministry of the Word by teachers given by Christ to His body, the Church, and the exercise of spiritual gifts, prophesying, and prayer, as we read in 1 Cor. xii., xiv., must not be confounded with what pertains to "the first day of the week." It is to be regretted that a popular way of speaking, I may say very thoughtlessly, *e.g.*, "gathering to the Lord," "breaking bread," "liberty of ministry" has entirely obscured this most solemn and holy subject, so much so that presenting ourselves before God as His priestly worshippers is thought of as "*a going to a meeting.*" We are crushed under these traditionary expressions. What, then, is the meaning of the first day of the week? What does God expect from us, His saved people, His priestly worshippers, seeing that in the death of Christ the old order of things came to an end? The law has been fulfilled, both in the way of obedience and penalty, and so magnified and established for ever, and done away. The covenant of circumcision is annulled, Jerusalem no longer is the place where God would put His name to be worshipped and blessed and praised:—what then was to come in place of all that was thus abolished? The laying of a Living Stone as a foundation, and through the gift of the Holy Ghost at Pentecost, and the consequent testimony to Jesus Christ the Lord, the building of living spiritual stones together a dwelling-place for God, with Christ as Son set over it, to all which Moses was a testimony; this took the place of what went before, and herein, as a perpetual memorial of how all this was effected, the table of the Lord was set by His own hand, and the bread and the wine which, in that upper room with the twelve, He presented before God, given that they and we who, generation after generation, through grace and mercy are the called of Jesus Christ into blessing, might enter into that deep communion with Himself which is meant by Christ our Passover. But as I am not writing for uninstructed Christians, this is enough to recall us all to a serious and most severe scriptural consideration of our thoughts and words connected therewith, so that our worship and service (Rom. xii.) should be "reasonable," *i.e.*, what is taught by Scripture. To develop the subject so as to bring out the glorious fact of the ministry of our Lord Jesus Christ

within the veil, would demand more time than I can give; but I conclude with again pressing the distinction between the first day of the week, and those days when the saints assemble for the ministry of the word and the exercise of spiritual gifts. "The manifestation of the spirit is for the common profit." The Lord's Table, the Lord's Supper, is characterised as the manifestation of the household of faith, the household of God. C.

GEMS FROM THE LATE DR. MULOCK.

WE would doubtless lose a blessed discipline to our souls if faith was not tried and strengthened, for during the trial we are the more cast on One who never fails a waiting, patient, submissive heart.

* * * *

The Lord has many ways of teaching us our lessons, and when we fail to learn in communion with Himself, He never fails to teach us by the more painful and humbling way of allowing us to reap the fruit of our own mistakes and follies.

* * * *

Oh, that every breach among the gatherings of God's separated saints was frankly confessed, and freely forgiven, and healed; for who should be united more than those who alone recognise the mystic body of the Lord Jesus, by both act and precept—a blessed truth, which when kept in the Spirit, and not as a mere form acknowledged perhaps but not acted upon, is the very essence of all Divine harmony, mutual sympathy, and Christ-like love among the saints in the church of God.

* * * *

Oh, beloved! when I read of the "evil servant" found smiting his fellow-servant because the Master tarried, and brethren found leading away disciples after them at the coming of the Lord, and when I see that he that soweth discord among brethren is an abomination to the Lord (Prov. vi.), and that he that causeth divisions among us is to be shunned by his brethren (Rom. xvi.), I cannot help feeling how deep is the estimate God puts upon the unity of the Spirit, especially among those who profess to acknowledge and to endeavour to act upon the truth of the One Body; and one cannot but see how entirely by such schisms

in those who meet on that ground (schisms which the Holy Spirit ranks with adultery and murder, too—Gal. v.), one cannot but see, I say, how the purpose of the enemy is fulfilled in causing the way to be evil spoken of, and in lending the infidel and opposer his weapon wherewith to reproach and strike at the testimony of the Lord.

* * * *

Satan would thus put oil on the fire he has already kindled, in the garb, too, of a defender of the faith; but be it ours, for Christ's sake, and His body's sake, and His truth's sake, on earth to keep God's unity in the Spirit and bond of holy peace, and to promote Christ-like love as far as in us lies, without which we are told faith to remove mountains, or knowledge of the deepest mysteries, even the mystery of the body, will profit us nothing, or worse than nothing, in the day of Christ.

PROPHETIC PAPERS. No. 18.

THE BOOK OF THE REVELATION.—*Continued.*
CHAPTER XIX.

BY F. C. BLAND.

THE nineteenth chapter of the book of the Revelation opens with Alleluias in heaven, because of the execution of the judgments of which we have read in the two previous chapters.

We do not get any definite statement as to who those are who sing, and so we do not speak confidently about it; but they must be those who have been the mind of Christ, and who, probably, having been partakers of the sufferings of Christ here below, are associated with Him in the execution of judgment when He comes to reign.

We gather a most important thought from these bursts of praise, and that is, that those in heaven are spectators of what takes place on earth, and are called to have fellowship with God in all His righteous acts.

There are several distinct bursts of praise recorded in the early verses of this chapter. All heaven seems to break bounds, and to be moved as it had never been before. The first is a voice of much people in heaven, saying, Alleluia! because of God's righteous judgment

of the great harlot which did corrupt the earth with her spiritual fornication, and because He had avenged the blood of His servants at her hands; and on hearing this the Alleluias are repeated. "Again they said, Alleluia! And her smoke rose up for ever and ever." Showing, if words have any meaning, that her judgment is not for a limited time, but throughout eternity!

Upon this the twenty-four elders and the four living creatures fall down and worship God that sat on the throne. These four and twenty elders seem to be distinct from the great multitude just spoken of, and are probably presented in priestly character, answering to the twenty-four orders of priests in the twenty-fourth of 1 Chronicles.

Then there comes a call from out of the throne to all His servants, and those that fear Him, small and great, to praise Him; and John hears a voice as of a great multitude, and of many waters, and mighty thunders, saying, "Alleluiah! for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth." After which follows a call to them to rejoice, "for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and His wife hath made herself ready."

In chapter v. we heard songs of praise in heaven over the nation on earth whom God had made a kingdom and priests, and who reign on the earth. And here again we have rejoicing in heaven, because the marriage of the Lamb has come!

I suppose we may take it for granted that the multitudes who rejoice in heaven are not the same people as those rejoiced over; or, in other words, that it is not the bride, the Lamb's wife, who sings about her own marriage. It would appear (as remarked in chapter v.) that here, again, those *in heaven* sing about others *on earth*. And I would suggest (though I know many differ from me), that this may be the fulfilment to Israel of the promises of Isaiah lxii. 4, 5, &c., and Hosea ii. 16, 19, 20, while the heavens declare God's faithfulness and His covenant.

The book of the Revelation is the history of God's taking up the earthly people again, and fulfilling His judgments on his enemies as well as His promises to Israel; and we must look for the fulfilment of the one as literally as of the other. Are all His judgments to be

poured out to the uttermost, and are the choicest of His promises to remain unfulfilled? Is this the way of Jehovah?

Israel had a past relationship with God as His wife (Jeremiah iii. 14). She is at present in a condition of estrangement from Him, which is called divorcement (Isaiah l. 1). And there will assuredly be a future relationship with Him again, for He *will betroth her unto Him for ever in truth*, and in righteousness and faithfulness. And if these shouts of triumph in heaven take place about God's righteous judgments on earth, how surely may we count that the fulfilment of His promises of blessing will call forth songs of praise too. God's ways are equal, and the recognition of His blessings will rightly fill the lips of those who have spoken also of His righteous judgments.

We learn from verse 9 that there are others in this scene who are called to the marriage supper of the Lamb, and who will have a share in these rejoicings: perhaps those alluded to in Ps. xlv., the daughter of Tyre, and other nations who will be called to rejoice in Israel's joy.

We must not pass over the expression occurring here, and in chapters xxi. and xxii., "These are the true sayings of God." We are so accustomed to deal with fiction that the Spirit of God would assure us that all that we have read, and are about to read here, are the true sayings of God.

Now John sees heaven opened again, and there is recalled to our recollection another Old Testament scene. The marvellous dialogue of Isaiah lxiii. between Jehovah Messiah and the repentant remnant of Israel, is presented here in a vision of terrible solemnity.

It is the time of the treading of the wine-press from Jerusalem to Edom, and, in Isaiah lxiii., the Lord is seen returning after the execution of the judgment. The remnant, contemplating Him, ask, "Who is this that cometh from Edom, with dyed garments from Bozrah?" and the Lord answers, "I that speak in righteousness, mighty to save." Again they ask Him, "Wherefore art Thou red in Thine apparel, and Thy garments like him that treadeth in the winefat?" and again the answer, "I have trodden the wine-

press alone; and of the people there was none with Me." And He goes on to say that His own arm brought salvation (2-8); while the remnant, listening and recognising Him as their Saviour, and the One who was afflicted in all their affliction, say they will "make mention of His loving-kindness," &c.

We might follow on this dialogue of wondrous beauty in these chapters of Isaiah, showing how their confession extends on through the next chapter, and how, in the following, Jehovah Messiah answers them, at first roughly, as Joseph did his brethren, but afterwards with good words and comfortable. But in Rev. xix. it is not a time of pleading with His *people*, but of judgment on His *enemies*; and so He is presented with all the emblems of righteous judgment as well as of victory, being followed by the armies in heaven, on white horses, as the executors of judgment—probably those spoken of in Jude, of whom Enoch prophesied. And here again we are in the presence of Old Testament imagery, and the description here of what is called the supper of the great God is almost identical with the wording of Ezekiel xxxix., which invites the fowls of the air to gather themselves to the great sacrifice which God prepares for them on the mountains of Israel.

The chapter ends with the taking of the beast and the false prophet, and their being cast alive into the lake of fire burning with brimstone. A reference to Dan. vii. 11, will tell, without any comment, that this final act of judgment, which was revealed to the prophet of Israel 605 years before the birth of Christ, finds its fulfilment here.

Chapter xx.—The twentieth chapter is the most comprehensive in its scope of any in the whole book of the Revelation. Indeed, while the whole of the previous part, or, at all events, from the fourth chapter to the end of the nineteenth, is all compressed into seven years, the twentieth chapter spreads itself over one thousand years of the Lord's reign on earth, a period commonly known as "the millenium," or a thousand years.

It begins with the vision of Satan being cast into the bottomless pit, and his being bound for the thousand years of Christ's reign on earth. The imagery is intended to indicate to us that he is shut out from all dealings with this world

during that period, and that men are freed from his temptation while he is so confined or restrained.

Then, in verse 4, we are told that those who have part in the first resurrection sit on thrones and reign with Christ for these same thousand years. According to the revised reading they seem to consist of two classes: those who were slain, *and those* (which words should be interpolated) who had not worshiped the beast and his image. The first part of the fifth verse is parenthetical, and we should read after the end of verse 4, "This is the first resurrection," and then the destiny of the lost dead—those who die unsaved, who rest in their graves until the thousand years are finished. From this we learn that there are a thousand years at least between the resurrection of the saved and the resurrection of the lost; or, as John v. 29 says, between the resurrection unto life and the resurrection unto judgment.

We mentioned in a former lecture that there had been already five dispensations, during which God has been dealing with mankind: innocence, conscience, the law, the time when God was manifest in the flesh and present in this world, interpreting God, and declaring His love to man: then this present dispensation, which is one of the Spirit, when He is witnessing to the work of Christ; and now, this is the sixth trial of man, when Christ is again on earth and reigning in power, and when Satan is bound. But man is to be called on to make another choice between Christ and Satan; and so, after these one thousand years are finished, Satan is to be loosed out of his prison, and is to go out to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth—"Gog and Magog," which are merely names for nations generally. And as the kings of the earth, and the rulers, took counsel together against the Lord and against His Anointed, when the Son of God was amongst them in meekness and lowliness, so the human heart proves itself to be the same under a reigning Christ as under a suffering one; and when Satan is loosed out of his prison again, men, after a thousand years of Christ's beneficent reign, take sides with the devil against Him. They are destroyed by fire sent down from God out

of heaven. A destruction which differs from that of chap. xix., which takes place at the close of this dispensation, and before the millenium begins. There, the Lord's enemies are slain by the word of His mouth; here, by fire sent down from God out of heaven.

The tenth verse tells us that the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, where they have been cast in a thousand years before, and that he is tormented day and night for ever and ever.

And then comes the great sessional judgment, when the dead, small and great (not the living, who have been reigning with Christ for a thousand years, but the dead), stand before God. The expression, small and great, does not, I need scarcely say, refer to men's stature, but to their positions in this world: whether pretentious or unpretentious, whether great in power or accounted as nothing, whether rich or poor, learned or unlearned; whether prominent or unknown to fame; all whose names are not written in the Book of Life.

The earth and the heaven fled away from the face of Him who sat on the throne, an expression which, whatever it may mean, is intended to indicate to us the awfulness of that Presence. The earth has been defiled by sin, and the heavens are not clean in His sight; and they must be created anew. "The books were opened; . . . and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books."

What are these books? It has been suggested, and I think it worthy of consideration, that these books represent the five different dispensations which have just been referred to, and to which must be now added this last, or the sixth, in which God has been testing man. In Eden, God gave Adam the test of obedience to one command. In the next dispensation, that of conscience, men were judged by their thoughts accusing or excusing them. God's testimony to man at that time being the great book of nature, in which the invisible things of God, even His eternal power and Godhead, were clearly seen in the things which He had made; so that man, reading God in the great book of creation, was left without excuse if he served other gods.

Then came the book of the law, of which it is said, "as many as have sinned in the law shall be judged by the law."

Next comes the Son of God into the scene, telling men that the word which He spoke should judge them in the last day. And, finally, in this dispensation, we have the Scriptures, "God-breathed," out of which men will be judged. And is it too much to say, that we, who live in this day of light and truth, are the most responsible of all, and that if, amongst the books that shall be opened, men's Bibles should appear in that day, with verses about salvation marked and interlined by the hands of those whose hearts are not right with God, what a fearful record will be the multitudes of sins that men have committed, secret and open, unknown and known, which remain unblotted out of the books.

But, "another book was opened, which is the Book of Life." In this there are no "things" written, there are only "names"; and it seems to be produced on that awful day to justify a righteous God in not bringing up for judgment those whose names are in it. Then only, will we know the great value of redemption; then we will understand the Lord's words—rejoice not in this, that the demons are subject to you, but that your names are in the Book of Life.

The sea gave up the dead which were in it, and death and the grave delivered up the dead which were in them. These are God's custodians. A thousand years before they delivered up the saved, and now they deliver up the lost, or the dead. Death means the place where the souls of the lost are; and Hades, or the grave, where the bodies of the lost dead are. And they were judged, every man, according to their works. It is a solemn fact that we shall all give an account of our works; but whether in life, as servants, or in death, as condemned already, the books will show.

This will not be the time when men are declared innocent or guilty; that has been settled a thousand years before. It is the time when the sentence is pronounced. Just as we sometimes see at an assize; the prisoners who have been found guilty under trial, are brought up at the end to receive

judgment. And death and the grave (the contents of both), *i.e.*, body and soul, were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. As one has said, "lest there should be any mistake, there is written over its dark portal, 'This is the second death.'"

It has been sought to prove, that because the first death was the end of the life of the body, the second death must be the end of life to the soul; but we cannot draw any such conclusion. We cannot judge of what the second covenant was by the first, for one was conditional and the other *absolutely unconditional*. We cannot learn what the second man is by the first, for the first Adam was made a living soul, but the last Adam was a quickening spirit. And so we cannot judge of what the second death is by the first.

The sentence of the first death was, "Living, thou shalt die"; that of the second death is, "Dying, thou shalt live."

Thus ends what is called in 2 Peter iii., "the day of the Lord," which is with Him as a thousand years. And just as the natural day begins by the sun rising and chasing the darkness out of the world, ruling the day for its appointed time, so will the Sun of Righteousness arise, purging out of His kingdom all things that offend and them that do iniquity; ruling until He has put all His enemies under His feet, including that last enemy, even death itself; after which He delivers up the kingdom to God, even the Father, that God may be all in all.

CANNOT PREACH CHRIST.

THE unconverted preacher may be able to give an eloquent address and to make his hearers believe that he is a wonderfully clever man. He may go further than this and become popular as an ear-tickler with his new-fangled notions and finely polished swelling words. He may also be able to discourse in a learned way about the Bible, God, and Christ; but, though he may be possessed of all the learning the colleges can impart, there is one thing he cannot do—he *cannot preach Christ*. He may have something to say *about* Christ, but preach Christ he cannot. The reason is not far to seek. Except Christ be dwelling in the heart by faith the attempt to preach Him is vain.—T. W.

THE BLESSING OF EPHRAIM AND MANASSEH.

BIBLICAL SOLUTIONS BY A. P. MACDONALD, No. 8.

Heb. xi. 21. "By faith Jacob, when he was a-dying, blessed both the sons of Joseph; and worshipped, [leaning] upon the top of his staff."

Gen. xlvii. 31. "And Israel bowed himself upon the bed's head."

THE Lord's ways are higher than our ways, and His thoughts than our thoughts! The Holy Spirit makes mention, in the eleventh chapter of Hebrews, of those moments in the lives of the patriarchs which He esteems to be the culminating points of their faith. It is probable that we, left to ourselves, should not have chosen the same moments when reading their biographies in Genesis.

Out of the whole life of Isaac, for the greater part so peaceable and submissive, God selects the instant when he recovers from a sad falling away. Out of Jacob's whole life, so full of cunning and calculation, He invites our attention to the time when the patriarch, finding himself at the end of his strength, must speak for God in contradiction to what was understood to be natural law by the men of his generation, and by his own son to begin with.

It may well be that Jacob had considered attentively his father's obstinacy and its results. At any rate, when his own turn came to be tempted in a similar way, he resisted. "By faith Jacob, when he was a-dying, blessed each of the sons of Joseph; and worshipped upon the top of his staff."

The last clause of Heb. xi. 21 is found, word for word, in the LXX. translation of Gen. xlvii. 31, after Israel's request concerning his burial. The Hebrew text signifies that "he bowed himself upon the bed's head," or that "he worshipped [turning himself] towards the bed's head." The Greek translators, differing only in a vowel point, render the word "staff." That is to say, the consonants in the Hebrew words "staff" and "bed" are the same, but the English translators have endorsed the one reading while the xxl. have adopted the other. The meaning, however, remains unaltered either way; as the spear of

the warrior-chief (see 1 Sam. xxvi, 7-11) and the staff of the shepherd-chief were set at his head while he slept. Either version tells us how Israel turned himself in a posture of devotion.

Up to this point I assume that the words found in the Septuagint MSS. that have reached us are the very words of the translators who laboured at this version nearly 300 years before Christ. If this be so, and whether this be so or not, the foregoing is a sufficient solution of the different readings. If this be so, the LXX. having stated exactly the same fact, although in another form of words, there was no necessity for departing from the received version in the New Testament quotation.

Nevertheless I must acknowledge a suspicion that the (sometimes quite unnecessary) agreement of the LXX. (as we have it) with the N.T. may proceed from the too retentive memories of Christian copyists during the first three centuries of this dispensation.

Was it at this moment, while so bowed in adoration, that Jacob received the oracle in accordance with which he must bless the two sons of Joseph? One fears to speculate where Scripture is silent, but the repetition of these words in Heb. xi. 21, where they are connected, not with the events of Gen. xlvii. but with those of ch. xviii., seems to attach a deeper signification to them than one would be inclined to accord at first sight. Jacob, bowed before the Lord, listened to the communication of His will, and then, in due time, raising himself up in presence of Joseph and his sons (Gen. xlviii. 2) he proceeded to bless these sons according to the commission God had given him, and notwithstanding their father's displeasure.

Before leaving the subject let us note that the Holy Scriptures make mention of the staff of Jacob on two distinct occasions, recalling each time a scene in his life as a servant of God on which the eye dwells with pleasure, which is not the case with every scene in that same agitated life.

1. In his prayer on his return to Mahanaim Jacob himself says: "I am not worthy of the least of all the mercies, and of all the truth, which Thou hast shewed unto Thy servant; for *with my staff* I passed over this Jordan; and now I am become two bands" (Gen. xxxii. 10). He recalls the evil day when he fled

from home to escape the vengeance of his brother Esau. At night he found himself alone, with his ruined prospects behind him, and the land of exile before. His only possession was his traveller's staff, and his only hope was God, who in His abundant grace, gave him the vision of the ladder, and confirmed to the houseless fugitive the promise made beforetime to Abraham and Isaac, and of which he personally was so little worthy.

2. Now again (Gen. xlvii. 31), at the close of the "few and evil days" of his life, he has been brought to recognize the worthlessness of human cunning and worldly wisdom in which, too often, his confidence had been put. Again he has nothing left but his staff which is now necessary to him because of age and infirmity. "The God of Jacob" is again his only resource, and in the fulness of the faith he passes judgment on all the glory of Egypt by blessing—he the old man, with his dying lips—the sons of the minister who was first after Pharaoh, and dividing the promised land between his successors as if there he had been already enthroned as king.

APT TO TEACH.

2 Timothy ii. 24.

WHEN we consider the vast importance of Sunday-school teaching, we are at once led to consider how we may be fitted, as instruments in God's hands, that we may be enabled to labour in this portion of the Lord's vineyard. What, then, is the first thing necessary in a Sunday-school teacher? (1) His own conversion; this should be the starting point. Salvation and pardon regarding my own self. (2) That he should have, by the Spirit's teaching, a devout knowledge of the Bible. (3) To be apt in teaching, scripture should be compared with scripture, in order that the Word of God may be discreetly handled. (4) Pray for wisdom; pray for patience and courage in the work. (5) "Apt to teach": that power may be given us by the Master in drawing the earnest attention of the scholars when we are giving the lessons. (6) "Apt to teach": that the Cross may always be the central attraction in all our lessons. It is a poor lesson that has

not Christ in it. (7) That we may pray for our scholars' conversion. This is the great duty incumbent on all Sunday-school teachers.

Let me advise that in lessons given in the class, or addresses behind the desk, there be earnestness, freshness, and illustration. A Sunday-school teacher, having the grace of God in his heart and a zeal for the work, need not be a dull teacher, especially now when so much is provided for his help; he should be a workman that needeth not be ashamed. Therefore, let us remember the short text we have taken for our consideration, "Apt to teach." We need much power given us in order to make us successful in the work—in order that we may feel a pleasure and joy in the work—in order that our hands may be sustained—in order that we may always feel it a pleasure to be in our place in the school. The reward will come by-and-by to those who faithfully labour to the end. They will receive an imperishable crown, eternal in the heavens. What a glorious time will this be when we stand in the presence of the Lord, and our scholars with us, to hear His "Well done." This is indeed a work which far surpasses in its results all that this world can give.

T. H.

cust. of Sir Walter Raleigh
SIR WALTER RALEIGH one day asking a favour from Queen Elizabeth, her Majesty said to him, "Raleigh, when will you leave off begging?" to which he answered, "When your Majesty leaves off giving." Ask great things of God: expect great things of God: let His past goodness make us instant in prayer.

Questions and Answers.

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

Has an assembly of God's saints any authority from the Word to appoint elders or Gospel preachers?

Having received only one reply to this question, we repeat it; and would say to our friends who have hitherto so kindly helped in replying, "Be not weary in well doing."

Proverbs i. 26—"I also will laugh at your calamity; I will mock when your fear cometh." How is this to be understood, and to whom does it apply?

2 Cor. v. 1-8. Is Paul here referring to the present state of the departed believer?

What is the spiritual significance of that thrice-repeated injunction of the law—"Thou shalt not see the milk of a kid in its mother's milk" (Ex. xxxiii. 19, xxxiv. 26; Deut. xiv. 21)?

Is it wrong for believers gathered out to "the Name" to attend meetings held by other Christians, as, for example, an evangelist connected with a society whom the Lord is using in the conversion of sinners? Can we not encourage the work in so far as it is good? Paul was "made all things to all men" that he might win some.

WITHOUT GOD AND WITHOUT HOPE.

QUESTION 325.—Can it be correctly said that all unsaved persons are without God and without hope in the world?

Ans. A.—It means to say that those who are living without a personal and experimental knowledge that God has saved them through the atonement of His Son, though they may be in a land where the Gospel is preached, yet can have no hope and are living as though they were born in a land that had never heard about Christ and His salvation. Hence, God is not in their thoughts; they are not following Him if they are not His sheep. In their present condition they are without hope. The Christian knows experimentally the power of God; he is sustained by a glorious hope, not only for this life, but that which is to come.

T. H.

Ans. B.—Ephesians ii. 12, points out the universal condition of the unregenerate. Where men are "without Christ" as their Saviour, they are, consequently, "without God," and have no true hope whatsoever. But this does not teach that God is regardless of them, nor that He does not, by His Spirit, work with them, or operate on them. The general fact is clearly stated as to man's universal condition, and to this both history and past and present experience agree.

A. O. M.

[**Editor's Note.**—When scripture plainly states that men are "without God and without hope," it must be "correct." The question is, in what sense are they so?

In Him they "live, and move, and have their being." He is "not far from any one of them." His Spirit strives with them. He is "the Saviour (or preserver) of all men."

All this God is to them, but they in their experience are "without God," they know Him not, therefore they live and die as beasts without any appeal to Him either in their joys or sorrows.

They are "without hope," in the sense of having nothing whatever to look forward to with blessed anticipation either in this life or the future; for Christ is the only Hope, and Him they know not.]

EATING THE SIN-OFFERING.

QUESTION 326.—Lev. x. 16—The sin-offering, when the blood was not brought within the holy place, was eaten by the priests. What does this teach us? Would Gal. vi. 1, 2, or James v. 19, 20, correspond thereto?

Ans.—The sin-offering of Lev. xvi., whereof the blood was brought into the holiest, was representative of Christ's offering of Himself *Godward*. Ordinary offerings for sin, whereof the blood was not brought into the holiest, were, in part, partaken of (Lev. iv., and vi. 24-30) by the priests who offered them, showing their participation with the offerers—as needing ever the same cleansing—through virtue of the same sacrifice. Heb. xiii. 9-12, teaches us that the benefit of the sin-offering, once offered, is *by grace*. The eating of this was never allowed, seeing it showed forth Christ's one sacrifice as made unto God. But God would ever have His people, when dealing with one another's sins in intercession, remember that, as Gal. vi. 1, 2, teaches, they all equally need (and should, with exercised souls, enter into), the same sacrifice—the same continual cleansing.

A. O. M.

[**Editor's Note.**—There is a sense in which he who intercedes on behalf of others (and nothing is more truly in harmony with the priestly character of the believer) makes the sin of the one for whom he prays his own; and the more clear he is personally as to the guilt, the more fully does he identify himself with the sinning one. See Ezra ix., x. 1; Dan. ix. This attitude, which grace alone can assume, casts the intercessor, as well as those for whom he makes intercession, upon the sin-offering, and thereby he feeds upon it in his priestly character, and it is as precious to him as if he were availing himself of it for sin committed by himself.]

"GREATER WORKS" THAN CHRIST WORKED.

QUESTION 327.—What are the "greater works" referred to in John xiv. 12? and does this promise refer only to disciples in apostolic days or to believers in general?

Ans.—The Lord Jesus held His great power in subjection to His Father's will—in abeyance therefore—until the baptism of death was accomplished, and He was no longer straitened (Luke xii. 50). Then came the promise of the Father—the outpouring of the Holy Ghost, and the consequent enduing of the disciples with such "powers from on high," that, as Acts ii. and iv. testify, the results were "greater" than from all the life-ministry of the blessed Lord. Yet it was He, not they, who wrought. He, the risen and exalted One, who, *by* them, as they always said, did these great things. And these "greater things" go on, and will go on until He come again, for He will, by His Spirit, be ever *in* and *with* His people.

A. O. M.

THE BACKSLIDING PATH.

A NEEDED WORD.

IT is only as we are consciously standing in the grace of God that we are peaceful, or enabled to overcome in the hour of temptation. Very many things present themselves to take the eye and heart away from Jesus. (Even the necessary occupations of life, the blessings that God bestows, the suggestions of our fellow-disciples, or zeal in the service of God, may be used by our great adversary to draw away our affections from Christ. We need to be *watchful*, as well as *prayerful*, lest we *enter into* temptation. Our foes are many, subtle, and powerful, and often emanate from sources we little expect. Conflict we sometimes feel to be very sharp and close. We may be truly said to *wrestle* against principalities and powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world. But Christ is *in* us as well as *for* us; and by *His* strength we can overcome all that oppose our heavenward course. "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me" (Phil. iv. 13). This is the vantage ground on which the believer is set, and he is exhorted to be "strong in the Lord, and in the power of His might"; "to be strong in the grace which is in Christ Jesus."

The course that our enemies pursue is very varied. The artful spell of flattery is as much to be dreaded as the lion's roar. Self-love, fond desires, fear of man, pride, and creature confidence, are like so many strings stretched by the unbelieving workings of nature, ready for the touch of the adversary, unless the new man, in the energy of faith, foil the wily foe. We feel this, and learn experimentally that we are kept by the power of God through faith; and thus are often constrained to look up to our God and cry, "Hold up my goings in Thy paths, that my footsteps slip not." "Keep me as the apple of the eye; hide me under the shadow of Thy wings."

Backsliding is the natural tendency of our deceitful hearts. The moment we walk by sight and sense, we cease to walk by faith; and, therefore, turn away from God. It is one of the most important points that a Christian is called to watch against. "Take heed," says the apostle, "lest there be in any of you an evil

heart of *unbelief*, in departing from the living God" (Heb. iii. 12). Unbelief is the root of every abomination. As the strength of our inner man is of God, and our many upholdings, deliverances, and restorations are to be ascribed to the riches of His grace, so all our follies and falls are traceable to unbelief—to forsaking Him who is our only strength, and turning to some rotten staff of carnal confidence, or to some broken cisterns of our own hewing out.

It has been said by some, that a Christian is either growing in the Divine life, or declining; and it is certainly true. Faith or unbelief, Christ or self, one or the other, each moment has the ascendancy. In each conflict, we either prevail or are overcome. In each temptation, we either stand or fall. Every moment's occupation is either sowing to the flesh or spirit. We walk either with Christ or with His enemies. We often try to convince ourselves that we are not walking in the flesh, and with the world, when we really are—that we are not backsliders, when we are not in communion with God. If we are living and walking by faith, we shall be abiding in the grace of God, for faith always looks to Christ; we shall be feeling our weakness, learning more and more our deep necessity of Christ, and realising increasingly that all His fulness is ours. Such do not lean on their store of knowledge, their past experience, their gifts, their graces, their brethren, nor even on their prayers, but on Christ. They do not carry their own burdens, nor oppress themselves with their own cares, but cast them upon the Lord. They have an assurance in their own souls that there is no real blessing in anything apart from Christ, and that, severed from Him, they can do nothing. They know Christ to be a sure Rock to build upon, a safe Hiding-place, a never-failing Refuge, an exhaustless Spring of Joy, a River of Peace, a Fulness of Strength; their Life, Wisdom, Righteousness, Sanctification, and Redemption; their Bridegroom, Husband, Friend; their Altar, their all-sufficient Sacrifice, their all-prevailing High Priest; the Renewer of their strength, the Restorer of their souls, the Keeper of their feet; their Head, their Lord, their ALL. The Person, work, and offices of Christ are, by the Spirit of God, the ever-fresh and all-refreshing subjects of their meditation. They know God's unspeakable

Gift to be a precious stone in the eyes of him that hath it, and so inestimably valuable is Christ to their souls, that they deny self, take up their cross, and follow Him. Conscious, however, that they have already attained but little of the knowledge of Christ, and learning more and more the deceitfulness of their own hearts, they still cry, "Draw us, we will run after Thee!" knowing there is no safety but in keeping close to Jesus, no joy but in the apprehension of God's love. Their souls long to be able to comprehend more of the inexhaustible fulness in Christ *for* them, they long exceedingly to realise more of the powerful workings of Christ *in* them, and desire also more sensibly to enjoy the presence of Christ *with* them. Knowing that they are no longer *far off*, but *made nigh* to God by the blood of His Son, that the banner of Divine unchanging love waves over them, they taste and enjoy something of the Father's fellowship with His returned prodigal, in eating and drinking the flesh and blood of the slain Lamb; and while the wondrous burst of love from the Father's heart is, "Let *us* eat and be merry," each grateful response is, "He brought me to the banqueting-house, and His banner over me was love" (Song of Solomon ii. 4). They have a ceaseless song of joy in the knowledge of what they have been redeemed *from*, what they have been redeemed *unto*, and what they have been redeemed *by*. This is standing in grace. This is laying hold on eternal life. This is the profession of faith we are called to bear witness to.

Further. Those who live by faith go forward, feeling that the blood of Christ has made a line of demarcation between them and the world, and that they are not *of* it, but delivered *from* it. Christ is their Comfort, their Example, and their Strength. Knowing they are saved, they choose the narrow road, the good path, the peaceful, profitable, and pleasant ways of wisdom. They grow in grace. They diligently "add to their faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; and to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; and to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity." In this path faith prospers, Christ becomes more precious, assurance strengthens, pilgrims "never fall," God is glorified, and believers

fight the good fight, and finish their course with triumph (see 2 Peter i).

Such seem to me to be a few essential points of the life and walk of faith, the fruit of abiding in Christ, of keeping near the fountain of living water. Backsliding is the departure of the heart from the living God, and there may be much progress in the evil way, before it is manifest to any, except to Him who searcheth the heart. "The *path* of the *just* shineth more and more unto the perfect day." But there is *another path*, and it looks enticing to the natural eye, but the eye of faith perceives that an unseen hand has inscribed at its entrance, "The way of transgressors is hard"—"Enter not." Many are seen crowding into it, boasting of its antiquity, ease, pleasures, and refinements. Self-will, disobedience, and carnal wisdom abound. Religiosity, and many things highly esteemed among men—"The lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of the life"—are also found in great variety; but there is no companionship with Christ. Human greatness, tradition, philosophy, and vain deceit, are upheld, to the rejection of the Spirit of God, the Christ of God, and the Scriptures of God. The honour of Christ, the finished work of Christ, the unchanging love of Christ, the speedy return of Christ, are matters little accounted of in this road; and every reason that can be invented, is pleaded for not praying in secret, not reading the Scriptures, not loving the brethren. This path, however, though pleasant and attractive to the senses at first, sooner or later exhibits its real character. Those who pursue it find that murmuring, fretfulness, darkness, barrenness, and disappointment are here, without any solid ground to rest upon, or any true solace to compose the fainting or troubled spirit. The further it is followed, the more effectually the Lamb of God is hidden from the soul; and that scripture is fulfilled, "The backslider in heart is filled with his own ways." The ashes of self is all he has to feed on; and restlessness and vexation of spirit mark his experience, till, by sovereign grace, he is quickened, and brought with confession of his sin into the presence of God and the Lamb. Then he tastes the grace of God afresh, lays hold of His promises; and, realising the all-cleansing

power of the blood of Jesus, he confesses that "salvation is of the Lord." All who have had much experience in Divine things are well acquainted with the reality of these two ways—the way of faith, and backsliding.

(To be followed in our next by "Bible Backsliders.")

PROPHETIC PAPERS. No. 20.

BY F. C. BLAND.

THE BOOK OF THE REVELATION.—*Continued.*

CHAPTER XXI.

WE closed our last lecture with a brief sketch of the reign of our Lord Jesus Christ on earth, called, in prophetic language, "the millennium," a time which is described in the prophecies of the Old Testament as being fraught with peace and prosperity; when the leopard shall lie down with the kid, and the lion shall eat straw like the ox; when the whole world is described as sitting still and at rest; when the inhabitants break forth into singing, and all the trees of the field shall clap their hands; when the work of righteousness shall be peace, and the effect of righteousness, quietness and assurance for ever; and when the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea.

We might multiply by hundreds the scriptures which describe those thousand years of peace and rest, when the creation itself shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the liberty of the glory of the children of God.

We have now reached the epoch in prophecy when the assurance given to Messiah, in the one hundred and second Psalm, is about to be fulfilled; when he who of old laid the foundations of the earth and created the heavens will fold them up as a garment, and change them as a vesture is changed; and when the prophecy of Isa. lxxv. 17 will be fulfilled in the creation of new heavens and a new earth.

I may quote the words of another, who, in writing on the new creation, says:

* "A thousand years must pass away before He that sitteth on the throne shall say, 'Behold, I make all things new.' A thousand glorious years, lighted up with the splendour of the

Sun of Righteousness; and then a storm, more dark and terrible than ever swept the earth before, clears the atmosphere for ever (Rev. ii. 8-19).

"Then shall the new heavens and the new earth be worthy of Him and them who are to dwell therein (Rev. xxi. 1-8).

"But the glory and peace of that everlasting day will not be more certain proof of security than is the groan and the conflict now in the heart of every sinner who, through simple faith in the Son of God, has been born into the new creation."

In speaking on these last two chapters of this wondrous book, all of which, I believe, refer to the eternal state, our words must be few. We have only some thirty-two verses descriptive of it, and even these are, for the most part, in symbolic language; and as we have not here any explanations as to what these symbols mean, as we had in the book of Daniel for the symbols introduced there, we must wait for further light on them.

An inventive mind might give detailed expositions of what is meant by the pure gold of the streets of the city, "like unto transparent glass," or what was symbolised by each precious stone in the foundations, or its gates; while another, with equal authority, might give a totally different exposition of the same things; but the Spirit of God has given us none, and so we leave it, content to wait until the time comes when we shall know it all.

We must have something for faith to wait for, and I doubt not that in this respect patience will have its perfect work, and true faith knows when to stop in its inquiry as well as when to go forward.

We must not omit to notice the mention of the name "Jerusalem," in verse 2, and again, as we did in considering chap. xix., we must travel back to the Old Testament with our lamp in our hand, and read in Is. lxxv. 17 and 18 the passage where mention is made of Jerusalem in connection with the promise of the new heavens and new earth, where it is added, "But be ye glad and rejoice in that which I create: for, behold, I create Jerusalem a rejoicing, and her people a joy."

Observe that the promise is not here as in other scriptures about her *restoration*, but her *re-creation*. And when the creation of the

* "The Real Presence and Royal Priesthood."
Shaw & Co. (Out of print.)

new heavens and new earth is spoken of in one verse, and the creation of Jerusalem is spoken of in the next, it would appear that they referred to the same operation; and the expression, "*rejoice for ever* in the things which I create," refers certainly to eternity, and not to the millennium, the period of a thousand years.

We may therefore assume that there will be a new Jerusalem created, to be the metropolitan city of the new earth, as the *restored* Jerusalem will be in the millennium, and this is confirmed by the expression in Is. lxvi. 22, "As the new heavens shall remain before Me, so shall thy name and thy seed."

We read, further, "that the nations of them that are saved shall walk in the light of it." And this tells us very plainly that there will be nations there whose nationality will still be preserved in distinction from that of Israel.

That there will be nations in the millennial earth which will be saved, and who will go up to Jerusalem to worship, is plain from Zech. xiv. and other scriptures, and that some of these same nations will be preserved and live in the new earth, is also plain from verse 24 of this chapter. But whence come they?

Peter tells us in his second epistle that the old world, being overflowed with water, perished, but that the elect were preserved in the ark, and descended in it into a restored earth. And when the heavens and the earth which now are shall be consumed by fire, the saved of the millennium will assuredly be preserved likewise, and may in like manner come down in the new Jerusalem into the re-created earth, where God will tabernacle with them for ever.

They cannot be on the earth while it is being burned up, and preserved they certainly will be; and so the saved of the millennial earth may pass into their new earth, while the heavenly people will pass into and inhabit the new heavens, for there will be terrestrial glories as well as celestial. The glory of the celestial being one, and the glory of the terrestrial being another.

But we must not fail to notice the name "Jerusalem," mentioned again in verse 2, where she is described as "a bride adorned for her husband," and again in verses 8, 9, and 10, where the new Jerusalem is called "the bride, the Lamb's wife." What is this? Is it the church of this dispensation? or is it the

nation of Israel passed into the new earth? or may it not rather be all the redeemed of every dispensation, who ranging themselves under the name of "Jerusalem, which is above" and which is "our mother," embraces all as her children, and is here called "the bride, the Lamb's wife."

It does not seem likely that what is spoken of here in this relationship is limited to any one dispensation; Abraham looked for a city which had foundations, whose builder and maker is God. Here such a city is described, and Abraham's title to a place in it appears to be indefeasible.

That he did not belong to "*the body,*" *the church of this dispensation* (the very existence of which depended on the breaking down of the middle wall of partition), seems plain; but no dispensational barriers can keep him out of his own city, which he and the worthies of old looked for.

I would therefore submit, that as the servants of the past dispensation are no longer servants, but sons, all who believe, in *every dispensation*, will share the place of sonship, and inherit all things, and be citizens of that city whose builder and maker is God, which is called in verse 9, the bride, the Lamb's wife.

The bride of chap. xix., where the marriage of the Lamb in the millennial earth is celebrated by hosts in heaven, appears to me, as remarked in last lecture, to be the bride of Hosea ii., while this in the new earth would include all the redeemed.

It will be questioned by none that the bridal relationship of Eve to Adam is a type of the bridal relationship spoken of here, and it has always been a difficulty with me to limit a type which is presented to us in the head of the whole human family, as well as in the mother of all living, to the saints of any one dispensation. But we know nothing yet as we ought to know, and in speaking on truths which are rather speculative than matters of doctrine, we must speak humbly concerning them.

The tabernacle of God will be with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His peoples (not people); again indicating that they will be of different nations. There will be no more sorrow, nor crying, and the tears will be wiped from every eye.

He that sits on the throne says, "Behold, I make all things new," and, after assuring us again of the truth and faithfulness of His words, He says, "It is done."

When the first heavens and earth were finished, it is announced in the majestic words, "Thus the heavens and the earth were finished and all the hosts of them"; and here we have the expression, "It is done." But between the "It is finished" of the second chapter in the Bible and the "It is done" of the second last chapter, there comes in another and a more wonderful "It is finished" in the nineteenth of John's gospel; words on which our title to the new heavens and new earth depend; when the Layer of the foundations of the earth poured out His soul unto death.

The Cross, in all its solitary grandeur, stood in the purpose of God before the foundation of the world, and its results will remain through the eternal ages.

And He said, "It is done. I am the Alpha and Omega." Why is it that the Lord here describes Himself by the first and last letters of the Greek alphabet? Can it have reference to His being "the Word"? Every syllable that has ever been formed, every sentence that has been uttered, and every book that has been written, have been composed of the letters which come between Alpha and Omega; and so, all that God has to declare to us is embodied in Him who is "the Word."

I do not mean this as an exposition of this wondrous name, upon which our souls feed. To pretend to expound it would be to take from its majesty. It is one of the mysteries of God; and it is only a carnal mind which would seek to reduce matters of mystery to mere matters of fact. So we leave it, with many other mysteries, until the time come when we will no longer see through a glass darkly, but face to face.

The description of the city is, of course, symbolic; to materialise it would necessitate the materialising of the temple which is therein, which we are told are the Lord God and the Lamb.

As one has said, the place of worship here is not the ordered place as of old in Israel's day of ritual; nor is Jehovah a little sanctuary, as He is in the present time to His wandering ones

who follow Christ in His rejection. But the Lord God and the Lamb are the temple of it, which at least indicates that there will be no more typical ordinances, as in the past, to be a shadow of Divine realities; nor will there be commemorative rites to remind us of an absent Lord. God will be all and all to His people, and the Lord Jesus will ever be known and worshipped as the Lamb, they shall see His face, and His Name shall be in their foreheads, and they shall go no more out for ever.

The new Jerusalem will be the centre of the earth's glory. Nothing that defiles shall enter into it; so there will be nothing to remind the inhabitants of sin, and nothing to offend.

Every agency previously employed by God, angelic, prophetic, and apostolic, are represented in either its foundations or its gates, which, I think, gives it a comprehensiveness beyond the narrow limits of any dispensation, and represents God's final purpose fulfilled in all His redeemed. None enter into it except those written in the Lamb's Book of Life.

(Chapter xvii., concluding these papers, will appear in our next.)

THE WAYS OF GOD;

Or, The Great Master-worker, His instruments, and His workmanship.

"Stormy wind fulfilling his word."—Ps. cxlviii. 8.

(Continued from page 82.)

THAT God effectuates His purpose by means of moral and intelligent, and therefore responsible agents, who have nevertheless not the least conception of what they are thus doing, or the purpose they are subserving, is almost an overwhelming thought; yet it must be received as an axiom by those who bow to the authority of Scripture. The Lord sends the proud "Assyrian against an hypocritical nation; against the people of His wrath He gives him a charge. Howbeit he meaneth not so, neither doth his heart think so. It is in his heart to destroy and cut off nations not a few" (Isa. x. 5-7). Cæsar Augustus issues his decree for taking the census of the empire, for wise political reasons; little did he mean, neither did his heart think, *thus* to bring about the accomplishment of a remarkable prophecy

concerning Him who is Lord of lords, and King of kings. The wisest men, the ablest politicians, the most renowned conquerors, whilst they are pursuing heartily and intelligently the object they have proposed to themselves, are ignorantly subserving another purpose which is not in their hearts. Religious prejudice and ignorance have their mission, as well as the stormy wind, or proud Assyrian. "And now, brethren, I wot that through ignorance ye did it, as did also your rulers: but those things, which God before had showed by the mouth of His prophets, that Christ should suffer, He hath so fulfilled" (Acts iii. 17, 18).

But the most interesting as well as the most wonderful power of order and control is found within the Church itself. Regarding the Church in its actual condition, it appears to us in hopeless disorder and confusion; yet, notwithstanding this appearance, the only-wise Master-builder is rearing a building of perfect symmetry and beauty, in due time to be manifested, without a single stone either wanting or out of place (Rev. xxi. 9-27).

In the rearing of this building He is now employing various workmen; yet these workmen are working by different plans of their own, often pulling down each other's building, because it is not according to their fashion, and sometimes building again what they themselves have destroyed. In appearance the several workmen have no common plan, no rule, no compass, no plummet; rearing several detached buildings, and each one glorying in the work of his hands, as if they were destroying the temple instead of building it. This must doubtless be to the damage of all. But under the superintendence of Him whose servants they are, they are all working for His end, although their passions, vanity, self-seeking, and littleness, may have an end of their own, or make them think that the Lord's end can only be attained by their way. It is truly blessed when the Lord Himself is honoured in His way as well as in His end. But notwithstanding the follies and by-ways of His servants, He is working for His end through them; and we are able in some measure to understand how He is doing this.

"And they went forth, and preached every where, the Lord *working with them*, and

confirming the word with signs following" (Mark xvi. 20). Now it is only just so far as the Lord is working with His servants that they are working with and for Him (2 Cor. vi. 1). He will set aside and burn up "the wood, hay, and stubble"; that for which their energy, it may be, has been spent, and in which their chief interest has been occupied. But that for which He hath wrought mightily in them (and His very might is calm and patient, compared with human energy), "the gold, silver, and precious stones," He will preserve.

The point here is, not which of the servants is acting most according to the Lord's plan, or how much loss many of the Lord's servants will have to suffer; but how it is, that with such a miserable set of tools, the great Master-worker produces such exquisite workmanship, in due time to be manifested as that city which has the glory of God.

But if all the Lord's workmen are under Him working for a definite end exactly in proportion as He works with them, it necessarily follows, that in that in which the Lord works with His servants, they are co-workers one with another, they are really working for one end; howbeit in their hearts they may repudiate the thought of being associated in common labour. That for which they are working in their own hearts is one object; that for which the Lord is using them, and working with them, is another. Humbling indeed it is that it should be so; and that regard for Him, whose servants we are, should have so little power in setting self aside. Great was the comfort to the apostle to have a true yoke-fellow in Timothy or Titus; but although he had few like-minded with him in his singleness of eye to the service of the Lord, he nevertheless acknowledges others as his fellow-helpers unto the kingdom of God. "These only," says he, "are my fellow-workers unto the kingdom of God, which have been a comfort to me" (Col. iv. 11). Many of the servants of Christ might be wayward and self-seeking; some entangled in Jewish traditions, others in Gentile philosophy; they were no comfort to the apostle, and instead of strengthening were by their ways apparently weakening his hands; nevertheless, the apostle acknowledges them as servants of Christ, and his fellow-workers unto the

kingdom of God. They must stand or fall to their own Master; but in fidelity to that Master, he must acknowledge them in whatever way the Master working with them was accrediting their work. If they really were ministers of Christ, they must, under the Master-worker's hand, be helping on His work.

Had not the apostle been able to take fellowship in labour on another and higher ground, than that of ostensible co-operation, he had so few "like-minded" that he might almost have been driven to express himself, as the prophet, in felt desolation—"And I only am left"; or to adopt the ready human way of party-making which he so strongly repudiates, "Who is Paul, or who is Apollos, but ministers by whom ye believed, even as the Lord gave to every man?"

"And John answered and said, Master, we saw one casting out devils in Thy name; and we forbade him, because he followeth not with us. And Jesus said unto him, Forbid him not; for he that is not against us is for us" (Luke ix. 49, 50).

THE DOORS AND VEIL OF THE TEMPLE.

EXPOSITORY LECTURES on the TEMPLES of SOLOMON and EZEKIEL. By THOMAS NEWBERRY, Editor of "The Englishman's Bible."

A DOOR with two folding leaves led into the HOLY PLACE.

The width of the house is twenty cubits; a fourth part of the width is five cubits; allowing five cubits for the two side posts and upper lintel, leaves an opening for the door ten cubits wide and fifteen cubits high (see 1 Kings vi. 33-35).

There were also side posts and lintels of two cubits square, reducing the opening to six cubits broad and thirteen cubits high. The side posts and lintels were of olive wood; but the two folding doors were of cypress, rendered fir in our ordinary Bibles, but more correctly cypress, as being the hardest and firmest wood.

The lintel and side posts of the entrance into the MOST HOLY PLACE were a fifth part of

the width of the house (internal), that is, four cubits out of twenty, leaving an opening of twelve cubits broad and sixteen cubits high. There were also lintels and side posts of olive wood, two cubits square.

The doors into the MOST HOLY PLACE were of olive wood (1 Kings vi. 31, 32). Our Lord in John x. 9, says—"I am the Door: by Me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture." And again, "I am the Way, and the Truth, and the Life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by Me." We may, therefore, consider these doors as emblematic of Christ, the true and living way into the presence of God; and into the secret place of the most high, under the shadow of the Almighty. These two doors were folding doors, divided in the centre, corresponding with the rent veil. When Christ died on Calvary, the veil of the temple was rent in twain, from the top to the bottom; the Holy Ghost thus signifying that the way into the holiest of all was made manifest by the death of Christ, not only by His spotless life and holy example and teaching showing the way, but by His atoning death putting away sin, furnishing a ground on which God can be just, and yet justify the ungodly.

The different varieties of wood mentioned in connection with the temple are beautifully emblematical.

First.—Shittim wood, of which the ark of the covenant was made, which was obtained from the wilderness of Shittim, typical of the humanity of the Lord Jesus Christ. "The children being partakers of flesh and blood, He also, Himself, took part of the same. Therefore, in all things it behoved Him to be made like unto His brethren, yet without sin, that He might become a faithful high priest in things pertaining to God."

Secondly.—Cedar wood. The whole of Solomon's temple was encased in cedar; cedar being a type of resurrection incorruptibility.

Thirdly.—Cypress, where especial strength was required, as in the floor of the holy place, the external dome, and the door leading into the sanctuary. This wood is emblematic of resurrection strength and power.

The fourth kind of wood was olive wood, which was employed for the side posts and

lintels of the outer door leading into the sanctuary, and likewise for the side posts, lintels, and door leading into the holiest of all; typical of the spiritual body in resurrection.

In 1 Cor. xv., the spiritual signification of these various kinds of wood are beautifully illustrated:—

First.—The shittim wood: "It is sown a natural body" (verse 44).

Secondly.—The cedar: "It is sown in corruption; it is raised in incorruption" (verse 42).

Thirdly.—Cypress: "It is sown in weakness; it is raised in power" (verse 43).

Fourth.—Olive wood: "It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body" (verse 44).

In the shittim wood we see the Word made flesh and tabernacling among us, crucified through weakness.

In the cedar we see Christ raised from the dead in resurrection perfectness, whose body saw no corruption, and who is alive for evermore.

The cypress reminds us of a risen Christ, almighty to deliver, and mighty to save.

And the olive wood of Christ Jesus quickened by the Spirit, perfected and glorified.

When the Lord Jesus manifested Himself to His disciples on the day of resurrection, so spiritual was His body that He could appear in their midst though the doors were closed, and vanish instantaneously from their sight; and yet, so truly was it His natural body that was raised and spiritualised, that He could say, "Handle Me, and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see Me have."

And now seated at the right hand of power, amidst the glories of the eternal throne, upon His raised and glorified body, the mementoes of His suffering and death are indelibly impressed.

THE VEIL.

In the temple of Solomon there were not only folding doors dividing between the holy and most holy place, but also a veil (see 1 Kings vi. 21; 2 Chron. iii. 14).

In two particulars there was a difference between the veil of the tabernacle and the veil of the temple.

In connection with the veil of the tabernacle, the Hebrew word used for the fine linen is "sheesh," which signifies white,

emblematic of the pure and sinless humanity of the Lord Jesus when on earth; for we learn from Heb. x. 19 that the veil was typical of the flesh of Christ.

But the word employed in the Hebrew for linen in connection with the veil of the temple is "vüts," which is expressive of brilliance and splendour, corresponding with the raiment of the Lord Jesus on the Mount of Transfiguration (Luke ix. 29).

In the tabernacle, the colours mentioned were blue, purple, and scarlet. The words here rendered "scarlet," "*tolahatte shanee*," signifying "the splendour of a worm," are typical of the earthly dignity of the Lord Jesus, as Son of David, born King of the Jews.

Whereas, in connection with the temple veil, the colours mentioned are blue and purple and crimson.

The Hebrew word for crimson being "*carmel*," expressive of fruitfulness and dignity; *carmel* meaning a fruitful field, and we read of "the excellency of Carmel and Sharon" (Isaiah xxxv. 2).

From this we learn that the veil of the tabernacle is typical of the earthly humanity of the Lord Jesus, "the Word made flesh and tabernacling among us."

But the veil of the temple is the type of the same humanity in resurrection, dignity, fruitfulness, and glory; not only was Jesus the Son of David, but also the Son of God; not only the heir of David's throne, but the One who has sat down on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty on high.

BEGOTTEN OF GOD; OR, EVIDENCES OF THE NEW LIFE.

By J. HIXON IRVING.

III. The Loving Life.

"*B*ELOVED, let us love one another: for love is of God; and every one that loveth is begotten of God, and knoweth God. He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love" (1 John iv. 7, 8).

No one reading this epistle, with any degree of carefulness, can fail to observe that it is an epistle of contrasts. God is contrasted with Satan, the Father with the world, the children of God with the children of the wicked one,

death with life, light with darkness, righteousness with lawlessness, and love with hate. Thus we get a perfect number of contrasts. There is nothing neutral here, all is distinctive, pronounced. No calling black, white; bad, good; or bitter, sweet.

A careful reader will also note another thing, viz., that the whole epistle is divided into two parts. The key-note of the first division (chaps. i., ii.) is, "God is Light" (chap. i. 5); whilst the key-note of the second part (chaps. iii.-v.) is, "God is Love" (chap. iv. 8-16). This second part may be fitly compared to a mirror in which a man may view himself, and thus see what manner of man he is; whether he is begotten of God, or whether he is not. In this portion, chiefly in chaps. iii. and iv., love to God and man is made the test of being regenerate. An absence of love is a fatal sign that the individual "knoweth not God, for God is Love"; but its presence is a proof of being "begotten of God." "Every one that loveth is begotten of God." In contrast to that, we read, "Every one that doeth not righteousness, is not of God, *neither he that loveth not his brother.*"

The contrast given in this section between those who are begotten of God, and those who are not, is of the most vivid kind. The one knows God, the other does not know Him; the one has the love of God abiding in him, the other has hatred in him; the one abides in love, the other in death; the former proves by his love that he is in a state of life. "We know that we have passed from (out of) death unto (into) life, because we love the brethren"; the latter, by his lack of love, that he remains in a state of death. "He that loveth not his brother, abideth in death." Can we imagine a more striking contrast than the one furnished us in these two chapters by the pen of inspiration; or anything more heart-searching to the child of God, or more humiliating or crushing to the nominal professor? It is no highly-coloured, overdrawn picture; there is nothing exaggerated or distorted in it; it is the word and mind of the Lord respecting the only two classes in the world. Of the one in whose heart the love of God is shed abroad by the Holy Ghost, and of the other who are strangers to the influence or power of that love.

The love of God in the heart is no mere sentiment or feeling, no natural or even spiritual affection, but a principle—a mighty principle strong to do and dare for God. If love were nothing more than a kind of spiritual feeling or affection, do you think we should ever have read—"Love suffereth long, and is kind; love envieth not; love vaunteth not itself; is not puffed up, doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil; rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth; beareth all things, believeth all things, endureth all things"? No mere creature love could accomplish that which the heaven-born love mentioned in this passage is said to do. And this love in greater or lesser degree is to be found in every regenerate heart, and is more or less seen in the life of every one begotten of God.

Of course, we need hardly say, just in proportion as the love of God is allowed to fill the soul will it flow out to others, especially to those who are children of God, for "Every one that loveth Him that begat, loveth him also that is begotten of Him." Need we ask why this is so? May we not rather let the question be asked "why it should not be so"? They have the same Father, Saviour, and Sanctifier; share the same life, nature, and hope; partake of the same trials, temptations, and sorrows; fellow-travellers to the same city of light and life. Can we wonder that true believers love one another? Nay! the wonder is that they love each other so little. Yet it is only by mutual love that the world can know that they are disciples of Christ. "By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye love one another" (John xiii. 35).

O may it be true both of reader and writer. "Ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren." Then shall we prove we are begotten of God.

IV. The Victorious Life.

"For whatsoever is begotten of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that hath overcome the world, even our faith. And who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God?" (1 John v. 4, 5).

In a late exhibition there might have been seen two massive and elaborately-wrought screens or gateways, one bearing the motto of the Prince of Hyderabad, "With God alone is victory"; and the other the motto of the Prince of Jeypore, "Where valour is, is victory."

These two mottoes may serve as an illustration of the double aspect of victory—victory by Divine grace, and victory by faith. The life of the Son of God is one of conflict—conflict with the power of sin within, a wily, subtle foe without, and also with a world that is energised by the prince of the power of the air, and is in direct opposition to the living God and all who are His by grace. If there is victory over the power of sin within (and this there must be if we are to conquer the world without) it is by the grace of God working in us through Christ.

"I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord." "Thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ" (Rom. vii. 25; 1 Cor. xv. 57).

It is with the victory of faith that we must occupy ourselves at this time: which is victory over the world. No one can be an overcomer in the world, and over it, that is not a believer in the Lord Jesus Christ. "Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God?" is the question of the apostle. This test cuts like a sharp sword through the religionised masses of Christendom, marking off the real from the spurious; the genuine child of God from the nominal professor. In the person there dwells a principle which is the power for victory. Mark, it is "whatsoever," not "whosoever," thus showing that it does not merely refer to the person begotten of God, but a principle imparted to him when he was so begotten, a principle called "His seed" (chap. iii. 9), the Divine seed, a new principle coming (so to speak) out of God, and infused into the soul, and producing faith which overcomes the world.

In man's first creation God breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and he became a living soul (Gen. ii. 7); so in the second creation, He inbreathes and imparts into the soul a new life, which inbreathed thing enables the child of God to obtain victory over the world, which lieth in the wicked one.

It may be asked by some, But how does faith which has its spring in the new life overcome the world? First of all, by an acceptance of the Word of God respecting the world; and second, by acting upon it. God has labelled everything that is of the world of men who have rejected Him with this sentence, "*Not of the Father.*" Its riches, honour, pomp, power, and pageantry; its fame, name, pursuits, pleasures, and its religion, all have this legibly written upon them; and he who knows his Father's hand-writing, and has got his Father's spirit, flees from them. True faith can never disrespect and disobey the Divine command, "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world" (1 John ii. 5); for faith is obedience, and hence "the obedience of faith." Faith's eye sees, not dimly, but clearly, that there is nothing in the world worth seeking after—"For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof" (1 John ii. 16, 17). It also apprehends that one object for which Christ died was to deliver His people from its evil influence. "Our Lord Jesus Christ . . . gave Himself for our sins that He might deliver us out of this present evil world according to the will of our God and Father" (Gal. i. 4).

Faith also accepts the soul-cheering fact, unfolded in the words of the Lord, that He hath overcome the world. "Be of good cheer: I have overcome the world" (John xv. 33). It also desires to realise the fulfilment of His prayer, "Keep them from the evil" of the world.

Faith also rejoices in the fact (which is to the natural mind foolishness) that by the Cross of Christ the world is crucified unto the believer, and he unto the world (Gal. vi. 14). It also sees from the word of the Lord that that which has forgotten Him is doomed (John iii. 17), "condemned already"; and thus, like Noah, whom God raised up, and of whom it is written, "he condemned the world" (Heb. xi. 7), the believer overcomes it instead of being overcome by it. The victory of faith is an unmistakable proof of the heavenly origin and destiny of the overcomer. He is conscious of being a "pilgrim"

by the Divine calling out, and a "stranger" by his birth from above: a citizen of a "city that hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God"; and thus, he walks by faith through a defiled and defiling scene, going from strength to strength, and from victory unto victory. As the conflict between faith and unbelief, the believer and the world, is a constant and continued one, so by the grace of God within, and the principle of faith, the victory may be continual. He may be more than conqueror through Him that loved Him. It may not be; nay, it is certain that all believers have not obtained the complete and perfect victory set forth in the above scriptures; it may not be that any single believer has obtained victory in every particular mentioned, but where there is heavenly life in the soul, there will be, must be, victory in measure, less or more, over the present evil world; and this will prove that the victorious one is begotten of God. Beloved, is this victory of faith characteristic of your life? Are you conquering or being conquered? Have you fought and failed, and are discouraged and cast down? Learn, then, the folly of trusting to your own unaided power, the strength of your own will, or self, in anywise. "Be strong in the Lord, and in the power of His might, and you cannot fail to conquer."

If the world seeks to ensnare your heart look at it through Gethsemane and Golgotha, look at it in the light of the Word of God and the judgment-seat of Christ, and spell-like its power will be broken, and your soul will escape the snare, and the palm of victory will be yours.

(To be continued.)

ELEMENTARY ARTICLES, No. 2.

SEPARATION FROM THE WORLD.

A CHRISTIAN, though *in* the world, is not *of* it (John xvii. 16). He is one with Christ in His rejection (Matt. x. 24), and may expect similar treatment to that which his Master received. He may count on persecution whilst in it if faithful to God and the Word of His grace. "As then he that was *born after the flesh* persecuted him that was *born after the Spirit, even so it is now*" (Gal. iv. 29). He knows that "The friendship of the world is *enmity with God; whosoever therefore will be a friend of the*

world is the enemy of God" (James iv. 4). He is promised "tribulation" whilst in it (John xvi. 33), and is told that because he has been chosen out of it the world will hate him (John xv. 19). He is exhorted by the mercies of God, not to be conformed to it (Rom. xii. 2), and to be separated from it (1 John ii. 15). He is commanded to "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him" (1 John ii. 15). The "Church" and the "world" are contrasted in Scripture, though we often hear professing Christians speaking of the "Christian world" and the "Religious world." All who have not been regenerated by the Holy Spirit compose the "world" whether "religious" or "irreligious," moral or immoral. Some may be traversing the *clean side* of the "broad road," and others the *dirty side*, but both classes are hastening to eternal ruin, misery, and despair. Though there are multitudes of professors in these "last days" of this dispensation, God's people are but a "little flock" (Luke xii. 32). Innumerable passages might be quoted, which show that the Christian is to be separated from the world. We would, however, specially refer to one. "Be *not* unequally yoked with unbelievers: for what fellowship have righteousness and iniquity? or what communion hath light with darkness? and what concord hath Christ with Belial? or *what portion hath a believer with an unbeliever?*

WHEREFORE COME YE OUT FROM AMONG THEM, AND BE YE SEPARATE SAITH THE LORD" (2 Cor. vi. 14-18, R.V.). Innumerable attempts have been made to break the force and blunt the edge of this plain and pointed precept. Some have had the hardihood to assert that the injunction does not apply to Christians at the present time; that it was a *special* command given to Corinthian Christians and is not binding on us. Are we then at liberty to reject those portions of Scripture which do not suit us? Were the epistles to the Corinthians not written for our instruction and guidance? The first epistle is (ch. i. 2) addressed not only to the saints in Corinth but to "ALL THAT IN EVERY PLACE call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs and ours." The Holy Ghost, in view of

those who would detract from the Word, added, "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" (1 Cor. xiv. 37). The "command" is from the Lord, and must therefore be binding on all Christians. "Believers" are persons who have been born again by the Holy Spirit, and "unbelievers" are those who have never experienced this change. It is maintained by some that the injunction is to be limited to "marriage." Doubtless the marriage of a believer with an unbeliever would be an "unequal yoke." Are there not, however, other "yokes" in addition to the matrimonial one? The Lord does not specify the character or object of the "yoke," and the command is explicit and comprehensive and APPLIES TO ANYTHING IN WHICH WE VOLUNTARILY UNITE WITH OTHERS TO ATTAIN A COMMON OBJECT. A Christian should not marry an unbeliever, nor enter into business partnership with an unbeliever, nor join "societies" with unbelievers, *nor enter or continue in church fellowship where known unbelievers are admitted.* The child of God should persistently refuse to be "yoked" with the unconverted, whether for matrimonial, commercial, religious, or benevolent purposes. "What communion hath light with darkness?" (verse 14). "Ye were *once* darkness, but *now* are ye light in the Lord" (Eph. v. 8). What "communion" can a child of light have with a child of darkness? At creation God DIVIDED *the light from the darkness* (Gen. i. 4). "What part hath he that believeth with an *infidel*?" (2 Cor. vi. 15). The word translated "infidel" is the same Greek word rendered "unbeliever" in verse 14. The Revised Version has "unbeliever" in both cases. What fellowship can there be between a believer and an unbeliever? The one is a child of wrath, the other is an heir of heaven; the one is a *friend*, the other is an *enemy* of God (Rom. v. 10). Of Israel it was said, "The people shall *dwell alone*, and shall not be reckoned among the nations" (Num. xxiii. 9). The children of God are a redeemed, consecrated, and separated people.

"But with what subtlety and effrontery Satan opposes," says one, "or seeks to neutralise every precept of the Lord. When

pressing this command upon the consciences of God's children, how constantly is it cast aside with the remark, 'It is impossible to tell who are believers and who are not,' 'the tares and the wheat are to grow together,' 'you are commanded not to judge,' &c., &c., as if the apostle would exhort the saints to a separation that is impossible; as if the tares and the wheat being allowed till the end of the age *to grow together in the world* (the field is the world, not the 'Church,' see Matt. xiii. 38) implies their being yoked together in the church; as if the command not to judge implied that the believer was to close his divinely enlightened eyes to the difference between light and darkness, between life and death, between Christ and Belial." Again and again we have been grieved and shocked as we have listened to persons telling how they were invited, urged, and pressed to "join the church" whilst unsaved. On pleading personal unfitness and suggesting delay they were assured that it was their "duty" to "observe the ordinances of the church"; that it was "time" for them to "make a profession of religion," as they were "of age," and so-and-so was "joining." Some have said that they attended the "minister's class," and on being able to *answer certain questions satisfactorily as to the facts and doctrines of Scripture* were admitted into communion. Others have spoken of their being "confirmed" by the Bishop, and led to imagine, whilst unconverted, that they were in a fit condition to observe the Lord's supper. No inquiries were made as to *when, where, or how the great change* had taken place; or, for that part of it, if it had taken place at all. They were received, to use a popular expression, "on their own responsibility." Large numbers of "members" of the various sects *make no profession of being regenerated.* If this is doubted, ask the average religious professor if he has been "born again," and you will discover the truthfulness of the statement. In our experience we have found that the most bitter and determined opposition to plain, searching, and awakening preaching (not of the "building up" but of the "stripping" kind), comes from unconverted professors, who, whilst having a name to live are dead in trespasses and sins.

A. M.

"LAXITY."

THERE is just now a fatal tendency to give up, or to count of little or no importance, truths once held very dear. Trouble "within" leads many to look abroad for quiet, and while still professing in a general way, to hold the truth of "separation," to identify themselves with much that in other times they would clearly acknowledge to be wrong. Such is not the path of faith, nor of those who have Christ, and not merely "truth" before them.

No doubt this is a time when we are called upon individually to test afresh directly by Scripture everything that we hold, or that holds us (including much that may hitherto have passed as current coin on the authority of others, without our having personally verified the mint mark upon it), but it is *not* a time for giving up one iota of Scripture truth or principle.

Let none of us therefore take occasion of a time of trial and confusion to run away and leave our quieter and humbler, but more faithful brethren to stand alone for "the faith"; but let us HOLD FAST just as much as, *and no more* than, we know to be of God, and not let one bit of *His truth* slip from us.

There is but one way of rightly holding the special truths which have been recovered in these last days, and that is by holding Christ first, and them *in connection with Him*. It is possible to talk of "the body" and all the while practically to let slip "the Head." These truths are precious to us because they are *His* work, *His* mind, *His* will, and for *His* glory. And surely as we get in spirit near Him, we must become heartily ashamed when we think how He bears with all our ways, and how little *we* can bear that which is trying or unpleasant.

Countenancing evil is a different thing, and it is this that tries many faithful hearts. In this case the principle is clear enough, the difficulty lies solely in the application. If evil is known and countenanced, and judgment of it publicly refused, the godly soul has but one course open: only let us be quite sure that such is the case; that, in the first place, it is sin of the nature and character indicated in God's Word; that, in the second place, judgment of it is refused; and thirdly, that it is for God's

glory that we do leave, and not for ease, or mere difference of opinion. The only guide for us is the Word of our God, in which alone we can find pure truth.

POWER IN THE GOSPEL.

(A few fragments from the late Dr. J. B. Mulock's letters.)

YOU will be pleased to hear of our first attempt last night at a Gospel service here. The Lord helped me to preach what I hope was both a faithful and tender Gospel, wherein I tried to arouse God's children from formal religious lethargy, and those who are only nominally alive to God from their death in sin, by setting before them God's way of life and death as solemnly as I could. Oh, for something more than the stirrings merely of the natural conscience. How powerless our Gospel nowadays must be, in that so few are "cut to the heart" as by the Word in Acts v. and vii.

* * * *

I am waiting upon the Lord about the Gospel. The meetings are very solemn to my own soul and to others, as I know on Sunday evenings. There is the stillness and attention of the Spirit's power; but two-thirds or three-fourths of those who come are Christians, while the streets are crowded with the careless and godless, soldiers, poor women, &c. We are sure the Lord would not have us preach the Gospel (and we believe the evening of Sunday, *at least*, should be exclusively devoted to this) to those who should be preaching it, in various ways, themselves. Will you pray that somehow we may either be brought out, or they may be brought in to hear? We cannot bear to see no fruit, when we literally sigh and cry for it, and preach directly to that end.

* * * *

We here have even a self-interest in your welfare; for are we not shoulder to shoulder against the common foe, and shall we fall out by the way? As well might two fire-escape or life-boat men fall out while habited houses were burning or soul-freighted ships were sinking. O, Lord, keep us evermore from such wicked folly, and from "making sport" for the Philistines or Satan.

Correspondence.

OBJECT TEACHING.

To the Editor of *The Witness*.

"Enquirer" asks, "Where since Pentecost, when the Holy Spirit came to lead God's children into all truth, do we find a word to justify the use of these things?" (that is, objects, &c.). God has given man a body and a soul. In the body are five senses, and through these, chiefly through the ear and the eye, God speaks home to the soul. This we see all through Scripture. Peter's *eye saw* his Lord's grieved, but loving look, after he had denied Him three times, and his *ear heard* the crowing of a cock, through which he was led to realise his sin, and "weep bitterly." With our *eyes* would the Lord Jesus have us to "*behold* the fowls of the air," and learn from them lessons not to be forgotten.

We know from Psalm xix. and Rom. i. and ii. that the heathen, who have not the Word of God to instruct them, will be judged by what they *SEE* and *HEAR*. Satan also uses the eye and the ear to entice man to sin. He first attracted Eve's *ear*, and then her *eye*, and thereby deceived her. Achan's confession is, "I *saw* . . . I coveted and took." When Satan had failed in his devices to make Jesus fall by what he *heard*, he tried to lead Him astray by letting Him "*see* all the kingdoms of the world and the glory of them." There was no attraction for Him in what He *heard* and *saw*, for the Lord God had "opened His *ear*" to discern what was false. The "*lust of the eye*" did not succeed in making Him a captive of Satan's as it had done in Eve's case. Long after Pentecost, Paul, in seeking to show the Corinthians their folly, draws their attention to the sowing of grain (1 Cor. xv. 36), and wishes them to use their senses in the natural progress of its growth. James also warrants the use of the *eye* and the *ear* all through his epistles, by setting before us a great many homely pictures in daily life. Peter, in his epistle, brings before us a dog and a sow as pictures of false professors. In Revelation picture after picture is brought before John to teach him deep lessons. The command given to him is, "Write the things which thou hast *seen*." In chapter vi. he tells us, I "*beheld*," and refers to the way in which a "fig tree casteth her untimely figs." Does the Holy Ghost not still speak to the heart of saved and unsaved through these things? Assuredly He does. Have we not often known instances of a guilty conscience being arrested as he *saw* the eye of the preacher falling on him, and he believing every word uttered was intended for him, while the preacher was altogether ignorant of the fact. I believe we lose much blessing through our ignorance of the different illustrations given in Scripture, and often draw wrong conclusions, which we would not do if we used our *eye and ear* as God would have us do.

Pictures in Scripture are EXTREMELY accurate. Some time ago, while walking through a field where cows were grazing, a friend drew my attention to the way in which a cow draws up the grass into her mouth. She does not crop it with her teeth as other animals do, but folds her tongue around it and quickly swallows it without waiting to chew it. When reading

Num. xxii. 4 a little while afterwards, I greatly enjoyed seeing how accurate the Word is. Many of our readers have never noticed the way and quickness with which "an ox *licketh* up grass," as Balak did.

Object lessons, &c., are used to attract the *eye* of little ones, and thereby convey a lesson to their hearts exactly in the way the Lord did. When I was a child I learned a great many Psalms and portions of Scripture, but my mother and teachers did not ask me to commit to memory the number of chapter and verse. My memory fails as I advance in years; I can still repeat the chapters learned when young, but greatly feel the loss of being unable to quote where such a verse is written. It was quite a surprise, as well as delight to me, to hear how accurately my little son and daughter could quote where the verses were written which they had searched for to fill in the vacant spaces in the *Young Watchman* and *Boys and Girls Almanacs*.

I shall always be thankful for these almanacs and periodicals, as I find them a great help in the training of my children. "Train up a child in the way he should go," is the command given to every parent; and in my brief experience I have often been pained by the negligence of parents to do so, their excuse being they are not gifted to teach little ones. Shortly after my conversion my teacher gave me a class of very young children, as her class had become too large, and I was the only converted pupil in her class. She had to take it from me again, as I could not keep the little ones quiet. I now seek to teach my children through pictures brought before us in Scripture. God used a sheet filled with "all manner of beasts and birds" to teach Peter not to call any man common or unclean.

Does the Holy Ghost not still use "beasts and birds" to speak to the hearts of Christians? We know He does. A "sparrow" is often His messenger to cheer the weary saint now as well as in the days of Christ's ministry, and a "worm" rebukes some erring one as it rebuked Jonah.

Let us seek grace to use our eyes and ears for the Lord's glory, and our hearts will praise the Lord for speaking to us through both.

A PARENT.

Co. Down, 20th June, 1889.

Questions and Answers.

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

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:—

Please give the meaning of Heb. vi. 16.

1 Cor. xi. 5—Does this scripture sanction the exercise of the gift of prophecy by women in the assembly, or the leading of the assembly in prayer by women, provided only that they be suitably attired?

Proverbs i. 26—"I also will laugh at your calamity; I will mock when your fear cometh." How is this to be understood, and to whom does it apply?

What is the spiritual significance of that thrice-repeated injunction of the law—"Thou shalt not see a kid in its mother's milk" (Ex. xxiii. 19, xxxiv. 26; Deut. xiv. 21)?

Is it wrong for believers gathered out to "the Name" to attend meetings held by other Christians, as, for example, an evangelist connected with a society whom the Lord is using in the conversion of sinners? Can we not encourage the work in so far as it is good? Paul was "made all things to all men" that he might win some.

Would it not be breaking a command of the Lord for a wife to get baptised against the wishes of her husband (see Eph. v. 22; Col. iii. 18)?

APPOINTING ELDERS.

QUESTION 328.—Has an assembly of God's saints any authority from the Word to appoint elders or Gospel preachers?

IN reply to this question we have pleasure in inserting a letter upon the subject written by the late Mr. Lincoln, with a copy of which we have been favoured.

Ans. A.—The Greek word *chêirōtônō* means to stretch out the hand, next to choose by a vote, next to choose.

In all languages there are many words which have a primary and then a secondary import, and meanings where the primary force is quite lost—"villain," for instance, in English.

Now that word occurs twice only in the Greek text (Acts xiv. 23 and 2 Cor. viii. 19); but the word occurs in another place with the addition of *πρὸς*, in Acts x. 41—"Witnesses chosen before *by God*." Here it is obvious the choice is by God Himself, for even the words *ὡς ἂν* are found in the passage—by God.

Surely there are in most assemblies senior godly men, marked out by God Himself as those who should take the oversight and rule. Specially if they minister the Word in spiritual power, according to Heb. x. 3, the saints would usually listen with respect to their guiding words. Oftentimes even it may happen that some one may have been specially used by God in this way, whether in the conversion of their souls, whether in leading them in the Christian apprehension of the way of God, or generally in building them up in faith and good doctrine.

It must be borne in mind that we are, or profess to be, gathered round the LORD, and He is Lord in His own house. He may give one under-shepherd, or six, or none, as He sees best. But the futile attempt of men to supplement His judgment, and to say, virtually, If you don't give us one we will appoint one; or, if you give us six we will reject five, is both Laodicean and disastrous. The door should be open

to receive whatever gift *He* gives; the assembly should judge all, whoever they are, who claim to speak or guide with His mind.

Rule—that is, feet-washing in the water of the Word, as Christ our Lord does—is exercised *in* the assembly by three classes.

I. By those who speak the Word of God with power.

II. By spiritual brethren of weight through years.

III. All the assembly to act the bishop over each other (Heb. xii. 15, 1 Peter v. 5).

I mark the word *in* the assembly to contra-distinguish it from *over*. In the Word the rule is spoken of as *in*. We are not lords over, but guides and examples. Above all, love should be the bond of perfectness of union between all the members, according to Col. iii. 14.

Voting is a worldly element—is Laodiceanism. Sheep might as well choose their shepherds. The only matter when the church's voice appoints is in those to administer her alms to saints.

W. LINCOLN.

Ans. B.—Divine authority comes down from above; it does not mount up from beneath. The notion that sheep have a "right" to choose their own shepherd receives no encouragement from the Word of God.

The men who lead in the assemblies of God (called "elders" because of their experience, and "overseers" because of their work) were first appointed by the apostles (Acts xiv. 23). Literally they were "chosen by hand"; that is, they were pointed out by the apostles in presence of the church.

In Acts xv. 4, 6, 23, and ch. xvi. 4, we read of the doings and deliberations of the "apostles and elders"; the Holy Spirit thus linking on the authority of the elder with that of the apostle, and preparing the way for the time when rule in the church should be carried on by the elders only, the functions of the living apostle having ceased. Compare Paul's address, in Acts xx., to those who were "elders" (verse 17) and "overseers" (verse 28) in the assembly at Ephesus.

Later scriptures provide for the present need. 1 Tim. iii. 2-7 and Titus i. 7-9 tell us by what sign we may know a true overseer, having no apostle to point him out to us; while 1 Peter v. 1-4 shows the elder how he is to enter upon the discharge of his duties without needing the "constraint" of a patron's call or a popular vote. As long as he thus exercises oversight he will be an overseer, and as long as he is an overseer those who needlessly oppose him are rebelling against the nearest approach to the authority of a living apostle that is left in the assemblies.

Acts xiii. 1-3 gives instruction as to those who are "separated unto the Gospel of God." The assembly does not "give them a call," but waits upon God that His call may be heard. When the call comes the Holy Spirit makes it plain, not only to those who are to go forth, but those who are to remain behind. The latter then identify themselves with the former, saying, "Where you go we follow you in spirit, your conflicts evoking our sympathy, and your victories becoming the occasion of our rejoicing." Thus, "they" (the brethren) send them away (Acts xiii. 3), while "they" (the Gospel preachers) are sent forth by the Holy Spirit (Acts xiii. 4).

Many sorrows have been ours owing to neglect of these important truths.

A. P. M.

Ans. C.—The following scriptures may serve to form our judgment on this question:—1 Thess. v. 12, 13; 1 Cor. xvi. 15, 16; 2 Cor. xiii. 3-5; 2 Thess. iii. 6-15; Hebrews xiii. 7, 17, 24; 1 Tim. iii.; Titus i. 5-9.

These scriptures teach the *recognition* and *accrediting* of such as answer to the description given. They enjoin obedience to such in the Lord. Other scriptures, e.g., 1 Cor. ix., Gal. vi. 6, teach the due support of such when necessary.

Titus i. 9-11, teaches the necessity and responsibility of the assembly to stop the mouths of "unruly and vain talkers."

True "elders" then, and truly God-sent preachers, will surely be *recognised* and *owned* by all that are truly spiritually minded (1 John ii. 20-27). The *appointing* lies in the hands of the Head of the Church.

A. O. M.

[Editor's Note.]—As to the appointment of Gospel preachers, there is no more scripture authority, so far as we can discover, for the appointment of these than there is for the appointment of elders. The evangelist, by exercising himself in the work for which he is fitted by God, will manifest to all that he is called of God to it. If there be evidently "gift, grace, and fruit," then it will be the business of the assembly to own and help such in the work of the Gospel. But to acknowledge and to have fellowship with individuals in the work is very different from appointing them.

That one or more, who have the Gospel work at heart, should, with the consent and approval of the assembly, arrange who shall address the Gospel meetings, is quite different from appointment. Some such arrangement is an absolute necessity if the work is to be carried on efficiently.]

THE PRESENT STATE OF DEPARTED BELIEVERS.

QUESTION 329.—2 Cor. v. 1-8. Is Paul here referring to the present state of the departed believer?

Ans. A.—The apostle is evidently referring to the then present state of himself and his fellow-labourers: that is to say, having shown the dangers and persecutions to which they, as the ambassadors of Christ, were exposed, in a world of which Satan is the god, who "blinds the minds of those who believe not"; and, carrying "this treasure" of the glorious Gospel of Christ "in earthen vessels," being "always delivered unto death for Jesus' sake," he then goes on to unfold what it was that sustained him and them, viz., the certainty that "if the earthly house of tabernacle were dissolved, they had a building of God, a house not made with hands eternal in the heavens."

In this frail mortal body, they groaned, not because they had any doubt as to their acceptance with God in Christ, but because the body was a hindrance to their full enjoyment of the glory which was before them, and of which they had already the earnest by the Spirit dwelling in them. Compare Rom viii. 16-23.

Not that they *desired* to be *unclothed*, i.e., to put off the frail mortal body by dying, they *earnestly desired* to be "*clothed upon*" with their resurrection body, the

"house which is from heaven"; and they saw such a power of life in Christ glorified, which could swallow up every trace of mortality, and conform their body of humiliation to His body of glory, and this they knew to be God's purpose concerning them (see Phil. iii. 20, 21; Rom. viii. 29). Therefore, they were always confident, the tribulations through which they had to pass in no wise discouraged or enfeebled them in their labour of love. They knew the ultimate issue, even if death should intervene, and they were willing rather to be absent from the body, since it would only be the means of introducing them into the presence of the Lord. Such was the blessed hope and certain expectation which encouraged and sustained the apostle and those with him. How far do we enter into it? How far is it true of us, "always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus may be made manifest in our mortal body"? That the same hope of glory belongs to every believer is undoubtedly true; but it is only as we are in some measure (it may be very feebly perhaps) entering into and sharing the sufferings, that we shall know anything of the sustaining power of the "far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory."

"The present state of the departed believer," is not referred to in this scripture except in the 8th verse, and then not as the object of hope or desire, but as an alternative to be preferred to being "at home in the body," inasmuch as to be "absent from the body" was to be "present with the Lord." The 1st verse, whilst, perhaps, leaving room for the separate state, can hardly be said to contemplate it, seeing that the possession of the "house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens" is placed as the immediate consequence of dissolution.

It is quite true that the destiny of the saints is the Father's house (John xiv.); but I submit that this is not found in 2 Cor. v., and that the "house which is from heaven" is, without doubt, the resurrection body of the believer, after the fashion of the glorious body of Christ, who is now in the heavens, and who is coming from thence for all His saints. G. A. S.

Ans. B.—The experience here given is in continuation of the subject of 2 Cor. iv., and seems descriptive of the *living* believers' hope, shown as *invoked* by God, who gives the earnest of the Spirit as pledge of its fulfilment, and thus lifts up those who might, while looking at "things seen and temporal," be cast down and perplexed. A. O. M.

[Editor's Note.]—Undoubtedly the expressions "tabernacle dissolved," "unclothed," "absent from the body and present with the Lord," all refer in different terms to the present condition, that is between death and resurrection, of those who have departed to be with the Lord.

The first refers to the body as a tent taken down and laid aside, done with.

The second refers to the soul and spirit as being in an "unclothed" condition while waiting for the *house* that is to replace the dissolved tabernacle.

The third proves that though "unclothed," and so far in an undesirable condition, it is not a state of unconsciousness, but of blessed realisation of the presence of the Lord.]

GOD TESTED BY PRAYER.

NOTES OF AN ADDRESS BY MR. JAS. WRIGHT.

“*Ask*, and it shall be given you; *seek*, and ye shall find; *knock*, and it shall be opened unto you: for every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened” (Matt. vii. 7, 8).

THESE words are fitted to meet the need of those in very different spiritual conditions: to *believers*, they ever have been and ever will be, one of the sheet-anchors of faith in approaching our heavenly Father in prayer, because they so distinctly set forth His will that His children should seek His face in prayer, and also very distinctly attest the power of prayer in obtaining blessing from God; on that account they always have been, and always must be precious to the children of God who have had experience more or less of the ways of God.

But there is another aspect of this precious word, which perhaps is to some extent overlooked: it may furnish to the *sincere inquirer* after the truth of God practical evidence of the reality of our holy faith. There are sincere inquirers after the truth of God, who, by reason of the scepticism in the very air, are unsettled in mind, something like the Israelites in 1 Kings xviii., “halting between two opinions”; and one very precious application of this word seems to me this, that it furnishes such hearts with practical evidence of the reality of the truth of God, and gives them an opportunity of proving it. Of the false gods that are no gods, the Holy Spirit says, in Ps. cxv., “They have ears, but they hear not” (the semblance of ears); “they have hands, but they handle not; feet have they, but they walk not.” They are powerless and motionless; but of the living God it is said, in the very same Psalm, “*Our God is in the heavens: He hath done whatsoever He hath pleased.*” He is a God who *acts*; and in Ps. lxxv. He is addressed as, “Thou who hearest prayer.” The living God can hear prayer, and has an arm, for He has done whatsoever He pleased. Now agreeing with this contrast between the true and living God and the false gods, Elijah submitted the question of the extent and power and faithfulness of God to a very simple test, viz., the

test of prayer. “Call ye on the name of your gods, and I will call on the name of the Lord; and the God that answereth by fire, let Him be God.” He appealed to the natural conscience of all the people, and the natural conscience of man recognised the reality of the plea, the soundness of the test. All the people answered and said, “It is well spoken”; well and righteous that the God who answered prayer visibly and manifestly must be the God. Now, may we not, dear friends, regard these words of the Lord Jesus in something the same way, as a test graciously offered to any heart that really and truly wants to know whether “God is, and that He is a Rewarder of them that diligently seek Him?” I have been led to this subject after waiting on God, and because I believe that God answers prayer, I think it may be a guide to some one in the meeting who may be more or less in this condition. Now I want to look at the words in this aspect: the Lord Jesus, the Faithful Witness, puts within your reach this simple test whereby you may settle your difficulties and questions about the truth of God without any amount of learning, without a classical or theological education, or any great power of intellect. He submits a test in the same way as Elijah submitted it to the people of Israel; the Lord Jesus says, “Ask, and it shall be given unto you.” He commits Himself, shall I say reverently, to the issue of the test; in effect He says, “Prove Me now herewith, . . . if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing.”

In considering these words a little more closely, you will observe, beloved friends, this same is a *privilege* and *obligation*, that of prayer to the *living God*, because nothing is more plainly implied in the words than that. The One who says, “I am the Light of the world”—that One who added the world-wide invitation, says, “Ask, and it shall be given you.” He speaks on behalf of the eternal God, out of whose bosom He came, and on whose behalf He came; and we can’t avoid the conclusion that the Speaker, the Lord Jesus, intends by that word emphatically to teach that it is the will of the heavenly Father that His creatures should cry to Him—“ask,” “seek,” “knock.” Now you will observe in setting forth this privilege and obligation, for

it is a universal obligation,—I say deliberately, a universal obligation,—God has a claim on every creature of His hand, that every creature in virtue of his absolute dependence on the Creator should speak to Him, and though for reasons abundantly manifest, they care not to do it, the claim remains the same,—in setting forth this obligation and claim, the Lord employs three different forms of application, all intended to set forth the same duty, and sets forth the response of God to those who have attended to His claims in three different but corresponding terms—“ask,” “seek,” “knock.”

Now when I *ask*, it is for a gift, a favour, a promise; hence I *receive* it. When I *seek* for something hidden, something to be shown to me, I *find* it. When I *knock* at a door or gate. I desire admission through the door or gate; and the promise is that admission shall be granted to the knocker, “It shall be *opened* unto you.” Now I want, dear friends, to illustrate these three actings of faith in prayer by some scriptures, because there is nothing like making God’s own Word a commentary on itself.

Concerning the first, viz., *asking* for a promise or a favour, which makes God’s answer a *gift*, we have a striking instance in chap. viii, where we find a poor leper coming and asking for healing. Did he get it, or did he not get it? Here the Lord is put to the test. An hour before, He said, “Ask, and it *shall* be given you”; and now there comes a poor leper, whose very appearance in the presence of Jesus is a prayer, asking for healing. Did he get what he wanted? To the eternal praise of the Promiser we read, “Immediately his leprosy was cleansed.” He had a very definite want; and the more definite our wants are, the clearer our prayers are; and the clearer the idea of our need, the more brief will be our supplications. A little further on there comes another to ask, not for personal blessing, but for blessing for one near to him. “There came unto Him a centurion, beseeching Him.” What did he ask? Healing for his servant; and, to the eternal praise of the Promiser, what do we read? “His servant was healed in the self-same hour.” The Word teems with illustrations of the faithfulness of God, and also I would say to any “halting between two opinions,” the

experience of every believer teems with illustrations of this. We have asked times without number, and never asked in faith without receiving. I don’t say we have actually in possession, but every petition referred to Him in faith, though not actually put into our hand (it may be delayed), we shall receive. Daniel’s prayer was heard hours before it was answered. “At the beginning of thy supplications the commandment came forth, and I am come to show thee”; but he did not get it till the time of the evening sacrifice. There was an interval between Daniel’s offering the prayer and receiving the answer. “What things soever ye desire, when ye pray, *believe* that ye *receive* them, and ye shall *have* them,” . . . to believe is to receive, in the counsel and purpose of the Father what we ask in faith of the Father, . . . immediately we offer the request we receive it. A day, a year, twenty years may intervene, but we shall have it, though the moment of its being put into our hand is delayed. The *receiving* of it, of having it put into our hand, is a question of our faith; the *having* it depends on the Promiser, is a question of His faithfulness as God. Has *He* failed? No; then you *shall* have it. Now these two instances touch bodily needs. Now turn to another in John iv.: the word of our Lord to the Samaritan woman, “If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, Give Me to drink; thou wouldest have *asked* of Him, and He would have *given* thee living water.” Now, what is more plain than this teaching of the Lord Jesus, that God’s spiritual blessing follows sincere asking for it, as surely as light follows the inletting of the sun’s rays? The others asked temporal blessing, and received it; and if she had asked for “living water,” the water of life, He would have given it. She had it not because she asked not; nothing could be plainer. Now, beloved friends, any doubters here halting between two opinions, here is this Word of Jesus, a test proposed to you in infinite grace, which you can use and put Him to the proof, and ask of Him the blessing you need, and He will give you light in your darkness, guidance in your mental perplexities, and dispel the clouds of doubt. It’s a *test*, and I want this word to be engraven

on the heart of every one in a doubting condition; and if you do not use it, your heart is not honest before God. It is necessary that the heart be absolutely honest before God. "If any man *will* do His will, He *shall* know of the doctrine, whether it be of God"; therefore, if really willing and waiting, ask for life, and it *shall* be given. Here's the way in which you can satisfy yourself that, "God is, and that He is a Rewarder of them that diligently seek Him." "But," you object, "In the very verse you have quoted, it says we 'must believe'; therefore it is no good for me to come and ask without believing." I am convinced it is an entire mistake and misuse of this passage to make it a barrier between the soul and God. Look at the connection; it is in connection with the walk of Enoch. Now in Genesis it does not say that he "pleased God," but that he "walked with God" three hundred and sixty-five years, a continuous course of habitual fellowship with God. Now, what is the explanation of this? what is the *modus operandi*, the rationale of it? how came it that Enoch could walk with God three hundred years? It was impossible without faith, for "without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he that cometh to God must believe that He is, and that He is a Rewarder of them that diligently seek Him." There you see the explanation of Enoch's walk. He was a firm believer that "God is," &c.; and, confiding in God in that character, he was helped onward in that course. "He that cometh to God," does not refer to the first coming of the soul to God; it's the expression of the *habit* of soul. I don't want you to take my word for it; I want you to have Scriptural proof of it. In chap. vii. 25, of the same epistle, we read, "He is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him." "The *comers* unto God"; it is the present participle, denoting the habit of soul. Then another verse, denoting the same aspect, chap. x. 1, "The law . . . can never with those sacrifices which they offered year by year continually make the *comers* thereunto perfect." Now, just as these verses denote a habit of soul, or a habit in the ceremonials of Mosaic ritual, so in 1 Peter ii. 4, we have a verse that denotes a habit of soul, "To whom *coming*, as unto a Living Stone"; not denoting

the first coming away to God, but the act of habitual coming every day to Jesus, and building on Him. In all these verses the present participle is used, showing the continual attitude of soul; and it is the same word in connection with Enoch, though differently rendered. "For the *coming ones* unto God must believe that He is," &c.; an explanation of the character and meaning of faith, and not a description of the personal response of faith of those who trust in God. In other words, it is not a barrier put between God and any coming soul, but a spiritual diagnosis of the habitual condition of soul of those who *have* come to Him. On the other hand, look how the Lord Jesus meets unbelief. "Then saith He to Thomas, Reach hither thy finger, and behold My hands; and reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into My side: and be not faithless, but believing." Now there's the heart of Jesus to one whose heart is true to Him, in spite of his naughty unbelief. Look again at His gracious dealings with one who came to Him, and the only prayer he could pray was, "Lord, I believe; help Thou mine unbelief." What was His action? Immediately his son received blessing. Ah! dear friends, don't turn our Father's Word against your soul; ask, wherever you are, and whatever your condition, cry out of the depths of your need, and you will receive according to your need. He who hears the raven's cry will not turn a deaf ear, to, I might almost say, the most unbelieving cry. If you will only come, there is budding faith; if you will only cry, there is incipient faith. Therefore I say, far lie it from me, and any creature of God, to put a barrier between the soul who wants to know the truth and God. God forbid that we should put the slightest barrier of dread or fear before any one who will only cry or come to Him. If you will only come, call, and ask, you *will* "receive," and have in your happy experience the most unanswerable proof of the truth of our holy faith that you could possibly have, and then you will defy any infidel in the world, however clever, to shake you; but you will say like the men of Samaria, "Now we believe, not because of thy saying; for we have heard Him ourselves, and know that this is indeed the Christ, the Saviour of the world."

(To be concluded in our next.)

BIBLE BACKSLIDERS.

FOLLOWING up the paper on "The Backsliding Path," let us now look at a few examples from the Word of God. As long as **Abram** went on *obeying* the voice of God, building altars, and calling on the name of the Lord, a pilgrim and a sojourner, trusting in the daily care and preserving mercies of Jehovah, all went well with him; but when *in the time of trial* he did not stand with God, but took matters into his own hands, obeyed the dictates of fleshly wisdom, and went down into Egypt in order to deliver himself, we find not only that he lost fellowship with God, and fell into grievous sin, but so fearful, even in the eyes of the ungodly, was his lack of moral integrity, that they "sent him away, and his wife, and all that he had" (Gen. xii.).

We also see in **Rebecca's** history, that God gave her a distinct promise to sustain her soul, and guide her thoughts, concerning her two sons—"The elder shall serve the younger." But the time came when God's simple word was not enough for her—sure indication of a backsliding heart—so that she could not any longer tread the path of faith and patience. Speaking naturally, things were looking against the fulfilment of God's word. Isaac had called for Esau to bless him. She could not *then* trust God. The subtle workings of unbelief guided her thoughts; and not only did she sin against God, and deceive her husband, but led her younger son astray, taught him to tell lies, and to deceive his own father; the bitter consequences they both severely reaped for many years (Gen. xxvi., xxvii.). O beloved, let us beware of the contrivings of unbelief!

Look also at **David**. As long as he had no plans of his own, was content to walk in any path God appointed him, and went on day by day trusting in God, he was enabled to overcome self, the lion, the bear, Goliath, Saul, &c.; his soul evidently prospered, and grew in the knowledge of God. But when he turned out of wisdom's ways; when he relinquished the life of faith, and ceased to lay hold of the truth that he was God's anointed king; when he leaned unto his own understanding, and falsely concluded, "I shall one day perish by the hand of Saul," from that

time he left the highway of faith and holiness, entered into "the way of transgressors," and the carnal stratagem of going into the land of the Philistines very soon resulted in lying, deceit, and cruelty, until the Lord's rod of correction came upon him, in burning up Ziglax, and taking away all that he had, when he again turned to God, and found His never-failing grace all-sufficient for him. "David encouraged himself in the Lord his God"; and so richly did restoring grace abound, that the servant of the Lord recovered all, and he had much spoil beside" (1 Sam. xxvii., xxx.). Saints of God, let us beware of unbelieving thoughts, lest they lead us into unbelieving ways, and their consequent sorrows! Let backsliders count upon the all-sufficiency of *restoring grace*, and encourage themselves in the Lord their God!

Love of ease, conveniences, luxuries, &c., often lead the souls of saints astray, for the *life of faith* is always connected with the *fight of faith*. This is the time for conflict and service; we shall rest by-and-by. As long as David fought against the enemies of the Lord, he was preserved and he triumphed; but when fighting was exchanged for lounging on the bed at even-tide, and walking upon the palace roof, then the adversary was too strong, the lust of the eye prevailed against the man after God's heart (2 Sam. xi.). Believers, let us remind each other how opposite the love of ease and luxury is to the way of faith, and let us take warning!

In **Hezekiah**, also, we have another solemn example brought before us. He was indeed a man of faith. When prayer and dependence upon God marked his path, the power and blessing of God were singularly with him. The work of God prospered in his hands, and there was great reviving. In answer to prayer, on one occasion, an angel was sent from heaven, and destroyed in one night one hundred and eighty thousand of the enemy's army; and, at another time, after pouring out his soul to God, in the last extremity, the prophet Isaiah was sent with healing blessing. But the honours and presents of the uncircumcised were the means of leading his heart away from the way of faith. Instead of witnessing to them of the grace and power of the God of Israel, the vain desires of nature

were so stirred up, that he entertained them by showing "the house of his precious things, the silver, and the gold, and the spices, and the precious ointment, and all the house of his armour, and all that was found in his treasures; there was nothing in his house, nor in all his dominion, that Hezekiah showed them not." God's solemn discipline followed (Isa. xxxix.). Beloved brethren in Christ, let us fear men's smiles more than their frowns! "A man that flattereth his neighbour spreadeth a net for his feet" (Prov. xxix. 5).

But there is **another point**. The Old Testament gives us a solemn example of one prophet misleading another (see 1 Kings xiii.). In the New Testament, also, we see repeatedly how the adversary used Peter and the other disciples to present temptation to the blessed Lord. These are indeed peculiarly weighty points for consideration, and will have a profitable effect upon our souls, if they lead us more sincerely and simply to walk with God in obedience to His word, not as serving men, but God which trieth our hearts.

Here let us pause, beloved. If we have been kept abiding in the enjoyment of the grace of God, let us adoringly worship, and give Him the praise. Much of the scriptures of truth are taken up with instruction and examples concerning the way of faith and backsliding. We see the perfection of the life and fight of faith in Jesus. He trusted in Jehovah at all times. He resisted sin unto blood.

"He is now our nearest Friend,
And His love will never end."

It may be that some who seriously ponder this subject, in the presence of God, will discover that they are no strangers to the backsliding path. The absence of earnest, persevering, closet prayer; the love of self, and ease, and luxuries; the fashionable furniture; the costly dress; the diligence in seeking after, or retaining, uncertain riches; the worldly habits; the unready hand to minister to the Lord's poor and needy, will, perhaps, read a tale to some, and convince them that they have wandered far from the highway of faith and holiness, which is the narrow, and only path of fellowship with the earth-rejected, heaven-welcomed Son of God. (Should, however, such discoveries lead souls with confession and

supplication to the Father of Mercies, how soon will His restoring grace put forth fresh vigour into their hearts, and conduct them into holier and happier ways, connected both with present blessing and the Lord's approval in the day of His coming! Oh to be so satisfied with Christ, that feeling that in Him we have all things, and can want nothing which He is not able and willing to supply, our continual song may be,

"Nothing on earth do I desire,
But Thy pure love within my breast;
This, only this, will I require,
And freely give up all the rest."

(CONCLUDING PAPER.)

PROPHETIC PAPERS. No. 21.

BY F. C. BLAND.

THE BOOK OF THE REVELATION.—CHAP. XXII.

THE twenty-second chapter begins with the words, "And he showed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb."

The history of man has been always connected with a river, as it has also been with a tree. If we go back to the second chapter of Genesis, even before the fall, we read that a river went forth out of Eden and watered the garden; and all through the Scriptures we never lose sight of a stream. The smitten rock in the wilderness, with its commentary on it in 1 Cor. x., shadows forth the thought of what it means. In Ps. xlvi. we are told that there is a river, the streams whereof shall make glad the city where God is in the midst of her. In Ezek. xlvii. we see it flowing out from the door of the temple in Jerusalem, with its trees on its banks; the fruit being for food, and the leaves for medicine.

In Joel iii. we read that "a fountain shall come forth of the house of the Lord, and shall water the valley of Shittim." In Zech. xiv. it appears again, and it is said, in that day living waters shall go out of Jerusalem, half of them towards the former sea, and half of them towards the hinder sea. And may we not trace it, if we may so say, in a parenthetical aspect, as we find it in the fourth chapter of John's gospel, where the living water is again

spoken of as having another source, as a springing well in the heart of the believer, and flowing through human channels to a thirsty world.

Here, in the last chapter of the Bible, we find it again, with the tree of life on its banks, bearing its fruit every month, both seasonable and various, while its leaves are for the sustinment (a better word than healing) of the nations. "There shall be no more curse, for the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it, and His servants shall serve Him."

Of what that service will consist, or what the sphere of its exercise will be, we are not told; but we may be assured that while there will be ceaseless activity there will be perfect rest. No mortal bodies to know what weariness is, no devil to tempt or hinder; it will be a service of perfect acceptance and of endless delight.

But we would not pass on without noticing that the history of the tree may be traced through scripture, from man's first start in innocence (not omitting, of course, the tree of Calvary on which Jesus was made a curse for us), and ending here with the restoration of that which our first parents forfeited when the solemn words were uttered, "He drove out the man."

"They shall see His face, and His name shall be in their foreheads." One might say in careless thought that the seeing of His face would be a necessary adjunct to redemption. But the Spirit of God gives it a speciality as a promise here, that we might have ever before us as a hope, the seeing of His face.

"There shall be no night there; and they need no candle, neither light of the sun," and they shall reign for ever and ever. "God is Light" for ever, as "God is Love."

For the third time in these chapters we are assured that "these are the true sayings of God." Surely this not only affirms the truth of all we have just read, but embraces also the promise in the next verse, "Behold, I come quickly."

We have only these few verses to tell us of the eternal state, but it may be that it will form the theme of further testimony in the age which is to come.

The promise of a blessing is repeated here to those who keep the sayings of the book of this prophecy, as in the first chapter it is

promised to those who read and hear its words. "Behold, I come quickly," is repeated in verse 12; and the Lord Jesus closes the testimony in His own words, saying, "Behold, I (Jesus) have sent Mine angel to testify unto you these things in the churches;" and emphasising her Jewish relationship and associations to the end, He declares Himself again to be "the root and the offspring of David."

He is the offspring of David, as being lineally descended from him; but He is the root of David, because every promise made to David had its root in Him.

There would have been no Jewish nation to live in the millennium if the Son of David and Son of Man had not been able, in righteousness, to take the place of Head over all things: Head of the new creation, Head of all principalities and powers, Head of the Church which is His body, and Head of the chosen nation. The nation of Israel because of its sin would have died away and become extinct; but it took a new start in the stem of Jesse, and through the scent of the water of life, flourishes again. Then, He further adds, "and the bright and morning star," which, as remarked before does not awake a sleeping world, but is the delight of those who watch.

It has been remarked that on the announcement of the Lord's titles in chap. i., there is a response of praise and worship from those whom "He loved and freed from their sins in His own blood"; and here again, on the announcement of His being "the root and the offspring of David, and the bright and morning star," "the Spirit and the Bride say, Come." The one who hears is exhorted to say, "Come"; and then the world-wide invitation is for the last time given, "Let him that is athirst come, and whosoever will let him take of the water of life freely."

There is a peculiar strain in these last cadences of the book; these last utterances of our Lord "until He come." We read them and worship, and pray that our hearts may be always ready to respond with an "amen" when we read His words, "Behold, I come quickly." How easy is it for us to sing, "A little while our Lord shall come," to teach the doctrine of His coming, and to contend vigorously against all who oppose its being scriptural, while our hearts know little of it as a hope.

How solemn are the words of the prophet Amos, "Woe unto you that desire the day of the Lord! to what end is it for you? the day of the Lord is darkness, and not light." Often do we find our minds and intellects ahead of our desires and affections, and our own hearts condemn us, and we have to humble ourselves before God, and begin with shame to take the lowest room.

The last words of the book are a warning with regard to keeping God's Word inviolate, not taking from it or adding to it. How little it is heeded in these last days.

Once more "He which testifieth these things saith, Surely I come quickly. Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus."

"The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen."

THE FIRST EPISTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS.

Chap. xv. 20, &c.

THE SUBSTANCE OF AN ADDRESS BY J. R. C.

AND now, having cleared the way by stating the abundant evidence of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and having shown how dreadful and hopeless our case would have been had the denial of it been true, the apostle goes on triumphantly to assert the glorious fact "**But now hath Christ been raised from the dead, the first-fruits of them which sleep**" (1 Cor. xv. 20, R.V.).

Thus, as the sheaf of first-fruits brought by Israel and waved before Jehovah "on the morrow after the Sabbath" (Lev. xxiii. 10, 11) was the earnest and pledge of the coming harvest, so the risen Christ is the earnest and the pledge of the resurrection of all those who by faith are partakers of life eternal in Him.

But "the first-fruits" was not only an earnest, it was a sample of that which was to be afterwards brought in. So we may judge that the resurrection bodies of the saints will be in like manner conformed to the resurrection body of the Lord Jesus. "As we have borne the image of the earthly, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly." "Who shall change our vile body that it may be fashioned like unto His own glorious body."

It would be idle and presumptuous to speculate upon the nature of that "glorious

body," or to attempt to define wherein it differed from that in which He suffered and died. It was the same, as bearing the marks of His wounds, and yet not the same, for those who before were intimate with Him failed to recognise Him.

But this we do know, it was *material*, for He said, "Handle Me, and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see Me have"; and yet it was "spiritual," and fitted for both earth and heaven. In it He could eat of the broiled fish and the honeycomb; and in it He could ascend up through the heavens and and take His place on the right hand of the throne of God, and dwell in that "light which no man can approach unto."

Even such will be the resurrection bodies of the saints: fitted to appear on earth and minister to its wants, and yet fitted to bear that glory which shone above the brightness of the noon-day sun. Material and yet spiritual—the same and yet not the same as those bodies in which we have tabernacled here.

Verse 21 gives us, as in Romans v., the two *men*, the heads of the two creations: the first man, Adam, being the one through whom came death; the second man, Christ, being the one through whom comes also the resurrection of the dead.

To be related to Adam, by descent from him as the head of the race, involves the necessity of death. It is no question of death being due to men individually as the penalty of sin; for, apart from all actual transgression, as in the case of infants, they, as well as the greatest transgressor, inherit death—"in Adam all die."

In like manner, "in Christ"—that is, in virtue of a vital relationship connecting the believer with the second Man, making him a partaker of the life of Christ—"shall all be made alive."

It is to "the dead in Christ" (compare 1 Thess. iv. 16) that this passage applies, and, indeed, "the resurrection," as far as this chapter is concerned, is viewed only as the portion of such.

That there shall be a resurrection, both of the just and of the unjust, is clearly taught in scripture (Acts xxiv. 15); but the latter is a resurrection by the power of God to judg-

ment apart from any relationship to Him who is "the Resurrection and the Life," and if referred to at all here, it is only under the expression, "*then cometh the end.*"

The following six verses give a marvellous prophetic synopsis of the future, a mapping out of events in a way that is most helpful to the understanding of the scope of the prophetic scriptures generally.

The order is "Christ the first-fruits"—in all things He has the pre-eminence, therefore He is "the first begotten from among the dead."

"Afterward they that are Christ's at His coming." Of this we read more particularly later on.

"Then cometh the end"; but before that "end" is reached there comes in "the kingdom," *i.e.*, the period during which Christ, as King, shall reign in righteousness; putting down all rule, authority, and power that stood opposed to God. The world under His benign sway being ordered and governed according to the will of God.

This "kingdom of Christ" goes on until all things—even death itself, the last enemy—are subdued unto Him. "Death and hell are cast into the lake of fire." No redeemed one shall ever again come into his dreaded grasp.

All previous kingdoms on earth were superseded by others which for the time being were more powerful. They rose and flourished for a time; but surely decay set in, and each one had its decline and fall. Not so the kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. He reigns till not a foe remains; and instead of decay, decline, and fall, His kingdom is delivered up to God, an eternal monument of redemption, grace, and power.

"Then shall the Son also Himself be subject unto Him that put all things under Him, that God may be all in all."

The first words of verse 27 are evidently quoted from Ps. viii. 6. There they are spoken of Adam, referring to the dominion conferred upon him in Gen. i. 28; but, in the hand of the first man, this dominion proved a total failure. Sin entered, and the sceptre fell from his hand.

But the purpose of God to have the creation put under the government of man, and by Him ordered and blessed, finds its fulfilment

in "the second man," even Christ, as we read in Hebrews ii., where the same Psalm is quoted more fully; and the answer to "What is man?" is found in the words, "but we see Jesus . . . crowned with glory and honour."

It is God's purpose that the Man Christ Jesus shall reign; that all things shall be put under His feet; and by the power of God it shall be effectually carried out in due time.

And the end of all will be that in this very creation,—from which God was shut out by sin, which so long was subject to vanity and sorrow, corruption and death,—"God shall be all in all."

Blessed and glorious result of the obedience unto death of the last Adam—the beloved Son of God.

Thus in His eternal glory, as well as in the days of His humiliation, the Son ever retains the subject place.

"Lo I come to do Thy will, O God," are the words wherewith He entered upon His mediatorial work; and such was the character of every step He trod, till on the cross He said, "It is finished."

Looking forward to the accomplishment of His atoning sufferings, He prayed the Father to glorify the Son. But in asking for glory, what was His object? "Glorify Thy Son, that Thy Son also may glorify Thee." It was no selfish desire that led Him to ask for glory, but only that in the glory He might glorify God, as He had done in the sufferings and the shame.

And now, in the passage before us, "the end" is arrived at, and we get a glimpse of the great eternal future, and there we see the Son still subject to the Father, resting in the bosom of infinite and eternal love; finding in this the fulness of His joy, that God is all in all.

SAUL. PAUL.

THERE are deep lessons to be learned from these names of the apostle (Acts xiii. 9). "Saul" means DESIRED; and this he was before conversion; a great man indeed, but, as he afterwards learned, it was of sinners he was chief (1 Tim. i. 15). Soon, however, he is known as "Paul," which name signifies LITTLE; and such he owned himself to be—even less than the least of all saints (Eph. iii. 8). F. W. F.

BEGOTTEN OF GOD; OR, EVIDENCES OF THE NEW LIFE.

BY J. HIXON IRVING.

V. The Holy Life.

“WHOSOEVER is begotten of God doeth no sin; because His seed abideth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is begotten of God.” We know that whosoever is begotten of God sinneth not” (1 John iii. 9; v. 18, R.V.).

The revival of the heresy of sinless perfection has been the means of perplexing the minds of many, stumbling not a few, and leading others into great extravagances of expression, to say the least. This Scylla is never very far from the Charybdis of Antinomianism, and we need great watchfulness lest in fleeing from the one we fall into the other.

The scriptures just quoted have, by some, been wrested from their plain meaning, and have been used to support both the heresies referred to. Now, we confess that unless we find “sinless perfection” taught in the Word of God—and hitherto we have failed to find anything approaching to it—we must reject mere assertion, no matter by whom it may be made, or “experience,” no matter by whom it may be given; whilst, on the other hand, if the life lived does not correspond with the profession made, we are equally unable with the Word of the Holy God before us, to accept the statements of the lips if negated by the deeds of the life.

Now, the revelation of God never contradicts itself: it is perfectly harmonious throughout, one part explaining, illuminating, illustrating, or confirming another.

If, then, such be the case, the passages before us cannot be found on examination to clash with or to contradict other portions of truth. For the sake of clearness, we propose to look first of all at what they do *not* teach; and second, at what they *do* teach.

What they do not teach.—It cannot be that they even suggest that at regeneration, or at any subsequent period of the Christian life, sin is expelled from the soul, for, “If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us” (1 John i. 8). Neither can it be that they teach that sin in the believer is

rendered powerless or impotent for evil. If so, what would be the meaning of the apostle’s words: “I find then a law, that, when I would do good, *evil* is present with me” (Rom. vii. 21). He does not say I cannot do the good I would for the evil that is in me: no, but even during his holiest deeds, he felt sin to be a present evil. And who does not feel the same? Certainly there can be no child of God that does not.

They do not intimate that sin is even in a quiescent state, “For 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).

An incessant combat goes on in the heart of the saint: a combat that can only cease with life. They cannot therefore teach that the child of God is incapable of sinning, or why such words as the following:—“My little children, these things write I unto you, *that ye sin not.*” “If any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the Righteous.” If sinless, what need of such an Advocate? or of any feature of the present representative work of Christ. Neither they nor any other portion of the Holy Word teaches that any saint does not sin for any given period after being begotten of God. For, “If we say we have *not sinned*, we make Him a liar, and His word is not in us” (1 John i. 10). Words that some would do well to ponder over.

No one would gather from them that the regenerate one did not need to watch against sin. “Stand in awe, and sin not (Ps. iv. 4). “Sin no more, lest a worse thing come unto thee” (John v. 14). “Awake to righteousness, and sin not” (1 Cor. xv. 34).

If the foregoing be true, then we need hardly say that the Christian is sinless in thought, desire, or motive; for is not the thought of foolishness, sin, and “whatsoever is not of faith is sin” (Prov. xxiv. 9; Rom. xiv. 23)?

We believe most sincerely that not one of the points indicated will be found to be taught in the passages we are looking at.

What they do teach.—They teach directly, inferentially or suggestively (in connection with other scriptures) the following:—That the believer has within him a sinless principle,

new, spiritual, and heavenly; and that this principle, which, as we have already seen, is something Divine, and will lead, not to a lawless life, but to a holy one: that he, following its leadership, as it is acted upon by the Holy Spirit, will not sin (Gal. v. 17, 18). This is to be led by the Spirit.

They also teach that he does not sin as compared with the time before being renewed in the spirit of his mind (1 Cor. v. 11; Eph. v. 8-12).

That he does not sin habitually as he once did, for "he that *doeth* (practiseth) sin is of the devil, for the devil *sinneth* from the beginning" (1 John iii. 8). Also, that he does not sin *wilfully* and *systematically*. "For whosoever *sinneth* hath not seen Him, neither knoweth Him" (1 John iii. 6).

They also very plainly assert that the child of God abiding in Christ by simple faith does not act lawlessly. "Whosoever *abideth* in Him sinneth not" (1 John iii. 6). O, to abide in Him every moment!

The law of the Lord, both written and living, is in the heart of the true believer; therefore, he cannot be lawless, which is the sense of the word "sinneth."

The mind, will, and soul remains loyal to the Lord even in the midst of much conscious failure in heart, walk, and testimony. He hates sin, flees from it, and if by reason of unwatchfulness, or the sudden surprises of Satan, he falls into it, he grieves over it, and confesses it to God the Father, and receives cleansing (1 John i. 9).

It is true that he does not live a sinless life, in the sense that he never commits an act of sin; but it is true that he lives a sinless life, in the sense that he is not lawless in heart and walk, but is instead under law to Christ: and thus he lives a holy life.

If he were able he would, by choice, nature, and disposition, live free from one single act or stain of sin; this he cannot do, but by the grace of God he may be able to live a holy life, and thus prove he is "begotten of God." To some this may seem to be a lowering of the Divine standard of holiness; but we believe it to be the truth of God upon the subject. Ye which are spiritual judge.

One word in conclusion, the best safeguard against the errors referred to in this paper, is

a prayerful study of the first epistle of John. Once the moral and spiritual being is thoroughly permeated with its teaching, there is little fear of becoming a victim either to perfectionism with its unreality, or lawlessness with its attendant unholiness.

May the Lord grant that both reader and writer may be living illustrations of the two passages at the head of this paper, and in proportion as they are, they will be reproducing the true Christ life, which is the will of God concerning them (2 Cor. v. 14, 15). "Follow after peace with all men, and sanctification, without which no man shall see the Lord" (Heb. xii. 14, R.V.).

VI. The Kept Life.

"We know that whosoever is begotten of God sinneth not: He that was begotten of God keepeth him, and the Evil One toucheth him not" (1 John v. 18, R.V.).

"The Evil One" is a title applied to Satan, first of all by our Lord, in the parable of the sower (Matt. xiii.); and next, and only, by the bosom friend who drank deepest of His spirit and teaching.

And hence, in this epistle, whilst he refers to Satan some *nine* times, in six out of that number he calls him the Evil One. This designation is expressive of character, and is here in contrast to the Real One of verse 20. From the apostle we learn that the world, which is morally in his power, is imbued with his spirit. "Cain was of the Evil One, and slew his brother. And wherefore slew he him? Because his own works were *evil*, and his brother's righteous. Marvel not, brethren, if the world hate you" (1 John iii. 12, 13). In the grasp of the Evil One, and partaking of his spirit, the God-begotten ones may expect its hate.

And this will be manifested in exact proportion as the life is opposed to its maxims, principles, and practices. Yet, blessed be God, those who are hated for His name and truth's sake, may, by His power energising them, obtain victory over it. "Ye are of God little children, and have overcome them: because greater is He that is in you than he (the Evil One) that is in the world." And on that account they are able to meet its evil:

with good, its hate with love, its falsehood with truth, its jealousy and envy with pity and compassion.

This victory is virtually a victory over "the god of this age." "I have written unto you, young men, because ye are strong, and the Word of God abideth in you, and ye have overcome the Evil One" (1 John ii. 14).

So far we have looked at the active side of the subject of keeping; but that is not the aspect brought before us in the scripture at the head of this chapter. The aspect there is the passive, not the active; the being kept. The only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth, keeps the begotten ones from the death-dealing touch of the Evil One. Thus, He keeps safe those whom the Father gave into His hand, guarding them from the deadly stings of Satan's fiery darts, from the harm of his hate, the defiling power of his presence, and the talons of his temptations, so that he toucheth them not to destroy. Their keeper will therefore eventually be able to repeat His *own* blessed words: "Those that thou gavest me, I have kept, and none of them is lost." He keeps them from the *unclean fowl* that would destroy, if he could, the incorruptible seed of life which is in them; from the subtle *serpent* that seeks but in vain to inject his deadly poison into their spirit; from the *lion* that not only roars to frighten, but who seeks to kill; from the *wolf* that oftentimes hides beneath sheep's clothing, seeking to deceive; from the *ruler of the darkness* of this age that so often comes as an angel of light; from the *prince of the power* of the air that claims the allegiance of the saints of the Most High, yet in vain; and from the *god of this age* that endeavours to gain the homage of the subjects of the King of kings. Kept for life, time, and eternity, by Christ, the Keeper, the Evil One toucheth them not to destroy. This comforting truth will not lead to carelessness or unwatchfulness on the part of the believer, but will inspire him to withstand and resist the Evil One. In Christ, and in Him alone, can we escape his fiery darts, or effectually use the sword of the Spirit against the foe of our peace, power, and progress. Out of Him, as to fellowship, we shall be a prey to his subtle devices; though he is not able to touch the life we have, yet he can rob us of

peace and power; and, solemn thought, he may likewise ruin our testimony. Beloved, may we ever abide in the bosom of our Divine Keeper.

We cannot close our remarks without referring to the dark, dark converse of all we have seen in those six portions of God-breathed truth, viz.: He that believeth not, worketh not righteousness, loves not God and his fellow-men, obtains not victory over the world, lives not a holy life, and is not kept from the power of the Evil One, is not begotten of God.

If any should read this who are honestly convinced they do not possess those heavenly birth-marks, let them not despair, but believingly read this message from the mouth of the Living God: "As many as received Him (Christ), to them gave He the right to become children of God, even to them that believe on His name: which were begotten, not of blood, nor of the will of man, but of God" (John i. 12). Then they too will be able to say, "Of His own will, He brought us forth by the word of truth."

Correspondence.

A SHORT ACCOUNT OF SOME OF THE LORD'S WORK IN SOUTH AFRICA.

KIMBERLEY (South Africa), 8th July, 1889.

To the Editor of *The Witness*.

Dear Brother,—The attention of many of God's people is being turned to this needy land, where as yet the glorious Gospel has but little shone. There are many towns and villages where the true Gospel is not, and has (so far as I am aware) never been, preached! Not to speak of the mass of heathendom lying beyond. But right here, where men have reared their altars and church spires: in this very Cape Colony with its teeming mass of churches and clergymen—this South African Christendom; this is the place that needs the Gospel!

I am cheered to see the hearts of so many of God's dear children being turned to Central Africa, and I praise God for the noble band of workers who have left the home of their childhood to go forth and make known the glad tidings of God's love and grace and truth, for the Name's sake, taking nothing of the Gentiles. I pray that our God would give them the needed "*patience*," for doubtless many trials await them; but GOD is sufficient!

Some years ago I went on foot from Delagoa Bay, through Tongaland and Swaziland, into the Transvaal, and back again, and that *little* journey gave me some

slight idea of the perils that our beloved brother Arnot has passed through. But again I say: *God is sufficient* for all these things, and, looking to Him, HE will guide us with His eye. I purpose giving you a short account of what I know of the Lord's work in these parts. There may be other labourers; but, if so, they are not known to me.

CAPE TOWN.*—This is the first place one lands at from Europe, and here is much scope for Gospel work. There is a Dutch and an English Assembly gathered unto the Name; the Gospel being preached to some extent by individuals in each of these gatherings, but, so far as I am aware, no *corporate* Gospel testimony!

WYNBERG.—A suburb of Cape Town. Here there is an Assembly composed of both Dutch and English, but all I believe understanding both languages. The "Gospel Hall" is their property, and their testimony in the Gospel has been blessed. Our valued brother, Van der Ryst, resides here, though he takes occasional trips up the country, preaching the Gospel.

NATAL.—There are two brethren (Eyles) labouring among the natives at Imbezana River, Port Shepstone, though I have not been able to elicit anything definite from them about their work. There are a few scattered saints in Natal Colony; but, I understand, no Assembly except at Imbezana.

JOHANNESBERG.—About two months ago brethren in this flourishing centre of mining wealth gathered together unto the name of the Lord Jesus. Among them are our esteemed brother W. Hamilton, formerly of Tredegar, and our brother Cranston Arnot. There is no Gospel testimony as yet, but they are looking to the Lord to raise up or supply the need.

KIMBERLEY.—It is now two years since we first broke bread in this "Sodom of sin and iniquity." The Gospel has been persistently proclaimed on the streets and in the hall ever since, and God has owned the testimony, and some have been saved. Still, here as everywhere, we have experienced "difficulties" in thus seeking to carry out the Lord's order and manifest His Truth. Some who "did run well" have turned aside out of the path, and others on whom we bestowed "much labour" have caused trouble and sorrow. Still we calmly wait upon God. It is better to have the "two or three" real hearts with you, than a great congregation of double-hearted people. This has one good effect upon those who seek to do His will—it makes them REAL, and that is what is wanted.

May the Lord of the harvest thrust forth His own anointed labourers in these last days.

BRETHREN J. and J. FISH, who came out a few months ago, have been labouring at Wynberg and Claremont, and the Lord has blessed their simple testimony to many. They have a Gospel tent, capable of seating 250, which they move from place to place. If the Lord will, they may come to Kimberley, after having made Christ known to the villages at the coast. Trusting that readers of the "Witness" will be led to a more perfect knowledge of this country and its great need of real testimony to the Lord,—Yours sincerely in Christ Jesus,

THOS. WINSHIP.

Questions and Answers.

Replies are invited to the following:—

Please give the meaning of Heb. vi. 16.

1 Cor. xi. 5—Does this scripture sanction the exercise of the gift of prophecy by women in the assembly, or the leading of the assembly in prayer by women, provided only that they be suitably attired?

Proverbs i. 26—"I also will laugh at your calamity; I will mock when your fear cometh." How is this to be understood, and to whom does it apply?

What is the spiritual significance of that thrice-repeated injunction of the law—"Thou shalt not see the kid in its mother's milk" (Ex. xxiii. 19, xxxiv. 26; Deut. xiv. 21)?

Would it not be breaking a command of the Lord for a wife to get baptised against the wishes of her husband (see Eph. v. 22; Col. iii. 18)?

THE RELATION OF BELIEVERS IN ASSEMBLIES TO THE DENOMINATIONS.

QUESTION 330.—Is it wrong for believers gathered out to "the Name" to attend meetings held by other Christians, as, for example, an evangelist connected with a society whom the Lord is using in the conversion of sinners? Can we not encourage the work in so far as it is good? Paul was "made all things to all men" that he might win some.

[The importance and interest in this question has induced us to give fuller replies than usual, crushing out the other questions, which we hope to take up in due time.]

Ans. A.—A word of God directly bearing on this question is found in 1 Cor. ix. 19, "Though free from all, yet have I made myself the slave of all, that I might win the more."

To-day, in the meetings of those PROFESSEDLY gathered to the Name of the Lord, we are in ever-increasing danger of becoming absolute slaves of men, and their ideas, and the pathway of faith less and less known.

In the pathway of faith in God, a servant of God can go with God in holy liberty *everywhere* to God's glory in perfect safety.

If it is not the pathway of *faith*, we are in danger *everywhere* of falling into a snare of the devil; and disciples professing to be gathered to the Name, and going to churches and chapels because they like it, or to show *their* liberality, would soon show that they never had *really* been gathered to the Name, that is, had never learned in the Spirit to obey Jesus as Lord in "going forth outside the camp unto Him."

* See map given in last number, before this account of the Lord's work was received.

They would thus sin in going to the churches and chapels, sin in doing what is suggested in above question, as they sinned in "joining the brethren."

M. T. B.

Ans. B.—Do the evangelists who preach, or the Christians who engage them, endeavour to carry out the commands of the Lord Jesus contained in Matt. xxviii. 19, 20?

If not, our presence at these meetings will never help these fellow-saints to obey Him whose authority in heaven and earth we profess to regard as absolute.

We may *please them*, but it will not be for "their good to edification" (Rom. xv. 2).

We can rejoice and praise God for sinners saved at such meetings, while praying also that it may please Him to give us the "greater joy" of seeing His children "walking in the truth" (3 John 4). A. L.

Ans. C.—This question has been discussed till it is "threadbare," and we are as far from a solution of the difficulty as ever.

There is such an endless variety of circumstances, that no rule could be laid down that would suit every case. "Let us not therefore judge one another any more: but judge this rather, that no man put a stumbling-block, or an occasion to fall, in his brother's way. Hast thou faith? have it to thyself before God" (Rom. xiv. 13-22).

If we feel that we cannot go to such meetings, let us see that we maintain the place of separation from a sacred regard of the truth of God, and not from bigotry or narrowheartedness.

If we have grace to go, and can do so without stumbling weaker saints, let us see that we are faithful to the truth and to fellow-saints.

When Paul was at Ephesus, he spake boldly in the synagogue for three months; but when he saw there was no more room for the truth of God, he separated the disciples, and took his stand in a meeting-place where he could teach the truth without opposition (Acts xix. 8, 9); and we never read of him going into a synagogue again. When he was at Troas seven days, we find him at the "breaking of bread"; but no word of the synagogue (Acts xx. 7).

When Apollos came to Corinth, Aquila and Priscilla "encouraged the work so far as it was good"; but their responsibility did not end there. We read: "They took him unto them, and expounded unto him the way of God more perfectly" (Acts xviii. 26).

Many saints who profess to be gathered unto "the Name," speak as if it were a piece of human fancy to be so, and not a solemn obligation binding upon every redeemed sinner. If the Lord in His mercy has delivered us from every sectarian and unscriptural association, we are debtors to every saint we have left behind us; and if we join hands with them in service, without seeking their deliverance, we are unfaithful stewards of what has been committed to our trust. If we are as faithful as Aquila and Priscilla were to Apollos, we will, by the blessing of God, effect their deliverance, or we will soon find that our help is not wanted. G. A.

Ans. D.—The question is, What is our motive? Is it to please the Lord or myself? Is it because there are no evangelists who have "gone forth for His

Name's sake, taking nothing of the Gentiles," that I am compelled to lend my support to those who are in a certain sense the servants of men? Or, Is it because I prefer to listen to the man of education and position, rather than to the simple utterances of the brother whose only claim on my fellowship is that he seeks to preach Christ as the Lord gives him ability, and to win souls for the Saviour?

If I am neglecting "the hall" where two or three have been waiting upon God, and are seeking to bring in souls to hear the Word, and go to another more popular place of meeting where there are other attractions besides the simple and precious Gospel of the grace of God, I may endeavour to excuse myself in a variety of ways; but clearly I am not governed by faithfulness to Christ. Alas! that His claims are so lightly treated, self so readily gratified, and His Word prostituted in defence of self-will. Oh, that each could say in truth, "For me to live is Christ." G. A. S.

[**Editor's Note.**—We have many replies to this question, all more or less in the lines of those we have given, with the exception of answer A, which we give because it differs so much from the others.

Most of those who have withdrawn from the various denominations, and who are gathered together after the manner of the early disciples, have taken the step in order that, being free from the doctrines and traditions of man, they might be subject to the Word of God and to the authority of the Lord, Christ.

Some there may be who have acted from unworthy motives. The trials of the way are too much for these, and they sooner or later return whence they came. Others have acted with little light, but desiring to follow the light given they progress slowly but surely. Others again have been granted a clear insight into the essential evil of all sectarianism, have seen not only that it separates into parties those who are members of one body in Christ, but that the root of this disintegration is failure to give to Christ His rightful place as Lord, as the One who has the sole right to order the House of God.

In the Scriptures of the New Testament there is but one association, THE CHURCH. In that association God intends that there should be a present display of His "manifold wisdom," such as draws forth the interest and wonder and adoration of angelic observers.

Devised as to its construction and order by God, it is adapted, if carried out in the wisdom, grace, and power of the Spirit, to answer all the purposes that God designs to accomplish through His saints in this present age.

It supersedes, of necessity, all other "associations." No other can find a warrant for its existence—let alone for its constitution—in the word of God. All other associations have their origin in the mind of man.

That they originated with good and great and benevolent Christians, and for great and praiseworthy objects, affords no justification of their existence. Each and all they are a practical denial of the sufficiency of God's "association," and proclaim that God's way is a failure, and that His servants must go outside His revealed will to find methods better adapted to effect the purposes of God—the conversion of sinners and the unity of saints.

The light that severs from the sect to which we once belonged, severed also from every other association of human devising, and shuts us up to act upon and contend for the principles of the assembly of God as laid down in the New Testament. The apostles' doctrine is the sole appeal, as therein alone can the revealed will of the Lord Jesus Christ be found.

If this be the truth, as we conceive it is, then the separated path is the only Divine way. If not, then it is the most vicious form of sectarianism, it is the sin of schism in its most specious guise, it is of the flesh and can only end in the judgment of God.

It is well to be perfectly clear as to the question at issue. There is no room for compromise. It is impossible to carry out the two principles, or to mix the two together. If God has revealed His will concerning His assembly, the only course for the loyal heart is to be committed to it entirely, and to cut off every bridge of retreat to that which has its origin in the will of man.

But if this be so, what is to be our attitude toward those who are members of the same body, and who are yet bound up in all the multitudinous associations of Christendom? Are they to be treated as moral lepers? Is there to be "no fellowship" with those who are indwelt by the same Spirit, and to whom, notwithstanding all their ignorance, the same Christ is precious? Are those who have greater light to despise them? To speak reproachfully of them? To sneer at them? As one has pertinently asked, Is there to be no point of contact with them?

So far as we can see, this is where the difficulty arises that is causing much controversy, and no small amount of bitterness, at the present time.

Some feel at liberty to go amongst all associations—they will "preach the Gospel anywhere." They will join with the clergy in a "mission," or will evangelise "under the auspices of the Y.M.C.A.," or will "conduct services" under the auspices of "the Christian Union," or "the Sabbath School Union," or any other "union." They don't surrender their privilege of "breaking bread on the first day of the week," but they feel at liberty as the Lord's servants to "go anywhere."

We confess that there is much to attract in such a course. There are larger and often hungrier audiences, both of saints and sinners. As a theory it sounds well, but when honestly tested we believe it is found lacking.

Two courses of action are open to such. The one is, to be faithful in the proclamation of the truth they have learned. If they go absolutely unfettered and give what God gives them, we well know that sooner or later scriptural teaching will either result in the breaking up of the association or in the turning out of the faithful.

Some may have faith for this. "To their own master they stand or fall." "Who art thou that judgest another man's servant?"

The other course is, to preach what is called the Gospel and nothing else; to say nothing that would give offence; to avoid all points of "controversy"; to suffer the converts, if there be any, to drift into the various denominations and associations that are around them, and practically to take sides with and conform

in their opposition to much of the precious truth of God those from whose "associations" faithful ones residing on the spot were obliged sorrowfully to withdraw, in order that they might do the will of God.

The latter of the two courses we cannot follow. It seems to us first and last to be "compromise," and practically to be a surrender of the truth that has led us into the place of separation and blessing that we occupy.

As to the former of the two courses, we fail to see how we can take our place on the platform of an "association" acting "under its auspices," without by that very act giving our sanction to it. We fail to see how it is possible consistently to sever or decline *membership*, and at the same time to stand on the "association's" platform, and fight under the "association's" banner.

But we dare not sit in judgment upon those who do not see thus. We may exhort them to faithfulness, we may remonstrate with them and seek to show them in what way they may thus be stumbling-blocks to seekers after the ways which be in Christ, but further we cannot go. Their action may be indeed a felt source of weakness; but this must not be rectified by carnal means, the readiest of which is "separation," but by committing the matter to God, seeking light for them and grace for ourselves.

So much for becoming co-workers in "denominational" or "undenominational" "associations."

But our question is as to attending such meetings. To occupy the platform at a public meeting is one thing, to be present as one of the audience is quite another. We dare not visit with wholesale condemnation the many who go and take others to hear the Gospel preached by servants of God, who are being mightily used in conversion. How many there are who can now rejoice over children and others dear to them, who have been brought to the Lord through the instrumentality of those whose position and associations were not such as we could possibly endorse or join in with!

Let those stay away who conscientiously believe that by going they would compromise the truth. But let them not judge and bring into bondage to man those who in all simplicity and godly sincerity feel at liberty to attend such meetings. That there is a danger connected with this liberty must be fully admitted. We could point to many, who, discontented with the less cultivated speech and less comfortable surroundings of the Gospel meeting in connection with the assembly, have gone to attend "mission services," and ended in forsaking the assembly and going back to what they had left.

Others, again, upon other grounds of discontent have fallen in with Salvation Army work and turned their back upon Scriptural order. The dangers are great and numerous, but the danger of falling under bondage to the fear of man we believe to be quite as great and quite as disastrous.

The fear of being judged and condemned, preached at and prayed at, separated from and maligned, proves too much for the faith and courage of many. To escape it, they lay down their necks under the yoke of men, and surrender the real liberty of seeking only and always to be well-pleasing to Christ.]

ROBERT JOHN JOHNSTON.

CONVERTED about eleven years ago in Keady, after serving the Lord for several years in the North of Ireland, he assayed to go forth to dark Africa with the light of the Gospel; left with the second African party, and, evidently after an attack of fever on the voyage, passed away the day of arrival, August 7th, 1889. His parents are both dead, but two sisters and (we believe) three brothers mourn his loss.

The following note from Bath, letters from our brother en route, and piece of poetry written before his departure, will be interesting, and doubtless act as an incentive to more earnest work for God during the "little while" of our appointed service.

"BATH, Aug. 8, 1889.

"Last night at 10.30, a telegram sent off at 5 p.m. came from Bengulla. Though very brief (partly by code) it tells that it is well with the first party, and also with the second; but that for one of the latter—our brother Johnston—it is 'far better.' The words are—'Johnston died of fever on arrival to-day; others well.' It must be in wisdom and love that God has permitted this great sorrow and trial of faith at the first meeting of our brethren and sisters; and as the tidings are so recent, we can plead for the present comfort and help that they must so greatly need, and we shall not forget the relations of our departed brother, and the many who have long known and esteemed him in the North of Ireland. May this experience—new to us in connection with our friends in Africa, but well known to others—be helpful to us all. At the farewell meeting at Walthamstow, our brother reminded us of the 'living sacrifice' of Rom. xii., well knowing what it might involve, and surely this has been a sacrifice 'well-pleasing' to God."

"J. L. MACLEAN."

"S.S. 'GIBRALTAR,'
"Saturday, June 22, 1889.

"MY DEAR BROTHER,

"Just a few lines to say how we got along since leaving London. We got on board the "Gibraltar," about seven o'clock, on Saturday morning, and we got out of the docks about eight o'clock. There were a good number of Christians at the place to see our ship steam out of the harbour. Amidst many sobs they were able to sing the first verse of

'God be with you till we meet again,'

but could get no further. There they stood till we were out of sight, waving hats and handkerchiefs. When we got away from them we turned our attention to what we could see down the Thames, but our hearts were with the friends we had left behind. Dear Mr. Morris, who had left his four young children behind him, said to me—"I thought my heart would have gone in two when I was parting with the children; but," says he, 'it's for His sake and the Gospel's.' However, we soon got over that. The day was splendid, and we enjoyed it, passing the cliffs of Dover, with their chalk rocks, and the beautiful spray from every wave was something grand, and until night we were still in sight of land. We went to bed about ten o'clock, after singing a few hymns together on deck; but in the morning when I awoke, after a good night's sleep, the ship was rocking like a cork on the waves. I found that the mighty roll of the Atlantic on our west was not the smooth waters of the Thames. I sat down with the others to breakfast, but had to leave. I went on deck and rolled myself up in a rug, and lay down. I lay all day. It wasn't long till three of the others were down also, and one or two were left to sympathise. We got

to bed early on Sunday night, the first Lord's-day for a long time that I had not been at a meeting (we would have had one on board had we been able). On Monday morning I was somewhat better, but not able to sit at table all that day. Tuesday I was quite better, but the other three were still getting worse; and that day we saw two very large whales and some porpoises leaping up out of the water. The whales were sending up the spray a tremendous height into the air, and sometimes you could see their great backs up out of the water like an elephant. Had a prayer meeting that night in our own cabin. We have a Bible reading every morning on the deck; we are reading in Joshua and Mark. Were noticing how many men of God in the Scriptures are said to have wept, and you know the verse that says, 'He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him. God keeps a bottle for the tears; how very few of mine go into it! Wednesday, all were up and out before breakfast. I was reading this morning Ps. lvii. The psalmist here cried unto God, who, he said, performed all things for him. Oh! to let Him perform all things for us; He would be sure to do the right. All our party are pretty well to-day, although the sea is very heavy, and we are getting a tremendous rolling; but it's grand, now that our sickness is over, and we are persuaded that the living God holds the water—all in the sea—in the hollow of His hand. What a powerful hand that must be!—we are sure to be in it now, as we are on the water which is in His hand. We hope to land in Lisbon to-morrow morning at eight o'clock, and we will be there for more than a week, until the 6th July; but this time won't be lost, as we will get a little while at the Portuguese language. It is fine to have Jesus, saved with an everlasting salvation, going to be in heaven for ever, no matter what occurs down here. If only our eyes were opened more widely to the realities of eternity, wouldn't we be more exercised before the Lord about the few moments—brief moments which we have left to us—remaining to us down here. I am really happy to-day, tossed about on the waves of the wide, dark-blue ocean, knowing I am in the hand of God, seeking to hear that *glorious Name* and its worth to those who never heard it. Remember me, with love in Christ, to all the Lord's people and all who wish to hear. I need not remind you of Rom. xv. 30. You will be hearing from me again, but perhaps not for some time.

"I am, yours in the Risen Glorified One,

"R. J. JOHNSTON."

"S.S. 'AMBACA,' July, 1889.

"MY DEAR BROTHER,

"After nine days' stay at Lisbon, we sailed off on Saturday, 6th July, on board the 'Ambaca,' a fine new steamer on her first voyage. After breakfast, on the second day, we got together in the saloon and sang a few hymns. A good few of the passengers, with the captain and doctor, came and listened attentively, although most of them could not understand English, as they are nearly all Portuguese. We then asked the captain, who knew a little English, if he would ask the company to excuse our bad pronunciation, and we would sing a hymn in the Portuguese language. He did so, and we sang—

'Tell me the old, old story,
Of Jesus and His love.'

We arrived at Madeira on Monday morning, about 5.30. Got a good view of the little island, which is about 40 by 30 miles, and is noted for its fruit—grapes, lemons, oranges, figs, and olives in abundance. We got together and sang—

'Far, far away, in heathen darkness dwelling,
Millions of souls for ever may be lost;
Who, who will go, salvation's story telling,
Looking to Jesus, counting not the cost.

All power is given unto me,' &c.

After a little prayer we started again for the ship. We got on board again about twelve o'clock. The doctor of the ship is a nice sort of man. Last night I asked him if he could speak English. He said he could, a few words. I got my praise book, and he read the sentence in Portuguese, and I read the same in English. In this way he taught me Portuguese, and I taught him English. I then got my Portuguese Testament, and asked him to hear me read a few verses, and see if I pronounced the words right. My object was more to get the Truth before him. I read John iii. 15, 16, 17, and drew his attention to two words in verse 16—'*Nao percea*' ('Shall not perish'). He said that was good. To-morrow, which will be 18th July, we hope to reach St. Vincent, one of the Cape Verde Islands, about mid-day. The next stopping-place will be Santiago, where we hope to get our mules. I have been reading in the book of Genesis these mornings, and have been refreshed on being reminded of Abraham, who is called the 'Friend of God.' How God told him, 'Fear not, I am thy shield and thy exceeding great reward.' Afterwards He tells him to 'Walk before Me, and be thou perfect.' If there was more of this walking before God there would be more blessing. I cannot but think of the meetings which will be in various places to-morrow. One does not know what a privilege it is to have such meetings until they are deprived of it, and then they can see what a privilege it is. I have no doubt but we shall be remembered at those meetings before the Lord. We will soon be at the one great meeting, where, all around the One whom we love, we shall sing the song which here we have begun: no parting then, thank God.

'From Burmah's shores and India's strand,
From Africa's burning plain,
From Europe and Columbia's land,
We all shall meet again.

'It is the hope, the blissful hope,
That Jesus' grace hast given,
The hope, when days and years are past,
We all shall meet in heaven.'

It is well to fill up the few brief moments for Him; it will soon be all over. What a pity if the little time we have would be lost. Oh! I do hope the Lord will give me grace to make the best of it for Him. Should it not be our object to seek how we could best spend the little while, so that we might be of some service to Himself. Don't you think we shall have time enough in heaven to take it easy. Before we know where we are the time in which we might have witnessed for Him will have passed. And what about a poor dying world? May our God touch our hearts with sympathy. What a pity to see so many of the Lord's people doing—literally—nothing, and so much they might do if only their hearts were in their right place. Jesus, our Lord, is coming. Brother Thomson joins in sending love to all the Lord's people there.

"I am, your brother,

"R. J. JOHNSTON."

"P.S.—Remember John iii. 16. We are down here for Him. Remember also, 'As thou hast done, so shall,' &c. Is there not a danger of us forgetting.
R. J. J."

1889.

LINES WRITTEN BY R. J. JOHNSTONE BEFORE HIS DEPARTURE.

A NEW, strange path stretched out before me lies;
A way untrodden, hidden from my eyes.
I know not what awaits me as I go,
Of joy or pain, of pleasure or of woe.

But I can trust. The way is all marked out
By One who loves me. Why then should I doubt?
He who has shed His blood that I might live,
Shall He not all things also freely give?

I place my hand within that pierced hand,
Which leads me gently t'wards "the better land";
He holds it lovingly within His own;
He ne'er will leave His trembling child alone.

I will not fear, tho' rough the path may be,
I have a tender Shepherd guiding me;
His grace will be sufficient for each strait,
Until He leads me in through heaven's gate.

I will not fear, tho' tempted oft and tried;
His strength is mine if I in Him abide;
His watchful love will still supply my need,
Will guard and guide me, keep, and clothe, and feed.

I will not fear: He ne'er has failed me yet;
His tender mercies have my path beset;
His love is like a river, deep and strong,
Bearing me ever on its breast along.

And when at last my earthly journey's done,
My warfare ended, and my race all run,
I know that g ntle voice which I've loved best
Will say to me, "Child, enter into rest."

R. J. J.

THE FIRST EPISTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS.

Chap. xv. 29, &c.

THE SUBSTANCE OF AN ADDRESS BY J. R. C.

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?" (ver. 29).

The apostle, as we have seen, argues throughout upon the supposition that Christ is not risen, and shows how such a doctrine goes to undermine the foundations of the faith. But one can hardly conceive of a chapter taking up such a line of argument, being regarded as in any degree complete, if it did not allude to that ordinance which so blessedly figures death and resurrection.

Incidentally this verse gives us the true meaning of baptism. It corresponds exactly with Rom. vi. 3, "Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptised into Jesus Christ were baptised into His death"; also to Col. ii. 12, "Buried with Him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with Him through the faith of the operation of God, that raised Him from the dead." Thus baptism not only shows the burial of one who is reckoned by God to be "dead with Christ," but also the resurrection of one who is reckoned by God to be "risen with Christ."

Thus our resurrection is bound up with Christ's, as our death is linked with His. Why, then, be baptised for a dead Christ—or buried as being a dead one in the grave of a dead Christ—if out from that death, that grave, there is no issue into a glorious resurrection? Such is the apostle's argument, and most forcibly it shows how meaningless the ordinance of baptism must be if Christ be not risen, and if His resurrection be not the pledge of the resurrection of all who are in Him.

If such be the significance of the ordinance of baptism, what a solemn perversion is that which substitutes for a beautiful figure of the death and resurrection of the believer, the sprinkling of a few drops of water upon the face of an unconscious babe.

To regard it as the dedication of the child of God does not mend matters. Very right and proper it is that the child of every believer should be from its infancy dedicated to God; but why alienate the ordinance of baptism

from its proper subjects, those who are one with Christ and from its true significance, and transform it into a meaningless rite, forming part of a humanly-devised dedication service? Let those who practise and countenance such error, bear in mind that for all these things they will have to give account unto God. But it is now as it was when our Lord Himself charged the religious teachers of His day. "Thus have ye made the commandment of God of none effect by your tradition" (Matt. xv. 6).

Verses 30 and 31 introduce another argument drawn from those dangers, temptations, and sufferings, which are the essential characteristic of this dispensation and the glory of the Christian. Paul could well take up this argument, for His whole Christian life and testimony had been one record of unparalleled trial and suffering, ending in a martyr's death. To Timothy he writes (2 Tim. iv. 6), "For I am now ready to be offered up, and the time of my departure is at hand." Thus toward the close of his ministry the Lord evidently revealed to him that he was to suffer martyrdom for His name's sake. Previously to this he invariably ranks himself with those who should remain unto the coming of the Lord, but now he is rather in the position of Peter, who had been informed by what death he should glorify God; and without a murmur, nay, even with triumph, he anticipates the end. As a soldier he had "fought a good fight"; as a runner for the prize, he says, "I have finished my course"; as a steward of the mysteries of God, he had "kept the faith." So he looks beyond the death that awaited him, and his eye rests upon the crown of righteousness which the Lord, the righteous judge, was pledged to bestow. Every one has an ambition of some sort. This was Paul's ambition; let us ask ourselves, Is it ours? How many are prepared to give up earthly pleasures and ambitions, to deny self and take up the cross daily, in order to obtain the crown? The life of the apostle was a daily dying. Every morning as that man rose from his couch he offered his life to the Lord. "Lord I am willing to die for Thee to-day." Just like the soldier going into the battle, ready to die for his Queen and country, and fearlessly going up to the cannon's mouth. To be "good soldiers

of Jesus Christ" involves the same surrender of will. But, alas! with how many even of the children of God five shillings a week advance in wages seems worthy of more effort than the crown of glory at the coming of Christ.

How full of meaning, then, as coming from such an one, the question "Why stand we in jeopardy every hour?" "What advantageth it me if the dead rise not?" "Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die."

This bearing of the Cross, this fellowship in the sufferings of Christ, is altogether a mistake, if there be no "resurrection of the just," at which an adequate recompense would be enjoyed. He who lives to eat and drink, to gratify self and enjoy the world, is the wise man after all, if there be no resurrection.

Thus the apostle concludes his argument, and having shown the utter folly of the error that had been eating into the vitals of their faith, he proceeds to exhort and to instruct.

"**Be not deceived.**" There was danger then, and there is danger now of being deceived, for we have a wily, subtle foe, the deceiver of the whole world, to contend with, and whose constant aim is, if it were possible, to "deceive the very elect." Heathen philosophy mocked at the doctrine of the resurrection. The Corinthians had been tampering with the things they had been delivered from, and having given ear to subtle philosophic lies they had well-nigh let go the truth. Evil communications (or companionships) had corrupted them. Well had it been for them, and for many now, had they given heed to the warning of the proverb, "Cease, my son, to hear the instruction that causeth to err from the words of knowledge" (Prov. xix. 27).

"**But some man will say, How are the dead raised, and with what body do they come?**" (ver. 35). The wise men of this nineteenth century are putting the same questions. Because the Divine mystery of resurrection is beyond their comprehension. Because they cannot understand "*how*," and with "*what body*" the dead are raised, therefore is the doctrine of the resurrection of the body being questioned and denied on every hand. But what is the reply?

"**Thou fool, that which thou sowest is not quickened, except it die**" (ver. 36). Not to see

that even nature teaches and illustrates the doctrine, proclaims a man to be "a fool." "Thou fool, God teaches you concerning resurrection every spring-time." Life springing out of death. Thus nature has a voice for the opened ear.* But men, in the pride of their hearts, professing themselves to be wise, have become fools. They are blind; but they say, "We see," and therefore "their sin remaineth."

ON PLEASING GOD.

FROM the moment of his conversion the apostle **Paul** had continually before him a definite purpose, from which he never swerved.

No earthly ambition moved him. This was his aim: to be *well-pleasing* to God (2. Cor. v. 9, R.V.); and this ought to be the all-engrossing endeavour of every redeemed saint.

Thus we read of the One in whom God daily delighted, that even **Christ** pleased not Himself (Rom. xv. 3). Whether as a child in the temple about His Father's business (Luke ii. 49); or, later, at His baptism, when the voice from heaven bore witness to Him as God's beloved Son, in whom He was *well pleased* (Matt. iii. 17); or, further on, in Gethsemane's garden, when, in the midst of His agony, as He looks forward to His sin-bearing at the Cross, He exclaims, "Not My will, but Thine be done" (Luke xxii. 42); or, at the Cross itself, when suffering there for sin because it pleased Jehovah to bruise Him (Isa. liii. 10), was it true of Jesus, "I do *always* those things that *please Him*" (John viii. 29).

It is also recorded of **Enoch**, thousands of years before, that He walked with God (Gen. v. 24).

No mighty work that he accomplished is narrated, and yet, as we read through the list of God's worthies in the eleventh chapter of Hebrews, what child of God would not single Enoch out from the other faithful ones, and say, "Lord, let me, like him, be well-pleasing

*Nature abounds in analogies and illustrations of spiritual truths, and the Scriptures abound in allusions to the teaching of nature. But to attempt to make out an identity of law between the processes of nature and of grace, is a most serious, though specious and fascinating, error.

to Thee!" (see verse 5, R.V.). How was it that Enoch thus succeeded in pleasing God when so many of those who were really God's children failed? The secret is many times revealed in this chapter. It was by *faith*. Faith begins when the sinner turns from himself to Christ, and, praising God, can truly sing—

"My soul looks back to see
The burden Thou didst bear,
When hanging on th' accursed tree,
And knows her guilt was there."

But, blessed as that is, it is only the commencement of faith, and, as at the first you learned how impossible it was to save yourself, and therefore put your trust in the Lord Jesus Christ, so God would teach you, all your earthly pilgrimage, that the just (or justified one; for he alone is just before God) shall LIVE by faith (Rom. i. 17; Gal. iii. 11; Heb. x. 38). "Without faith it is impossible to please Him."

But just as God had to say in Malachi's day of those He loved (chap. i. 2), "I have no pleasure in you" (verse 10), so we read of Israel long before, though blessed with many great blessings (see the five alls of 1 Cor. x. 1-4). "Howbeit, with most of them God was *not well pleased*" (1 Cor. x. 5, R.V.).

Why? True that five special sins are recorded against them there; but these were only the natural result of their *unbelief*.

Notice that expression so common near the commencement of most of the Pauline epistles, "I thank my God."

Is it to the beloved of God at Rome we read, "*First*, I thank my God through Jesus Christ for you all, that your *faith* is spoken of throughout the whole world" (Rom. i. 8)?

To the Ephesians he writes (chap. i. 15-16), that when he heard of their *faith* and love, he ceased not to give thanks for them.

To the saints and *faithful* brethren which are at Colosse again he gives thanks for their *faith* in Christ Jesus and love to all the saints (Col. i. 4).

His first letter to the church of the Thessalonians the thanksgiving is for their *faith*, love, and hope (1 Thess. i. 3), while in the second epistle he exultingly writes, "Your FAITH GROWETH EXCEEDINGLY; and similarly Paul wrote to Timothy and Philemon.

There is indeed one notable exception, and that is when writing to the churches of Galatia; for here the first words after the usual salutation are, "I marvel." And why? Not because they were lacking in works; no, but having begun right, they thought they were to be made perfect in the flesh, and so the apostle, showing how he himself lives, enforces also the same life for them; for the just shall live by faith (Gal. ii. 20, and iii. 11).

A Jew was asked not long since what he thought of Jesus Christ. "Oh," he replied, with much emphasis, "He's dead." And a dead Christ was indeed the last the world saw of Him. But even as God revealed Himself to Israel by Moses as the "I am," so to-day is it given to the believer to know Him as the God *that is*, or, in other words, the Living God.

Such is the One with whom Enoch walked, and such is also the One with whom we may indeed consciously walk; but only when we walk by faith, not by sight (2 Cor. v. 7), and be able to say, with deep joy, "Truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ" (1 John i. 3). But while faith delights to draw near, unbelief is ever drawing back, so that the solemn word of warning is needful: "Take heed, *brethren*, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the Living God" (Heb. iii. 12).

As we turn over the pages of our Bibles how continually we find what a true picture of God's children this is; even Peter, who had been called out to be a fisher of men, we find turning back to his earthly occupation, and no sooner does he say, "I go a fishing," than the others chime in with, "We also go with thee" (John xxi. 3).

We get a beautiful contrast brought out in Heb. x. 38, 39. "But My righteous one by faith shall live; and if perchance he draw back, My soul delights not in him. We, however, are not of a drawing back unto destruction; but, of faith, unto a preservation of soul" (Rotherham's translation).

The drawing back is evidently that of the righteous one; and does not this confirm our own knowledge. Many a time have you not seen a saint starting on the heavenly race, and so running as if to distance all others, but,

as the golden apple of Grecian fable, thrown down before Atalanta, caused her, so swift of foot, to lag behind, have you not seen such a one, alas, too often drop off, until at last, because of the easily besetting sin—unbelief—he can hardly be known as a runner at all?

Therefore exhort one another daily. Dear fellow-believer, how is it with you? Are you running with patience the race set before you; looking unto Jesus, the Living One, who is indeed occupied with you? If you get into God's presence it will then be easy to say whether you have made any progress in grace since the Lord saved you.

How continually the cry is heard on all hands of the lack of power. Surely the reason is not far to seek. God, the Living God, has not been sought or else His power would have been seen.

Further, to be well-pleasing to God you must present your body to God in definite surrender, a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable (literally well-pleasing; see R.V. margin, Rom. xii. 1) to God. What for? Simply that God may work in you to will and to do of His good pleasure (Phil. ii. 13). For it is only as He works in you that you can be well-pleasing in His sight (Heb. xiii. 21).

In conclusion, we find that Enoch was translated that he should not see death. For a time walking here with God; then, in a moment his place is changed from earth, and though some evidently looked for him they did not find him. What a fitting type of our glorious prospect. Changed in a moment, and then for ever with the Lord. "Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work OF THE LORD, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord" (1 Cor. xv. 58).

F. W. F.

CALVARY is the cloudless sky; by faith we look through it and see *the heart of God*.

THEY that have *weak* faith shall have more, and they that have *any* have eternal life.

OUR true growth is more known by our growing downwards in humility than by all the outward things put together.

MOMENTS in life may be agony, but life itself is a blessing.

THE RESURRECTION OF THE LORD JESUS.

BY THE LATE WM. LINCOLN, OF LONDON.

John xx.

IN speaking upon this chapter, I would like to interlace with it the closing verses of chapter xix., in order to weave in our minds, as scripture always does, the thought of *death and resurrection*. We were noticing how that scripture closed with the narrative of Joseph and Nicodemus bending together over the dead body of the Lord. Does it strike you as something strange in the gospel of John that there should be *two* there? I think that the Spirit must have a special object in this, for, generally speaking, this gospel so much sets before us the Lord dealing with single individuals; but in this closing scene it is *two*. Two is common enough in Matthew, whilst in the other gospels one of the two is dropped; because, according to the Law of God given to the Jews, in the mouth of two witnesses every word should be established. But not so is it in John. Can it be, then, without design that it is so here? Why is it? I think to suggest that by the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ we are crucified to the world, and the world is crucified to us. They were two most timid disciples, but they have done with their timidity, with the Lord's body in their hands; they were two rich disciples, and who knew what fleshly ease was, but now they were done with it all. Thus, when the Lord had been crucified, the timid became bold, the rich had done with their fleshly ease; they would be marked men now. Oh, may we, knowing that our Lord Jesus has died to this world, be done with all timidity and seeking of rest upon earth. And is there no compensation? Oh, yes; look at the singular way in which the narrative ends. "Now in the place where He was crucified there was a garden; and in the garden a new sepulchre, wherein was never man yet laid." Why does scripture call attention to the fact that it was a *new* sepulchre? I think to give us the first hint to faith that heaven was opened. How? I believe the reference is to the *burnt-offering*. The difference between it and the *sin-offering* is that the ashes of the *sin-offering* show God's inflexible hatred of sin, whilst the ashes of the

burnt-offering show us God's delight in the sacrifice. Turn for a moment, if you please, to Leviticus vi. 8-11, the law of the burnt-offering, which tells us that the ashes were to be carried "without the camp unto a *clean place*"; and here we learn that the ashes of the sacrifice were put into a *new* sepulchre, which had never been defiled by death. Let us put the two together and see their lesson. There are many timid disciples, but the cross delivers them from their timidity; many there are who have loved ease upon earth, but now they want it not. What is there instead; what to compensate, and more than compensate? Heaven opened, and the sacrifice in all its fragrance and preciousness before God, and these two timid, ease-loving disciples accepted in heaven in all the value of that burnt sacrifice.

FOUR WAYS OF THE LORD.

Now let us go on to the scripture which tells us of resurrection. In this 20th chapter are four things. The Lord's way with *the foe*, the Lord's way with *a disciple*, with *His church*, with *an absentee*. And, beloved, pray bear in mind that these scriptures on the resurrection, whether in Matthew, Mark, Luke, or John, are the authoritative and official way of the Lord's dealing with us His people. Thus, in Matthew, we are regarded as rebels turned into disciples, suitable to the gospel of the King; in Mark we are regarded as lost and needing to be saved, suited to the heavenly Servant; in Luke we are seen to need repentance and remission of sins, suitable to the gospel of the Son of Man; in John it is the Son of God giving life. "These things are written that ye might have life." Taking up dead sinners and giving them life. These four ways are perfect, and, combined, they are a perfect whole.

The Foe.—Observe that the Lord begins with the foe. There is the body lying in the tomb, the grave clothes around it like fetters binding it in death, as if death would not release its prey, and behind death him that had the power of death. There we see how Jesus triumphed over all our foes, puts off the garment of death, symbolical of the putting off and conquering of every foe. There are three passages which are believed to be allusions to this scripture in the epistle to the Colossians. Chapter ii. 15, "Having spoiled (or stripped

off) principalities and powers, He made a show of them openly, triumphing over them in Himself." And in verse 11, "In whom also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in the *putting off* the body of the sins of the flesh, by the circumcision of Christ." And in chapter iii. 8, "And now ye also *put off* all these; anger, wrath," and so on. Look at the majesty of the Son of God, in rising from the dead and thus putting off the garments of death; not hurriedly. He did it in the grave, and by *folding* and *sorting* the garments would, as it were, say, Is there any one single charge that can be laid against any of My people? One foe who has aught to say against one? The living Son of God overcame death, and now that He lives it is a proof that there is not one enemy left, or a single charge unanswered.

The Disciple.—Look now at the Lord's way with a single disciple. And ever bear in mind that in grace He ever begins with the individual and not with the church. For example, in Ephesians, the great church epistle, the Spirit begins with speaking of our individual election and predestination. He deals with each one individually, and our hearts approve His way. He knows, and loves, and carries each one of us; and I think there may be something suggestive in its being pressed that it was Mary Magdalene, because we are so many times told it so emphatically. She, out of whom He had cast seven devils, the perfection of evil; Magdalene meaning a monument. Mary a monument; is there no meaning in it? Will not each heart, which has had to do with the Lord, but own itself a monument of grace? I think it is a similar thought that the Holy Ghost has in attaching the epistle to Philemon to the epistles of Paul. It is like Christ taking first to paradise a saved robber; and the epistle to Philemon concerns one who had been a robber. And when the Lord Jesus begins His great work of church building, He takes first Mary Magdalene as a specimen.

"Touch Me not; for I am not yet ascended to My Father: but go to My brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto My Father, and your Father; and to My God, and your God." I have been asked the question as to whether the Lord Jesus did not ascend twice. My answer is, If there are two ascensions, may

there not as well be two resurrections? and that would be denying the resurrection altogether. But the Lord Jesus did not ascend until the time of which we read in Acts i. When He had given commandments to His disciples, He was taken up, and it is that of which He speaks in John xx. Then why these words? In Matthew we are told that the women were allowed to hold Him by the feet and worship Him; whilst in John it says, "do not be touching Me," or "do not keep holding Me." The idea is again of pointing her to the heavenly home; earth severed from us, the heavens opened to show us our proper place, the Magdalenes, the monuments of grace. In Matthew they represent the Jewish remnant, who will have their home, and worship Him upon earth. In John it is rather the picture of the church of God, and therefore of the heavenly calling.

WORK FOR THE LORD IN CANADA AND THE UNITED STATES.

NOTES OF AN ADDRESS BY T. D. W. MUIR, OF DETROIT, MICH., IN THE MARBLE HALL, GLASGOW.

MR. MUIR read Acts xv. 3, and said:—"They declared the conversion of the Gentiles," and this announcement "caused great joy unto the brethren." This shows that the dear saints of God, among whom they were passing, had a heart for God and His work beyond their own immediate circle and neighbourhood. They rejoiced when they heard of God working in other places.

Now, what I have to say to-night is concerning work for God in Canada and the United States. I only speak of that which has come under my own observation, and that which I know by report from those engaged in it. Twenty years ago, in going from New York to San Francisco, I suppose you would scarcely find a scripturally-gathered assembly of God's people. Sects there were, and are, in abundance. And there were doubtless saints in places, and parties of them separated from the various sects; some of them holding certain distinctive truths in which we rejoice, but, at the same time, they were not gathered scripturally unto the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. But where light is earnestly desired God gives

it, and so it proved in many of these cases. Occasionally some brethren would go over from this country for evangelisation purposes, who were in professed fellowship with Christians gathered to the Name here; but there they preached with Presbyterians, Congregationalists, Baptists, &c., and if any souls were saved they were not taught God's truth of separation unto Himself, and so were left to wander whither they might choose.

About sixteen years ago our esteemed brother Donald Munro went from Scotland to Canada for his health. He had two brothers living there whom he visited. Seeing the spiritual need of the country, he was led to pray about it. He returned home; but having no rest in his spirit, eventually went back again to Canada, and began work for the Lord there. He was soon after followed by our brother, John Smith, of Aberdeen, who became his companion in labour. They not only preached the Gospel to the unsaved, but taught the saints of God that there was something else in the Book than merely being saved and getting to heaven. The truth of believers' baptism, and gathering unto the name of the Lord, as an assembly of God's people to carry out the will of the Lord, as shown in His Word, was put before them, along with other plain, though much neglected things from the Scripture, with the result that little gatherings of God's people were raised up here and there.

Eventually they came to Hamilton, a city of about 30,000. A small hall was procured, and they preached on the street, and then invited the people into the hall, where the service was continued. God was pleased to bless His Word to the conversion of souls. Our brother William Faulknor, now in Central Africa serving the Lord in the Gospel, was one of them. For about four months these brethren went on preaching the Gospel in that place amid many discouragements, but encouraged by God. Personally, I look back to that time with thanksgiving, for it was then God saved my precious soul, as well as other members of my father's family. Since that time there has been an assembly of Christians gathered to the name of the Lord alone there, which has steadily increased in numbers, and I trust usefulness. In due time young brethren

began to speak a word for God, in cottage meetings and at the street corner, and thus were made to become fellow-helpers in the truth.

Then other brethren began to come over to work among us. Brethren Donald Ross, Marshall, Campbell, Matthews, M'Ewen, Martin, Carnie, Telfer, and others, are possibly known here, and we thank God for them there. They, with others who have been raised up there, have laboured in various parts of the country, with many happy results which stand as evidences of the grace of God which has been with them. But the "fields are white," and there is room for many more who are satisfied to live for God and preach Christ, for Christ's sake.

In connection with work in the Western States, our brother, Ross, after having been a winter with us, returned to Scotland, but shortly went back to America, and was soon after followed by his family. He began tent work in the city of Chicago, in company with a Brother Goodfellow. They worked away afternoons and evenings in the tent, also visiting from house to house as opportunity afforded. God saved some souls, and, as the result, an assembly was formed, which still goes on. Chicago then became a centre for work in the Western States, and several little meetings have been begun all around there. Other States have also been visited, in most places an open door being found for the Gospel. But, in spite of the fact that continuous "pioneering" work goes on, yet there are many directions in which one could ride a thousand miles on the railway without running across a single assembly of saints gathered simply to the name of the Lord. In the whole country there are about sixty million people who speak the English tongue; and most of them are unsaved! Have we not a responsibility, beloved, to reach them with the Gospel?

Ignorance of the letter of the Word of God is very marked. We have to urge the people who come to our meetings to bring their Bibles with them; they don't think of bringing them unless urged to do so. In Sunday-schools Bibles are frequently not carried; they use what are called "Lesson Leaves" for the small children, and "Lesson Quarterlies" for the older scholars. In these the lesson for

the day is worked out. The teacher usually has a larger one more full yet in explanation.

A friend of mine, visiting in a country district, went to hear a man who was to preach at the close of a Sunday-school. When she arrived the school was just closing. None went away, and as others gathered in, the place was soon filled. When the preacher came he looked around for a Bible, and not finding one he said, "Well, friends, I have no Bible with me, and I don't see one here, perhaps someone could lend me one." My friend, being a stranger, did not like to offer her Bible, and so waited for a little. But amongst that congregation of teachers, scholars, and others who had come in, no Bible could be found! So she had to pass her Bible on to the preacher. Sad to say this is not an unusual case.

I mention such things, because it is natural for people to suppose that as it is nominally a Protestant, and so-called Christian nation, therefore, they may be expected to be well instructed in the Word. Oh, that the Lord would stir up many more who are willing to give themselves to the Lord and His work, and who have a real desire to lead souls to Christ. I cannot understand how young men, saved by grace, and having no encumbrances, who have a measure of gift, and a heart for perishing souls, can content themselves, when practically they are trampling on one another's heels, while over there thousands are dying without ever hearing the simple Gospel. If they have a heart for Christ, they will find people to preach to, and also some to receive the message they bring, and thus make them shout aloud for joy. You can distribute Gospel tracts, and the people will take them eagerly and thank you for them. My own home is in Detroit, in the State of Michigan, and I know of numbers of places in that State alone, from whence the cry is coming constantly, "Come and preach the Gospel." Other parts of both Canada and the States are the same. Will some of you not respond, "Lord, here am I, send me"?

In closing, I ask the prayers of God's saints, not only on my own behalf, but on behalf of the Lord's servants over there. And don't forget to ask the Lord to prepare, raise up, and thrust forth many more into that vast harvest-field, who will seek to live for God, and preach Christ.

THE ARK OF THE COVENANT AND THE CHERUBIM.

EXPOSITORY LECTURES on the TEMPLES of SOLOMON and EZEKIEL. By THOMAS NEWBERRY, Editor of "The Englishman's Bible."

THE ark of the covenant (2 Chron. vii. 10) was made for the tabernacle in the wilderness, and appears to have been the only vessel connected with the tabernacle which was brought into the temple at the time of its dedication, and placed under the wings of the cherubim.

The ark of the covenant is one of the most perfect types of the Lord Jesus Christ—a full-length representation of Immanuel. His humanity was typified by the shittim wood; His Divine nature and glory by the gold which covered the shittim wood within and without. The sinless obedience and perfection of His life and walk was set forth by the unbroken tables of the law within; His atoning work by the blood-stained propitiatory or mercy-seat; His present glory by the crown of gold surrounding it; the fulness of the Spirit received in resurrection was set forth by the two cherubim of glory shadowing the mercy-seat.

THE CHERUBIM.

What is the idea suggested by the cherubim? We find them mentioned throughout the entire Scripture, beginning in Genesis and ending with Revelation. It will not do to have one favourite idea and try to carry that out throughout Scripture. Truth must always be looked at in its connection and variety, as well as harmony, from a consideration of the whole subject. I may state my conviction: that the cherubim represent the agency which God employs for the accomplishment of His will, for the communication of His mind, and for the promotion of His glory. The varied agencies employed by God for this purpose are, first of all,

ANGELIC AGENCY.

This is obvious from the first mention of the cherubim. God placed at the east end of the garden of Eden cherubim to keep the way of the tree of life (Gen. iii. 24). Secondly,

SPIRITUAL AGENCY.

That is the agency of the Holy Spirit. This will be seen from the two cherubim on the ark of the covenant (Ex. xxv. 18-20). We noticed

that these cherubim are of pure gold, no shittim wood is mentioned in their construction; gold being the emblem of that which is purely Divine. It is always the best and safest plan to interpret the types of Scripture by the facts recorded in Scripture. And we know that when Christ had carried captivity captive, and ascended up on high, He received gifts for men (Eph. iv. 8; Ps. lxxviii. 18). In incarnation the Spirit of Jehovah rested on the Man Christ Jesus, fitting Him for His earthly service; and through the eternal Spirit He offered Himself without spot to God (Heb. ix. 14). Then, as the Priest in resurrection, He received the anointing of the Holy Spirit for His priestly and eternal service in heaven. The various emblems in Scripture to represent the Spirit of God are exceedingly significant and beautiful. The overshadowing, or fluttering wing is the first emblem employed to set forth the action of the Spirit of God. (Deut. xxxii. 11). "The Spirit of God moved (or fluttered) upon the face of the waters" (Gen. i. 2). "As an eagle stirreth up her nest, fluttereth over her young, spreadeth abroad her wings" Again, in Ex. xix. 4, "I bare you on eagles' wings, and brought you to Myself." Also, in Isa. xl. 31, "They that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles." When the Spirit descended on Christ at His baptism, it was in the form of a dove (Luke iii. 22).

The mercy-seat, or propitiatory, represents the mercy, or loving-kindness of God, which is from everlasting to everlasting; for the cherubim were beaten out of the two ends of the mercy-seat, and their wings, meeting above, formed a complete circle. The faces of the cherubim were toward the mercy-seat, setting forth the fact that the atoning work of Christ was the centre purpose of God, the eternal Spirit foretelling and foreshadowing it before its accomplishment, and keeping up the remembrance of it throughout eternity. Thirdly,

PROPHETIC AGENCY,

combining the intelligence and sympathy of a man; the courage and strength of the lion; the patient, persevering labour of the ox; the strong wing and keen eye of the eagle (see Ezek. i. 4, 10). Fourthly,

THE FOUR LIVING ONES

of Rev. iv. 6-8. When John was caught up

into heaven in fulfilment of that word of the Lord Jesus, "If I will that he tarry till I come," he saw a throne set in heaven, and one seated on the throne, and round about the throne were four and twenty elders, representing those of a former dispensation, who, having died in Christ, rise first when Jesus comes; all who have departed in the faith of Christ, from righteous Abel downwards, previous to the present Pentecostal dispensation.

Then we read, "In the midst of the throne, and round about the throne, were four living ones." In chap v., we see the Lamb as it had been slain standing in the midst of the throne. These four living ones are connected with Him, they are in union with the Lamb in the midst of the throne; thus symbolic of the Church of the first-born written in heaven, those who, by the Pentecostal Spirit, are baptised into one body, whether Jew or Gentile, in union with their risen head; one spirit with the Lord in glory, members of His body, His flesh, and His bones, but here shown in resurrection. When to these we add the multitude which no man can number, who came out of the great tribulation (Rev. vii.), we have the whole company of the redeemed who share in the first resurrection. Fifthly,

THE LARGER CHERUBIM

in the holiest of all, in the temple of Solomon (1 Kings vi. 23-28; 2 Chron. iii. 10-13). I may mention here that cherubim is the plural of the word cherub. These two cherubim stand ten cubits, or about twenty feet, in height, half the height of the most holy place. The wings of these cherubim stretch from wall to wall and meet in the centre over the propitiatory. These cherubim were not as the cherubim on the ark, made entirely of gold, but formed of olive wood, being typical of the resurrection bodies of the saints in their spirituality; and the gold of the Divine glory in which they share. These larger cherubim of olive wood overlaid with gold, I believe, represent not simply the Church of the present dispensation, but the whole company of the redeemed in their spiritual bodies glorified together with a God-glorified Christ; the agency which shall be employed by God throughout the countless ages of eternity to make manifest the deep purposes of God centring in the person and work of the crucified Messiah; the

redeemed, in their resurrection and spiritual bodies and in their heavenly glory, will be employed by the Holy Spirit for carrying out and making known the purposes of God throughout the illimitable universe. This is expressed by their wings reaching from wall to wall on either side, filling, as it were, the whole expanse; and as shown by the wings meeting in the centre over the blood-stained propitiatory, they will be occupied with the one central truth—God's matchless love in the redemption which is in Christ Jesus; and making known that love to the glory of God, the honour of Christ, in the energy of the Holy Spirit, throughout the universe in its wide expanse, and throughout eternity.

GOD TESTED BY PRAYER.

NOTES OF AN ADDRESS BY MR. JAS. WRIGHT.

"Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you: for every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened" (Matt. vii. 7, 8).

NOW we come to the second, "*Seek, and ye shall find.*" When we seek, it is for something hidden, as for hid treasure; we want something shown to us or explained to us. Turn to Proverbs ii. 3-5, and you see how under the old covenant we get a similar promise, "If thou criest after knowledge, and liftest up thy voice for understanding; if thou seekest her as silver, and searchest for her as for hid treasures; then shalt thou understand the fear of the Lord, and find the knowledge of God." Now seeking and searching are there connected with crying, calling, lifting up the voice, so the seeking by prayer constitutes . . . seeking of the kind to which the Lord refers when He says in Matthew, "Seek, and ye shall find." And to whom is the voice lifted up, to whom should we seek for wisdom but to the only wise God; and as the Lord Jesus says, we shall "find," and as the Holy Spirit in Proverbs says, we shall "find." Now, I say, this is a test. Have you any hard questions, difficulties about inspiration and apparent contradictions in Scripture? Then, dear friends, you are to use the test. The

Lord Jesus puts into your hand an infallible test, "Seek." Of whom? Of Him who is the wisdom of God embodied. You remember He said most mournfully to them, "The Queen of the South shall rise up in judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it: for she came from the uttermost parts of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon; and, behold, a Greater than Solomon is here." (He is bound to bear testimony to Himself as the Greater than Solomon.) The Queen of Sheba had hard questions, as we read in 2 Chron. ix. 1, and came to Solomon and "communed with him of all that was in her heart"; and we read the remarkable statement, that there was not a difficulty or question but that he told her all. Now, do you see, she brought all her hard questions to the wisdom of God in that dispensation, to the one whom God had made wiser than any man before or since; and the Queen of Sheba, hearing the report of him, believed it, and came a long distance (and travelling in those days was not by express trains) at great expense to reach; him, and when she arrived, what did she do? She did not go to his servants, though she admired them, but went straight to Solomon, told her hard questions to him, and got the explanation of every one. Now, how does the Lord Jesus use that? "That woman shall rise up and condemn you." *You* had hard questions. I heard one say, "Shall Christ come out of Galilee?" and another, "How can this Man give us His flesh to eat?" and not one of you came to Me and communed with *Me* about it. If you had come to Me I would have told you that I was born at Bethlehem, and proved it; and, about eating My flesh, you would have had all explained if you had come to Me, as the Queen of Sheba did to Solomon, instead of tearing yourselves to pieces about them. "Ah!" said the Lord, "she shall rise up in the judgment and condemn you." Beloved friends, if you do not use the test put within your reach, I shall rise up in the judgment and condemn you, for I have told you of the test; and if you bring your difficulties to the living Christ, the Searcher of hearts, and tell them out, it may appear very foolish. But put it to the test; and if you seek knowledge after that

way, you *shall* find it: if you go down on your knees and speak to the invisible Lord Jesus at the right hand of God, and tell Him honestly your difficulties, and that you want to know the right way; and then look at His Word, for that is the only way He speaks to the soul since He has gone on high and His audible voice has ceased, and since the apostles have gone to their rest and the transition from oral teaching to the written Word has taken place. He prepared them for it, saying in Rev. ii. and iii. seven times, "*Write*," and in connection with the churches who received the manuscript, "*Hear*." As each received the manuscript message and opened it, they were to hear the voice of the Spirit. "Hear what the Spirit *saith* unto the churches." So if any are seeking from the Lord Jesus an explanation of their difficulties . . . turn to His Word whereby He speaks to our souls now; and He says with unqualified certainty, if waiting on Him, patiently seeking from Him, meditating on His Word, you "*shall* find," and the Word *He* has spoken can never fail, or one jot or tittle of it be broken.

Before we go on, I should like to look at an instance or two of the godly soul in fellowship with God obeying this injunction. Look at Daniel ix., "I set my face unto the Lord God, to *seek* by prayer and supplications," &c. Well, he sought; did he find? "Whiles I was speaking in prayer" (seeking in this fashion exactly agreeing with what the Lord says in Matthew vii.), "the man Gabriel . . . being caused to fly swiftly, touched me about the time of the evening oblation. And he informed me, and talked with me, and said, O Daniel, I am now come forth to give thee skill and understanding. At the *beginning* of thy supplications the commandment came forth" (he *received* the moment he asked), "and I am come to show thee." He *has*. "Believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them." In intention he *received* as soon as he prayed, and he *had* at the time of the evening oblation. "Therefore, understand the matter," &c.; and the whole thing is explained to him. Isn't this just an illustration, dear friends, of the path noted out for us? When we have difficulties, let us bring them to the Lord Jesus, and seek information from Him, and in His own time and way,

and as we *need* the light, we shall "find," because *real* need and *fancied* need are two different things; we may fancy we need light when we do not really. What do we need it for? To *do* His will; and if we have not come to the point when we need knowledge in order to do His will, we do not get it. Oh! let us be obedient children in this, and want knowledge in order to *do* God's will; and if the time has not come to do this or that, I shall not know it. A servant does not need to know on Monday what he has to do on Wednesday; but if his master does not tell him by Monday what he wants done on Monday, he must not blame the servant if it is not done; but if, on the other hand, he elects to keep him in ignorance till Wednesday of what is to be done then, he has a perfect right to do so. Let us keep in mind, then, that a revelation of the will of God is only needed to qualify us to *do* it.

Let us look at another instance; for it is so instructive, and impresses the truth on our hearts. Ezra viii. 21, "Then I proclaimed a fast there, at the river of Ahava, that we might afflict ourselves before our God, to *seek* of Him a right way for us, and for our little ones, and for all our substance." What was the issue? "He was entreated of us." And look at the end of the chapter, verse 31, "The hand of our God was upon us, and He delivered us from the hand of the enemy, and of such as lay in wait by the way. And we came to Jerusalem." They waited on God, and sought of Him a right way, and found it. "Seek, and ye shall find."

Now this instance is just an illustration of the applicability of this promise to all sorts of things. We are to seek to Him, as obedient children, about the most trivial crises in our daily life; not simply about the great ones, as entering into business partnerships, or about marriage, upon which the prosperity of years after depend. I suppose most Christians feel when they come to such crises, the need of seeking guidance, and it shows a most lamentable state of soul if they enter into these conditions without as much as speaking to God about it. But, dear friends, we are not to reserve our dealings with our gracious God for these mighty crises; we are to wait on our God for a right way

about *everything*. So when Paul wanted to get to a certain church, he prayed, "Now God Himself and our Father, and our Lord Jesus Christ, direct our way unto you," so we should commit every little journey to God, and if we are only going to Bath or London, should come and ask for guidance. You see, the fact that He is the Great Giver, is a reason for simplicity in dealing with our God and Father; the argument used *against* this, is really an argument *for* it. "How can you trouble the great God about such little things?" The answer is, God's power in entering into these little things is the exhibition of His mightiness. Do we not say of mere men, that their not only grasping the general outline of a thing, but entering into all the minutæ, *proves* their might? It was said of Wellington that he could not only plan a campaign, but regulate the weight of his soldiers' knapsacks. And how it proves the might of our Father, that He not only directs the stars in their courses, but numbers the hairs of our head! Instead of being an argument against, it is an argument for it, exhibiting the mightiness of the mind of our God. So let us wait on God for a right way; and what will be the result? Our hearts will be so peaceful. Shan't we have tribulation? "In the world ye *shall* have tribulation." But will our *hearts* be troubled? Not if stayed on Him, and if we do not carry a single care, but roll them all on Him, all the little cares that come pouring in, and which, if they accumulate, will break us down. Snowflakes are very little things, but if they go on and on, they will break through the strongest roof. So the little cares, multiplied, will break the strongest will. Let us be obedient children and cast our cares on God, and then we shall have a peaceful, happy day.

Thirdly, "*Knock, and it shall be opened unto you.*" We knock for admission; don't we? Now we have some precious illustrations of the meaning of this. In Psalm lxxxiv., we see a soul intent upon getting admission into the very recesses of the house of God. "How amiable are Thy tabernacles, O Lord of hosts! My soul longeth, yea, even fainteth for the courts of the Lord; my soul crieth out for the living God. Yea, the sparrow hath found an

house, and the swallow a rest for herself, where she may lay her young, even Thine altars, O Lord of hosts, my King, and my God." The swallow and the sparrow have a house appointed by God, who marks the sparrow in life and in death. "Not one of them is forgotten before God"; and "One of them shall not fall on the ground without your Father." "He who has provided a home for the swallow and the sparrow, won't He let me get to my home, even the altar of my God?" Oh! He understood atonement by blood, He understood that He had no home except by atoning blood, that there was no reaching God but by the atoning blood. The true altar is the Cross, where the Lord Jesus poured out His blood and made atonement for the soul. Trust in that, and you get home into the very heart of God. Now you see how the Psalmist longs. "A day in Thy courts is better than a thousand." Well, aren't they opened to him? I think so, from the last verse. "Blessed is the man that trusteth in Thee." Now, look at Psalm xlii. 1, "As the hart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after Thee." Psalm xliii. 3, "O send out Thy light and Thy truth: let them lead me; let them bring me unto Thy holy hill, and to Thy tabernacles. Then will I go unto the altar of God, unto God my exceeding joy." But look you, before he reaches the altar, he goes through the door. The door of the tabernacle shut off the worshipper from the altar, so before he could reach the altar, the door had to be open. It is well to know that the door is open to go to the altar. Look at a New Testament illustration of the same truth, Eph. iii. 14, "For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ." Behold the Apostle Paul in prayer! What did he bow his knees concerning? "That He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with might by His Spirit in the inner man; that Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; and to *know* the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God." This is essentially the same thing; here is a soul on fire with desire to reach the innermost recesses

of the heart of God, and know the love of Christ, and know, not simply for himself, but for others. Now, you see in Phil. iii. 10, the same spirit, "That I may *know* Him." All these are the requests of a soul seeking admission into the innermost recesses of the heart of God. 1 John i. 3, "These things which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ,"—that you may be admitted into the same holy, happy fellowship.

Now, dear friends, there are gradations in these three terms. If by grace we have asked and received God's free gift, the living water, eternal life, and have sought for knowledge and wisdom to know all God has revealed in His Word, and to increase in the knowledge of God, we shall not rest till we know fellowship with the Father and the Son, which is the very highest goal that the soul can reach. There is no higher blessing than that expressed in the words, "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"; that's admission into the very fellowship of God and of His Son. And, I say, the one who has received Christ as the atoning Surety, who has eternal life through faith in the Lord Jesus, the one who has gone on to seek instruction and knowledge in the Word, will not be satisfied till he knows this fellowship. We shall not know it fully till we reach heaven; but we get a taste here, but only a taste—

"That, that is the fulness, but this is the taste";

but it quickens our appetite. Oh! if we have the taste, and mark declivity in that taste, let us be alarmed, for it is a sure sign that backsliding has begun. Let us "desire the sincere milk of the Word, that we may grow thereby."

Now, may we believers put this precious test into use more and more, and prove the reality of the Lord's promise, "*Ask*, and it *shall* be given you." He will do for us exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think. Let us *seek*, and we shall find; and let us *knock*, and gain admission into the recesses and secrets of His heart, for "the secret of the Lord is with them that fear Him."

ELEMENTARY ARTICLES, No. 3.

THE LORD'S TWO ORDINANCES.

I.—BAPTISM.

THE Lord Jesus instituted two ordinances for the observance of His people, Baptism and the Supper. The Lord's Supper shows forth Christ's death *for us*, and Baptism *our death with Him*. Baptism is a type of death and resurrection. It is also an act on the part of the Christian by which he acknowledges the claims of Jesus as Lord, having died and risen with Him. "We were buried therefore with Him through baptism into death; that like as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we also might walk in newness of life" (Romans vi. 3, 4, R. V.; Col. ii. 12). As the believer goes under the waters of baptism he declares, "I am buried *with Him* by baptism into death"; and as he rises from the typical grave he can add, "Like as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, even so I ought to walk in newness of life." In baptism the Christian confesses his identification with the Lord Jesus in His death, burial, and resurrection.* Baptism is neither a means of salvation nor the door of entrance into the church. It is a profession of faith on the part of the believer; and, in submitting to the ordinance, he virtually says, "I have died with Christ, I have been buried with Christ, and I am risen with Christ." Christian baptism was instituted *only* for believers (see Matt. xxviii. 19, 20 and Mark xvi. 16). In apostolic times *whenever a person believed* he was baptised (see Acts ii. 41; Acts viii. 12; Acts x. 48; Acts xvi. 15, 33; Acts xviii. 8; Acts xix. 5). There is not a single example in Scripture of infant baptism, nor the semblance of a command to baptise infants. It is amazing to us that any honest student of the Word should seek from Scripture to uphold infant sprinkling. We fully endorse the following words of the venerable George Muller, of the Orphan Homes, Bristol:—"It is my firm conviction that of all the truths

revealed in the Holy Scriptures none is clearer than the truth in regard to baptism, justification by faith not excepted, and that the truth is obscured solely because inquirers are not willing that the Bible alone should decide the question." In a catechism on Protestantism, inspired by Rome, the following directions are given:—"When a Protestant offers you a pious book praising the Bible to the skies, and attacking at the same time the truths of our faith and Christian practice under the pretext that they do not find them in the Bible, ask him where he finds in the Bible that it is right to baptise little infants which they do just the same as ourselves." The mode of baptism must have been by immersion. "Baptism" ("baptismos") is a Greek word with two letters cut from the end. Why was the word not translated? Because at the time the translation was made, sprinkling had been adopted. The Greek verb "baptizo" signifies to "immerse," "submerge," "sink," "dip." (See any standard Greek lexicon). In the Greek church baptism is performed by immersion. One would naturally suppose that Greeks should be best acquainted with their own language. We shall give the testimony of some representative men in the various sects which *practise infant sprinkling*. Calvin, the reformer, says: "The word 'baptise' signifies to immerse, and the rite of immersion was observed by the ancient church." Dr. Chalmers, a Presbyterian professor, in his "Institutes of Theology," remarks: "Baptism signifies generally an *immersion* of whatever kind, and done on whatever occasion." John Wesley, in expounding Romans vi. 4 ("Buried with Him by baptism"), says: "The allusion is to the ancient manner of baptism by immersion." Dr. Stanley, Dean of Westminster, in his article on "Baptism," which appears in the *Nineteenth Century* (October, 1879), declares that "for the first *thirteen centuries* the almost universal practice of baptism was that of which we read in the New Testament, and which is the very meaning of the word 'baptize' that those who were baptised were *plunged, submerged, immersed* into the water. *Baptism by sprinkling was rejected by the whole ancient church* (except in the rare exception of death beds or extreme necessity) *as no baptism at all.*" Dr. George:

* It is asserted that there is no resemblance between an Eastern burial and immersion. Was our Lord not laid in Joseph's tomb,—buried in a cave? How would "Buried with Him by sprinkling" sound?

Campbell, in his notes on Matt. iii. 11, states that "The word 'baptizo,' to baptise, both in sacred authors and classical, signifies to dip, to plunge, to immerse." Dr. Tulloch, Principal of St. Andrew's University, in *Good Words* for February, 1871, says, "Adult baptism and baptism by immersion were the rules in the early church. Every scholar knows this."

"Households were baptised, and there must have been babies in them." Such is one of the props on which infant sprinkling rests! Three households are mentioned as having been baptised, viz., the households of Lydia (Acts xvi.), the Philippian jailor (Acts xvi.), and Stephanas (1 Cor. i. 16). To establish infant baptism it is necessary to prove that there were infants in the households, and that such were baptised. Of Stephanas' household it is said they were the "first fruits" of the preaching in Achaia, and that "They addicted themselves to the ministry of the saints" (1 Cor. xvi. 15). Could infants "addict themselves to the ministry of the saints"? Does the Word not inform us that the jailor "rejoiced, believing in God *with all his house*"? (v. 34). Lydia's household is frequently adduced to support infant baptism. But before this can be established, it is necessary to show (1) that Lydia was or had been married; (2) that she had children, and that some of them were infants; (3) that she had brought them to Philippi; (4) that such infants were actually baptised. "There might have been babies in the household," it is said. In order to *prove* infant baptism to be a Scriptural doctrine, there must be stronger evidence than that derived from mere supposition. "There couldn't have been infants in that (jailor's) household," said one; "for wasn't the youngest eighteen years of age?" "Where do you find that?" said another, sharply. "Where you find there were infants: I guessed it." The Word of God gives no room for such "guessing." "Many of the Corinthians *hearing, believed, and were baptised*" (Acts xviii. 8). This is God's order still—hearing, believing, and then baptism. "Baptism has taken the place of circumcision," it is affirmed. No passage of Scripture says so. On the contrary we find that numbers were baptised in addition to being circumcised (Acts xv. 1, 2). If baptism takes the place of

circumcision, only *male infants* should be baptised (Gen. xvii. 12). If baptism is substituted for circumcision, domestic servants of Christians should be baptised, whether believers or not (Exod. xii. 44). If, however, baptism has taken the place of circumcision, the analogy is in favour of believers' baptism. If a literal infant under the law corresponds to a literal infant under grace, then *only babes in Christ should be baptised*. *Natural life and birth*, were prerequisites for circumcision: *spiritual life and birth* for baptism. Often the question is asked, "Does the Word of God forbid infant baptism?" To this we might reply, Does God's Word forbid the baptism of bells? (practiced by Romanists). There is as much Scripture for the baptism of *bells* as there is for the baptism of *babies*. The question to be considered by those desirous of pleasing the Lord should be, "Does Scripture inform us that infants were or should be baptised, and, if so, in what passages can it be found?" "I thank God that I baptised none of you" (1 Cor. i. 14) is often quoted. But the apostle does not thank God that the Corinthian saints were not baptised, and thus make light of the Lord's command. He gives his reason: "Lest any should say I have baptised in mine own name" (v. 15). Again and again we hear professing Christians saying that "baptism is not essential to salvation." Quite true, but it is *essential to obedience* on the part of those who are disciples of Christ. When Jehovah commanded Abraham to sacrifice his only son Isaac, he did not disobey Jehovah and assert that the offering up of Isaac was not "essential to salvation," and that he could easily "get to heaven" without it. All who really believe on the Lord Jesus Christ will get to heaven whether baptised or not. Obedience is the *fruit and proof of love*; and the words of the Master are suggestive, "If a man love Me, *he will keep my Words* (Jno. xiv. 23). One has forcibly remarked, "When people speak of 'essentials' and 'non-essentials,' they generally mean by the former what concerns *their own salvation*, and by the latter those things *which only concern the glory of God!*"

If, then, baptism is one of the Lord's commands, and you are a disciple of His, why tarriest thou? "Arise and be baptised."—A. M.

ACROSTIC—IN MEMORIAM.

[R. J. J. died on 7th August, 1889, at Benguella. He intended, with others, to proceed to Garenganze, but was called to be with Christ the day he landed in Africa.]

Repose he has found in the land of the stranger ;
On others may toil, but his labour is done.
Beset by no trial, exposed to no danger,
Entombed where his warfare would just have begun ;
Recalled from the conflict—nor went he in vain ;
Though to us it seems loss, unto him it is gain.

Just reached was the land, when his spirit, so weary
Of pain yet untold, to its resting-place fled !
His feet were forbidden the desert so dreary.
No tropical sun shall e'er smite on his head.

Joined now to the blest who are weary no more—
Ohow sweet is his rest on that sorrowless shore !
His requiem may be but the dirge of the ocean ;
No records of earth may commit him to fame.
Still dark Garenganze shall hear with emotion
The tale of his death, and shall honour his name.
Obltrude not a question ! *God knoweth that grave*
Nearth the watchful star cross, in the land of the slave.

Sept. 11, 1889.

W. B.

Questions and Answers.

Replies are invited to the following :—

Would it not be breaking a command of the Lord for a wife to get baptised against the wishes of her husband (see Eph. v. 22 ; Col. iii. 18) ?

What is the spiritual significance of that thrice-repeated injunction of the law—"Thou shalt not see the a kid in its mother's milk" (Ex. xxiii. 19, xxxiv. 26 ; Deut. xiv. 21) ?

Seeing "the time is short," and "the coming of the Lord draweth nigh," is it wrong for saints to neglect studies which would advance them in worldly position, and go and engage in Gospel work, the study of the Word, &c., &c. ?

1 Peter iii. 15—Why "with fear" ?

Are we who are gathered out to the Lord, and who profess, for His Name sake, to take nothing of the Gentiles, or help them in their schemes, free to benefit by a public subscription in case of an accident, in the same way as the ungodly do ?

Will you kindly ask through your paper what we are to understand by the word "worlds," spoken of in Heb. i. 2 ?

QUESTION 331.—1 Cor. xi. 5—Does this scripture sanction the exercise of the gift of prophecy by women in the assembly, or the leading of the assembly in prayer by women, provided only that they be suitably attired ?

Ans. A.—The passage alluded to certainly shows—

I. That our Lord was pleased to confer on women the gift of prophesying. They, as well as men, shared in the partially fulfilled prophecy of Joel—"Your sons and your daughters shall prophesy" (Acts ii. 17 ; see also Acts xxi. 9).

II. It seems also clear that certain women in Corinth used the gift bestowed, in other words, prayed and prophesied, in the assembly at Corinth. That it was in the assembly, I deduce from the following reasons : 1st—The principal sphere of the prophet was in and to the church. "He that prophesieth edifieth the church" (1 Cor. xiv. 4-22). 2nd—I am not aware that it would be any breach of decorum for a woman to have her head uncovered in private, or before females only ; therefore, the case in hand alludes to women praying, &c., in public, and before men. 3rd—The apostle, summing up, says, "We have no such custom, neither the churches of God" (verse 16), showing that it was a church matter.

III. The passage further shows that these women, as well as men, were doing a *right thing*, but in a *wrong way*. The apostle does not find fault with the thing done, but with the manner of doing it, and that for reasons given in the passage. Clearly, *in this passage*, the exercise of the gift of prophesying by women in the assembly, or the leading of the assembly in prayer by women, was *not* interdicted, provided only that they were suitably attired.

But with many honest souls the real difficulty lies in comparing this passage with 1 Cor. xiv. 34-36, which seems to impose absolute silence on women in the church, while in 1 Cor. xi., praying, &c., in the church is not condemned, but regulated.

May the solution of the apparent contradiction not lie here ? In 1 Cor. xi. the apostle is speaking of praying and prophesying, *i.e.*, women speaking for God, and to God ; in 1 Cor. xiv. he is speaking of women asking questions, and wishing to learn. This he condemns, and tells them—"If they would learn anything, let them ask their own husbands at home." Ignorant wives asking questions is a very different matter from women praying and prophesying, and called for different treatment.

This is a large and important question, affecting as it does the majority of the Christian Church, and in view of the fact that God in these days, in a special manner, is calling out, and setting His seal to, the ministry of women, it becomes us to handle the question in a fair and dispassionate spirit. C. C.

Ans. B.—Man and woman throughout the first fifteen verses of this chapter would be better rendered *male* and *female*. It is of *such* in the Lord and in the assembly that the apostle is speaking, and not of husband and wife as verses 8 and 12 distinctly show, where to read husband and wife would make nonsense. Thus 1 Cor. xi. 5 seems most clearly to establish that God's way was to speak through females in the assembly, whether through the *widow* Anna, in the temple of

Jehovah, speaking of Jesus to *all* that looked for redemption in Israel, or by the four *virgin* daughters of Philip, which did prophesy in the assembly which is now the temple of God.

Such liberty had holy women of old in God's presence. Alas! that there is not to-day, both in the church and before the *world*, the same spirit of prophecy, which is the testimony of Jesus through male and female; for ye may *all* prophesy one by one, and then *all* thus prophesied. An *unconverted* one coming into such an assembly felt the presence and power of God. But the Holy Spirit, the Lord, limits this liberty. *Only* the *unmarried* females were permitted to prophesy, fulfilling the word through the prophet Joel—"My hand-maidens shall prophesy."

Thus 1 Cor. xi. 5 harmonises with xiv. 34—"AS FOR THE WIVES *in the assemblies*, let them keep silence, for it is not permitted them to be speaking, but let them be in submission, according as *even the law* says (Gen. iii. 16; Rotherham's translation, in his emphasised New Testament). But if anything they are wishing to *learn*, at home, their *own* husbands let them question; for it is a *shame* for a wife to be speaking in assembly."

One more passage on this subject remains, presenting an *apparent* contradiction to the above line of thought, in 1 Tim. ii. 11, 12. Let the careful reader see that in verses 8, 9, and 10, the apostle is writing of the becoming conduct everywhere, in assembly and in private, of *males* and *females*. In verse 11 he is speaking of a *wife*—"Let a *wife* learn in *quietness* (not silence), with all subjection, for I suffer not a wife TO BE TEACHING, nor to be lording it over a husband." (Alas! too many are fond of doing it, and then the husbands become babies.) Thus *from verse 11* the apostle is entirely speaking of private conduct of the wife to her husband, and cites an example of the first husband and wife ere sin had marred the Divine order in Paradise, where Adam is both seen and heard speaking, but Eve is seen and not heard. Further, verse 15 shows most unanswerably that he is speaking of the married women, where he says—"Nevertheless *she* shall be saved if *they* continue in faith, and love, and holiness," &c. Who are the "*they*"? Why, of course, husband and wife. The faith and holiness of *both* is required, that they may claim the fulfilment of this promise, or God might visit the sin of the husband on the godly wife, depriving him of her as a chastisement of him for his failure and sin; translating thus, *all* scripture sweetly and blessedly harmonises.

It may be added that the *married* woman, as under law to her husband, and thus representing the Church in subjection to Christ, is in the *assembly* commanded to keep silence. Further, nature would dictate the impropriety of a *married* woman rising in the assembly to teach her own and other husbands there present. The moral effect on the husbands would be bad, who, being both the natural and spiritual heads of their wives, would, in taking this subordinate position of learners in public of their wives, be violating both nature and grace.

In this delicate question of woman's ministry, we shall do well indeed to be fully and *intelligently* persuaded as to the mind of God, and then leaving God Himself to work, beware of putting out our hands

either to thrust forward or thrust aside the weaker vessel.

It seems an exceedingly weak argument to say that, as there are no prophetesses now, woman cannot speak in the assembly. If she spoke two thousand years ago, Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever; and the spirit of prophecy, which is the testimony of Jesus, still lives in the heart of the godly, both male and female, and would, if ungrieved and unhindered, speak out in the assembly to the glory of God. M. T. B.

Ans. C.—Various breaches of due decency and order having crept into the church at Corinth, and the apostle having been made aware of it, he wishes, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, to correct them. He reproves them because, firstly, he learns that, when meeting together for the worship of God, there was evident lack of due reverence, in that the men kept their heads covered, and the women appeared unveiled and with uncovered heads. This careless and irreverent mode of appearing before God he strongly reproves, and shows both men and women that whatever might be done in private or in ordinary scenes of life, was on no account to be done in the public assembly of believers before God. He argues that as "the head of every man is Christ, and the head of the woman is the man, and the head of Christ is God," so ought they always to keep this in mind in their coming together for worship. The man to appear with uncovered head, "forasmuch as he is the image and the glory of God"; and women to appear with covered heads, and veiled, seeing the woman is subject to and the glory of the man; and also because of the (witnessing) angels. In other words, that though there was equality before God, as saved by one common salvation, yet as men and women they were designedly to show forth, by the one being uncovered as representing the "image and glory of God," and by the other being veiled and covered, as being subject to "the glory of the man"—the relationship between Christ and the Church.

The question here of *utterance* in praying or prophesying is not the point; it is simply the question of behaviour and due attire when met together. Now, from 1 Cor. xiv. 34, 35, and from 1 Tim. ii. 11, 12, it is absolutely forbidden to women to take part in public ministrations when men are present, or to take place of authority over man in teaching; they are commanded to be silent in the churches, and to learn in silence. Therefore the mention of women "praying and prophesying" must be simply understood in the light of the whole passage, v. 1-16, as referring to their joining in worship in the assembly *when praying and prophesying is going on*, and not as referring to a habit of "praying and prophesying" audibly, as though they had equal right to do so with the men. It seems thus to point out simply how women should be modestly dressed (men also) when assembled in worship, and not to give ground to women to audibly pray and prophesy, as they may feel led, equally with men. Praying and prophesying is, then, here dwelt on as the general act of the assembly, and the word "worshipping" might lawfully be used in its place, as far as he tenour of the argument goes. A. O. M.

[Editor's Note in our next.]

THE FIRST EPISTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS.

Chap. xv. 37.

THE SUBSTANCE OF AN ADDRESS BY J. R. C.

AND that which thou sowest, thou sowest not the body that shall be, but a bare grain, it may chance of wheat, or of some other kind; but God giveth it a body even as it pleased Him, and to each seed a body of its own."

In sceptical minds difficulties arise as to the possibility of the resurrection body consisting of the identical particles that composed the body which died and was buried. Such particles, they say, went long ago to form other organisms—as, for example, those who have been devoured by wild beasts or fishes, the particles of the bodies which were devoured went to form part of the bodies of the animals that devoured them, and these in turn went to form others.

But in the teaching of this passage no such difficulty appears. Each kind of grain, be it wheat, or oats, or barley, being sown in the earth, produces as it dies a new life—a plant strictly analogous to the kind of seed that it sprang from—the form of the plant being invariably that very form, and no other, which it pleased God at creation to connect with that particular kind of seed. The plant that rises from the dead but quickened seed does not consist of the identical particles: "Thou sowest not the body that shall be"—not a graceful, beautiful plant, with stem, and leaves, and fruit, but "a bare grain," inferior in size and beauty to that which springs from it.

True, there is an intimate and mysterious connection between the seed and the plant, and so there must be also between the natural and the resurrection body of the saint; for graves are opened, and the sea gives up the dead which are in it. But however mysterious and incomprehensible to us the relation of the new body to the old, there remain the following points clearly demonstrated in this scripture:—1st, that "the body which shall be"—though in some sense connected with and springing from the corruptible body—is not the same; 2nd, that though it be not the same, it shall correspond with it, as the wheat that springs up corresponds with the wheat that is sown.

Then the apostle proceeds to show from analogy the variety that may and will characterise "the resurrection": and, chiefly, we would notice, the "bodies celestial and bodies terrestrial"; "but the glory of the celestial is one, and the glory of the terrestrial is another."

May we not gather from this that there will be a resurrection of the dead for earth and a resurrection of the dead for heaven. Both in heaven and on earth there will be eternal monuments of the wondrous redemption work of the Lord Jesus. The Church is heavenly, therefore our hope is heavenly. Our prospect is not to walk the earth, but to shine in the heavens.

And turning to the heavens, we read there are differences of glory, as of the sun, the moon, and the stars, and "one star differeth from another star in glory." Think of the difference between the sun and the moon: the sun shining in its own inherent glory—the moon having no light in itself, and yet reflecting the glory of the absent sun. Such is the Church—"fair as the moon" if only she reflect the glory of Christ; if only she show forth the virtues of Him who called her "out of darkness into His marvellous light."

Lately we witnessed an eclipse of the moon. Gradually its fair and brilliant disc became obscured, and night was robbed of her cheering light and left to its native darkness. What caused it? It was only that the earth had come in between the sun and the moon, and so intercepted his glorious rays.

What a lesson we may learn from this! Only as the Church with unveiled face beholds the glory of her Lord, can she shine upon the darkness of this world. In herself, like the moon, she has no light—she is "black"; nevertheless she is "comely"—but only as she dwells in the light, and reflects that light amid the darkness of earth.

Let earth, the things of time and sense, the love of the world, come in to hide Christ from the saint, and, like the moon eclipsed, his light goes out—he shines no longer. Here is the secret of the change, when coldness takes the place of zeal, and silence takes the place of testimony—when those who once shone bright are dim, and hardly differ from the darkness around—the world has come in and Christ is out of sight.

By-and-by "He shall come to be glorified in His saints, and to be admired in all those that believe." Innumerable hosts shall behold with admiring gaze the beauty of the Lord,—His character and His glory reflected in the Church,—and as they see it all to be the fruit of His agony and toil, what wondering and adoring worship will ascend!

Verse 42—"It is sown in corruption; it is raised in incorruption." We don't know what "incorruption" is here. Precious stones are the nearest approach to it on earth. The glory and beauty of the first creation is likened to the flower of the field which passeth away. But the beauty of the new creation is likened to "all manner of precious stones." Bodies and inheritance alike will be incorruptible.

Verse 43—"It is sown in dishonour; it is raised in glory." As I have stood by the grave of one I loved, and have seen the earth heaped upon the coffin, I thought, what dishonour! To have to bury under the earth one whom you have looked up to with affection and veneration—what a dishonour to heap upon redeemed dust! But, I thought again, that is the very last now that sin and Satan can do. The next scene—how different!—when that which has thus been sown in dishonour shall be raised in glory, and fashioned by Him who is the "Resurrection and the Life," like unto His own glorious body.

"It is sown in weakness; it is raised in power." Christ was "crucified through weakness, yet he liveth by the power of God." Death is utter weakness. How different the risen Lord Jesus, ascending up far above all principality and power and taking His place at the right hand of the throne, from that same Jesus nailed to the cross, or taken down from it and laid in the cold sepulchre! Even such, in measure, is the difference between the saint laid in the grave and that same saint as he rises up on the resurrection morn. Happy is he who learns the lesson of weakness here. To die daily is weakness indeed; but it is such, and they alone, who know the power of Christ resting upon them, that same resurrection power by which He rose.

Verse 44—"It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body." I want you to notice the difference between "a spirit" and "a spiritual body." When the disciples beheld

the Lord in resurrection, they were afraid, for they supposed they had seen a spirit. But Jesus said, "Behold My hands and My feet, that it is I Myself: handle Me, and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see Me have" (Luke xxiv. 36-39). Thus He proved to them that He was not a mere spirit. Even so in resurrection we shall not be spirits, but shall have spiritual bodies—bodies of such a nature that they may be seen and handled, and yet fitted for a spiritual and heavenly existence. In our present bodies we could not bear the glory of heaven. The sight of the Lord blinded in an instant Saul of Tarsus. When John saw Him in Patmos,—His countenance as the sun shining in its strength,—he fell at His feet as dead. Only a spiritual body can be at home amid the heavenly glories; and such a body will be ours—no longer a clog and hindrance to spiritual energies, to be kept under and brought into subjection, but a fit vehicle for the new-born, eternal life,—the spirit that is begotten in us by the Spirit of God. We hardly know what life is here, we are so beset with weakness and infirmity. It is said, regarding the dwellers both in heaven and in hell, "They rest not day or night." But why no rest in heaven? Because there is no need for it. These natural bodies need rest. It is a humbling thought that we spend nearly one-third of our life in unconscious sleep. But the spiritual bodies which shall be ours at the coming of the Lord will need no sleep. Now we have life, then we shall have it "more abundantly" (John x. 10).

AT JESUS' FEET.—ON JESUS' BREAST.

FROM AN ADDRESS BY WM. BLANE.

THERE are two wonderful characters in the Gospels—John the apostle, and Mary of Bethany. The first of these that we will speak of is Mary, and the grand choice she made.

Three Scenes in Mary's Life.

THE HOME SCENE.

Now, I want you to notice particularly the time that she elected to *sit at Jesus' feet*. It was just amid the daily toil, when all things were going on in their usual course, when her big brother, Lazarus, was coming in for his

meals, when the look of health was beaming on his countenance, when he was the joy and stay of that family. If there was ever a time when she had no need to be careful about the Lord Jesus Christ, it was then. What a lesson for those with whom everything is going well! Elect amidst all, as you have it, to take your place at Jesus' feet. There are some who are for ever setting up a fools' paradise, and they say, If things were only so-and-so, I would be better; but, let me say, the man who so determines is just the very man who would not change one little bit more than he could help. Life is what you have it. Life in London may seem a grand thing to that man away in some village green; or, to the one who lives in a kitchen, life in a palace may be a grand ideal, but it is not her study. Life in the kitchen is what she has got to meet; and she should make it her *study* to make life sweeter, grander, more beautiful, in that sphere, and in so doing she will glorify God. It is not what may be, or what should be, but it is what *can be* and what *is* that we have to do with. What are my circumstances, and can I please God in them? Yes, beloved friends, you can. Life is where you find it, and that is the very place where God would have you to glorify Him. If you take life in this way, then you are welcome, nay, you are wise, to beautify and embellish it, and God will bless you in it. When you elect thus to serve God in the position in which He has placed you, then you will not pass the notice of Him who marked Mary "at His feet." He approved of her choice, and, more, He said it would "never be taken from her." The time will come when I will not be able to speak; the time will come when service shall cease, and be a thing of the past; but the time will never come when we will be forced to rise from our position of "sitting at His feet" listening to His word; that will be ours for ever and ever. I would have liked to linger here; but pass on and read a portion in John xi.

THE TOMB SCENE.

"Then Martha, as soon as she heard it, went and met Him; but Mary sat still in the house. Then when Mary was come where Jesus was, she *fell down at His feet*, saying unto Him, Lord, if Thou hadst been here, my brother had not died. When Jesus therefore saw her weeping, and the Jews also weeping which

came with her, He groaned in the spirit, and was troubled, and said, Where have ye laid him? They said unto Him, Lord, come and see. Jesus wept."

I do not think it was so much Lazarus in the tomb that day, nor the deep gloom of the surroundings, that drew the tear from the eye of the Lord Jesus Christ, as to see that one in her deepest and keenest affliction in her accustomed place, *at His feet*. And as the burning tear-drops fell from her eye on to His dust-covered sandal who had come to do the work of love, the heart that knew the eloquence of a tear throbbled as it never had done before, and He wept with the truest sympathy between Himself and that one at His feet. There had come the dark cloud over Bethany; I believe Bethany means "the house of affliction." We would all like our houses to be Bethanys; but if we are to have them Bethanys, we will have the affliction. And so, when the dark cloud of affliction came, Mary could trust in her Lord, and when He came He was more to her than her own sorrows were; and so He got the first of her heart, for she fell at His feet.

THE FEAST SCENE.

Another scene in chapter xii. "Then Jesus, six days before the Passover, came to Bethany, where Lazarus was which had been dead, whom He raised from the dead. There they made Him a supper; and Martha served: but Lazarus was one of them that sat at the table with Him. Then took Mary a pound of ointment of spikenard, very costly, and anointed the feet of Jesus, and wiped His feet with her hair: and the house was filled with the odour of the ointment."

Here all is changed again. Their tears are all dried away, for yon tomb no longer holds their brother Lazarus, and now Jesus comes to visit their home. You can fancy the circle. There is Lazarus, the man who knew, but kept, the cold, dark secret of the grave. Who would not be carried away as they looked into those eyes which had been closed in death? But, whoever might be carried away, Mary, amidst the brightness of that feast, is in her accustomed place, at the feet of the Lord she loved. Thus we see that the one who learns in the common things of everyday life to take that place at Jesus' feet, will, when the dark gloom of affliction and death comes on, still be found there; or, again, when the bright cloud comes and the glory shines forth, will not be carried away. Now look on

Three Scenes in John's Life.

THE SUPPER SCENE.

"Now there was leaning on Jesus' bosom one of His disciples, whom Jesus loved. Simon Peter therefore beckoned to him, that he should ask who it should be of whom He spake. He then lying on Jesus' breast saith unto Him, Lord, who is it? Jesus answered, He it is to whom I shall give a sop, when I have dipped it."

Here we find John at the supper leaning his head on the bosom of the Lord Jesus, for there was a communion between John and the Lord that was not between Him and any of the other apostles. Peter said, "Ask Him, John; you are near Him and have confidence in the love that is in His heart"; and so John asks, and gets the news to communicate to all the rest. That was ministry, as the result of leaning on Jesus' bosom, and all true ministry must come in that way. A little word on this. In 1 Peter, chap. iv., we read, "If any man minister, let him do it as of the ability which God giveth." Now in the whole universe God has a system of ministry: the air and the sea minister to the earth, for God has made the world one great piece of machinery; and all His creatures—animate or inanimate—minister the one to the other. So with the body, my foot ministers to my hand, and my hand to my foot. Beloved children of God, we cannot get on without one member of the body of Christ. It is not all speaking. O no. Speaking and ministry must be distinguished. Speaking to the saints of God should be the result of leaning on the bosom of Christ. John vii. 38—"He that believeth on Me, out of *his belly* shall flow rivers of living water." It is out of his warm parts, not out of his head. The result of leaning on the bosom of Christ is, that all the ministry that comes from us is from the heart of Christ.

THE CROSS SCENE.

There is another scene in chapter xix. "Now there stood by the cross of Jesus His mother, and His mother's sister, Mary the wife of Cleophas, and Mary Magdalene. When Jesus therefore saw His mother, and the disciple standing by whom He loved, He saith unto His mother, Woman, behold thy son! Then saith He to the disciple, Behold thy mother!"

Here we find John following his Master in that dark hour of trial. Peter had denied Him; now John stands denying Him. John stood by Him, supporting that widowed, heart-broken mother when the sword was

piercing her heart; here we find him coming into this dark gloom, because he knew the heart that was bleeding on the cross of Calvary.

THE CLOSING SCENE.

Now another scene in the last chapter of John, the 20th verse. "Then Peter, turning about, seeth the disciple whom Jesus loved following; which also leaned on His breast at supper, and said, Lord, which is he that betrayeth Thee? Peter seeing him saith to Jesus, Lord, what shall this man do? Jesus saith unto him, If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee? Follow thou Me."

Here we find that the risen Lord Jesus says to Peter, "Follow thou Me"; but John seems to be unnoticed. He could stand by and see Peter, who had denied the Lord, commissioned to feed the sheep and lambs, while he seemed to be left aside; but he still went on following the Lord. Practical godliness is needed. The man who, in spite of all seeming contradictions, would take his place in the ways of the Lord, doing God's work, apart from its relation to the place of another, and, even although it is to plant his foot in the footprints of a Peter, would be content to do it, must learn of Him who is "meek and lowly in heart"—must lean on Jesus' breast.

ELEMENTARY ARTICLES, No. 4.

THE LORD'S TWO ORDINANCES.

II.—THE LORD'S SUPPER.

THE Lord's Supper is designed for believers, and believers only. Only those who have *known* the Lord can "remember" Him. It was "disciples" who came together to break bread (Acts xx. 7). *The Lord's table is for the Lord's people.* A large, influential, and aggressive sect refuses to allow any but those who have been immersed to observe the Supper with them. The basis of Christian fellowship should be broad enough to receive all whom God has received (subject to such limitations as are specified in the Word). "Him that is weak in the faith receive ye" (Rom. xiv. 1); and the ground of this reception is, "*God hath received him*" (v. 3). If, then, God has received one (apart from the question of scriptural discipline) we are bound to receive him, *else the table ceases to be the table of the Lord and becomes the table of*

a sect. "If there be any term of communion proposed save the all-important one of faith in Christ and a walk consistent with that faith, the table ceases to be the table of the Lord, and becomes the table of a sect" (C. H. M., in "Thoughts on the Lord's Table," page 18. Revised Edition). A lady desired to be received into fellowship with Christians gathered to the name of the Lord. They were satisfied that she was a child of God, and instructed her on the truth of baptism. She stoutly affirmed that she was baptised when a baby. They sought to show her from Scripture that she had not received Christian baptism and that it was her privilege and duty to be baptised. Whilst strongly contending that she had obeyed the command of the Lord, she said, "I am satisfied that I had Christian baptism, but so anxious am I to be received into fellowship that I am prepared to be re-baptised." They could not, however, undertake such a responsibility until she saw it to be the will of the Lord. Seeing that it was not a question of *submission* but of *intelligence*, she was "received." Not many weeks after, she learned the truth represented by the figure, and was buried in the waters of baptism. It was the apostolic custom for Christians to assemble themselves on the "first day of the week" to "break bread." "*Upon the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread*" (Acts xx. 7). Not the "first Sunday of the month," or "the first Sunday of the quarter." Through the traditions and commandments of men, the Lord's Supper is now observed only occasionally by the majority of professing Christians. On the plea of making it "too common," or being "inconvenient," once a month or once a quarter suffices! To "break bread" was the object for which the early Christians assembled themselves. They did not come together to hear Paul "discourse with them" (Acts xx. 7, R.V.), though he availed himself of the opportunity of doing so. Doubtless there would be special occasions for teaching and exhortation in addition to the meeting for breaking bread.

The following is the substance of a conversation between a Christian lady in one of her sects, and an evangelist in fellowship with
gathered to the name of the Lord. "I

trust," said she, "that you had a good time this morning at your meeting. We had a capital discourse from our minister." "We always have a 'good time,'" said the brother. "We went to meet the Lord Jesus at His own table, and when thus assembled we cannot be disappointed. Suppose Queen Victoria," he added, "announced her intention of holding a levée in W—, and you were invited to meet her in a certain place, on a certain day, at a certain hour. Suppose also that a nobleman from the Court of St. James visited W—, and announced his intention of giving an address or lecture *about Her Majesty*, on the same day, at the same hour, whether would you meet the Queen or go and hear what the nobleman had to say *about her*?" "Of course I would go and meet the Queen." "The difference between you and me," he continued, "is this: *I went to meet the Lord Jesus Himself at His own table, and you went to hear what one of His ministers had to say about Him.*" Many of God's dear children, like the lady, instead of seeking to remember the Lord in the breaking of bread on the first day of the week, are satisfied to hear what others have to say about Him.

In the early days of the Church there was nothing known of "officials" *presiding* at the family feast. At the institution of the Supper it was the Lord who gave thanks, broke the bread and handed it to the disciples (1 Cor. xi. 23-25). All they did in the matter was to receive from His hands the symbols of His body and blood. From this scripture, it is supposed that the "minister" for the time being is in the place of the Lord Jesus, *presiding at His table, and "dispensing the sacrament."* When the Lord instituted the ordinance He did not say to John, "When I am away you will preside at the Supper." While down here, He was in the midst of His gathered ones; and has He not promised "where two or three are gathered together unto My name, *there am I in the midst of them*" (Matt. xviii. 19, 20)? If, then, the Lord is "in the midst" of the twos or threes gathered unto His name, why should any of their number assume to take His place? Though unperceived by the bodily eye, He is visible to the believer by the eye of faith. "You might join our church," said one Christian to

another. "Who presides at the Lord's table?" "Mr. P. (the minister) does." "If the Lord were to enter the meeting-house, what would Mr. P. do?" "He would rise and allow Him His place at the head of His table." "Has He not promised that if 'two or three' are gathered together to His name He is there in their midst? And if He is in 'the midst' why should Mr. P. usurp the Lord's place at the head of His table?"

The Word of God is silent about "ministers" administering the sacraments. There are no "sacraments" in the New Testament. The word "sacrament" is derived from "sacramentum," an oath. Roman citizens, on enlistment as soldiers, took the "sacramentum" or military oath of allegiance to their country. Whilst remembering the Lord in the "breaking of bread," the believer takes no "oath" or "vows" upon him: he celebrates a *feast*.

There is no proof whatever that it was considered necessary to have the presence of elders, bishops, or "ministers," when believers assembled themselves to break bread. We do not read that the "Reverend So-and-so administered the sacrament of the Lord's Supper." Such ecclesiastical phraseology was utterly unknown. On "the first day of the week," when disciples were gathered together to "break bread," elders or bishops, if present, would take the bread and wine among the rest; but the "sacrament" and the "clergyman" HAD NOT THEN BEEN INVENTED.

Our attention was recently directed to a suggestive correspondence which appeared in the columns of the Canadian "Baptist" denominational organ. It would seem, from what we were able to learn, that a small Baptist congregation in a sparsely-peopled district had, for several years, been without the services of a duly qualified and regularly ordained "minister." During that period they had ceased to "break bread" and had thus been disobedient to the Lord (for if non-observance of the one ordinance is disobedience, so must non-observance of the other). One of the correspondents took New Testament ground, and contended that the little company were entitled to break bread even though no "ordained minister" were present. Another strongly condemned the position, and maintained that such unseemly

conduct, if tolerated by the "Baptist" body, would inevitably lead to "Plymouthism." Whether ecclesiastical *permission* were granted the Christians to obey the Lord or not we cannot say. It would be considered next to sacrilege by some if any but "ordained" men baptised. Those who received Christian baptism in the house of Cornelius were not baptised by a "minister," Peter being the only one present. He did not baptise them himself. We are told that he *commanded* them to be baptised (Acts x. 48). A. M.

WOMAN'S MISSION.

- 1 Tim. v. 14.
- To be of home the star of love,
And shed bright beams around; Titus ii. 4, 5.
- To guide the house with wisdom, 1 Tim. v. 14.
Her lips with love to sound. Prov. xxxi. 26.
- To be man's faithful counsellor,
In doubt or danger near, 1 Sam. xxv. 33.
And draw Heaven's blessings on his head,
By constant, fervent prayer. 1 Sam. xxv. 39.
- To kneel beside the couch of pain, Acts ix. 36.
And words of comfort give; Prov. xxxi. 26.
- To soothe the weary aching head,
To pity and forgive. John viii. 11.
- To seek the wretched and the lost,
Whom Jesus died to win; Luke xix. 10.
- To draw those weak and erring ones,
From paths of vice and sin. Prov. xxxi. 20.
- To call the lambs with gentle voice,
And lead them to the fold; Luke xviii. 16.
- To tell them of a Saviour's love,
That story sweet and old. John iii. 16.
Deut. ii. 19.
- To charm the hours of grief away,
With loving smiles of peace, 2 Cor. i. 4.
- And guide loved ones toward that home,
Where earthly woes shall cease. Rev. vii. 16, 17.
- And thus to do the Master's will,
In meekness and in love, 1 Peter iii. 4.
- Adorned with that which is of price,
E'en in the courts above. 1 Peter iii. 4.
- And when this world has passed away,
And earthly toil is done, Rev. xiv. 13.
- To shine with Jesus in that "Home,"
Where life is but begun. Dan. xii. 13.

A. O.

QUESTIONS asked at the close of Mr. Newberry's Lectures on the Temple, and the **ANSWERS** given by him.*

10. *Can you indicate the place and occupation of the Church when Christ shall reign upon the earth?*

Believers have been begotten again "to an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven" (1 Peter ii.). Their inheritance and their home are in heaven. Christ has gone to prepare amongst the many mansions of His Father's house an habitation for His bride; but when He will come as the Messiah to reign over the millennial earth, His Church will be associated with Him in His resurrection and heavenly glory. Their place is with the risen, glorified Christ. I have often thought that our Lord's intercourse with His disciples during the forty days He spent with them before ascending to His Father, was a foreshadowing of the intercourse which raised and glorified saints will have with the inhabitants of the millennial earth.

11. *Will not the restoration of sacrifices necessitate the re-establishment of the Levitical priesthood; and how will this affect the priesthood of the Lord Jesus?*

"Elijah will first come and restore all things" (Matt. xvii. 11); these are the words of the Lord Jesus. Also, we read in Malachi iv. 5, "Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of Jehovah." He will put all things right.

There are certain important changes connected with the priesthood, sacrifices, and feasts of the millennial period. The prince that is spoken of will be a prince and not a king. And no high priest is mentioned. The Lord Jesus will unite the kingship and high-priesthood in His own Melchisedec office. So, also, as there will be no evening sacrifice and no feast of Pentecost, there will be no day of atonement. And with regard to those priests of the line of Aaron who are admitted to the priestly office, the right of entrance into

the inner court is restricted by God to those of the family of Zadok (Ez. xliv.). But all these things will not interfere with the high-priesthood and Melchisedec kingly glory of the Lord Jesus. And the observance of the various sacrifices will be but commemorative, as showing forth the finished and accepted work of the Lord Jesus Christ.

12. *Is the individual mentioned in Daniel xi: 3 the first or second beast of Rev. xiii.?*

The man of sin, or the lawless one, who is antichrist, is the first beast, and the head of the Roman empire in its last form, when it will be divided into ten kingdoms. The second beast arising from the earth, who plays into the hands of the first, is the false prophet.

There are three mysteries at work which will be headed up and completed by-and-by, after the removal of the Church, and previous to the manifestation of the Son of Man in glory:—

First, There is the mystery of iniquity or lawlessness, which was at work in the apostle Paul's time, and which has been going on ever since with greater energy than before.

Second, The corruptions of Christianity—the working of the leaven which the woman put into the meal (Matt. xiii.)—that is going on all around us, which will culminate in Babylon the Great. This great apostasy will not be consummated so long as the Church, with the Holy Spirit in the midst of it, is on the earth; but when the wheat is taken into the garner, the tares will be left ready to be burned at the close (Matt. xiii.). Babylon the Great will include every form of apostate Christianity. There will be one universal false church, and when antichrist sets himself as God to be worshipped, she will become the harlot companion of the beast. Then she will no longer be the dwelling-place of the Holy Spirit, but the cage of every unclean and hateful bird (Rev. xviii. 2).

Third, Philosophy, falsely so-called, or science without God, will be headed up in the second beast, the false prophet who, by his satanic wiles, will cause all the earth to worship the first beast, or antichrist.

These are the three distinct forms of evil which we shall do well to keep ourselves far from.

* Vols. XVIII. and XIX. contain the whole of these Lectures. 3/, post free.

13. *We read of certain persons entering into the holiest of all being visited with death; is there anything answering to this judgment now?*

Natural and temporal death under the ceremonial law is a foreshadowing of spiritual death under a spiritual economy. From this we learn that there is no real entrance into the holiest of all, apart from spiritual life and spiritual purity. We may speak of worshipping in the holiest, but it is only as having the heart sprinkled from an evil conscience, and the body washed with pure water; that is, as redeemed by the blood of the Lamb, and sanctified by the Spirit of God, we can really enter into God's presence. "God is a Spirit: and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth." Real worship, drawing near to God, supposes three things:—*First*, That we are born again by the Spirit of God. *Second*, That we are redeemed to God by the blood of the Lamb. *Third*, That we are living under the sanctifying grace and present power of the Spirit of God.

14. *Which of these scriptures, John v. 28, 1 Thess. iv. 16, Rev. xx. 6, concerning the resurrection of the dead, apply to past, present, or future?*

The scripture mentions the resurrection of the just and of the unjust; the resurrection of life and the resurrection of judgment; the first and the second resurrection.

With regard to the first resurrection, "Christ is the first-fruit; afterward, they that are Christ's at His coming" (1 Cor. xv. 23). According to 1 Thess. iv. 16, when the Lord Jesus descends from heaven the dead in Christ shall rise first. By that term, "the dead in Christ," I understand all who have departed in the faith of Christ, from righteous Abel up to the time when our Lord shall come. "Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up." Paul was amongst the living and remaining ones in his day; you and I, believers in the Lord Jesus, are amongst the living and remaining ones at the present time. "Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord"; not in the clouds, but "in the air." The cloud will receive us, as it received Christ at His ascension (Acts. i.).

We read in Rom viii. 11, "If the Spirit of Him that raised up Jesus from among the dead dwell in you, He that raised up Christ from among the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by His Spirit that dwelleth in you." The virgins who had oil in their vessels went in when the Bridegroom came. Every one in whom the Spirit of God dwells, whether they be rich or poor, high or low, if purchased by the blood of Christ, and sealed by the Spirit of God, shall be caught up to meet the Lord in the air. If any have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His (Rom. viii. 9). Those who are slain during the time of the "great tribulation" will share in the first resurrection. Thus we read in Rev. xx. 4, 5—"And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them (these are the dead in Christ who rise first): and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and those which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image; . . . and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years. But the rest of the dead (from Cain downward) lived not again until the thousand years were finished." Then, when the heavens and the earth have fled away, the great white throne will be set up, and the dead, small and great, that had no part in the first resurrection, will be raised, and stand before God to be judged according to their deeds.

FIRST PRINCIPLES even have been so little understood, that those who should have been teachers of the way of life have hardly known whether they had life themselves. Like a professor who should say to his class, "Gentlemen, I am to lecture on 'Life,' on the conditions of its propagation, development, and sustenance. I must, however, explain that I am in grave doubt whether I am a living man, and I must also warn you against too rashly presuming that you yourselves are alive." And when first principles have been seen and held, and a measure of truth beyond these has been embraced, how ignorant have we been found when difficulties have arisen in the assemblies of the saints, and how much has the ability to throw light upon them from the Word been lacking? Have the priest's lips kept knowledge in these, any more than in the former days?

CHRIST ON THE THRONE.

As seen in the Epistle to the Hebrews.

A CONFERENCE ADDRESS BY THE EDITOR.

READ with me a few passages in the Epistle to the Hebrews, chap. i. 1-3:—"God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by His Son, whom He hath appointed Heir of all things, by whom also He made the worlds; who being the brightness of His glory, and the express image of His person, and upholding all things by the word of His power, when He had by Himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high."

Ch. i.—THE SIN-PURGER ON THE THRONE.

—We have here before us, at the outset of this epistle, the Lord Jesus as the risen and glorified One. He is seen here seated on the right hand of the Majesty on high. But He is there in a certain character, viz., as the One who has *purged our sins*. That is the very first aspect in which, as believers, we were made to know Him. He took our place, took our guilt upon Him, became answerable for our transgressions, and by His own blood made a cleansing (or a purging) of them all. It is the very same expression that we have in Revelation i. 5: "Unto Him that loved us, and washed us from our sins" (made a purging of our sins) "in His own blood." It is well for us to seek to make it the habit of our souls to look up to the throne of God and to discern there the One who purged all our sins. To be on the throne is to be in the place of highest authority; as He said before He left the world, "All authority is given unto Me in heaven and on earth." The One who was crucified is now in the place of power, and what an immense fund of grace, strength, and blessing is there for us in Him! Authority over angels, over the powers of darkness, over the affairs of the world, over the winds and the waves. All authority in heaven and on earth is committed to the One who loved us and bore our sins. Then notice how perfect must be that work, how perfectly accomplished, how thoroughly finished and completed! He became answerable for our sins on the cross. He was forsaken by God as the Sin-bearer.

He was delivered for our offences; and that word DELIVERED means, one that was taken and delivered up into the hands of justice to bear the sentence, whatever it be. "He was delivered for our offences," and therefore God in His inflexible righteousness forsook Him. But "when He had by Himself purged our sins," He "sat down on the right hand of the Majesty in the heavens," and there He has been ever since, ordering all things, controlling all things. "Head over all things to the Church which is His body"; so that He can make "all things work together for good to those that love Him." "Head over all things"; so that we might glory in the tribulations He permits and sends, so that in those very things that seem against us we can learn the most blessed lessons. If we are fretful and murmuring amid difficulties, and forget that He who is on the throne is ruling over all, we lose the blessing. If we do not wait patiently on Him, we miss the experience that we should get out of the tribulation.

What a beautiful opening for a book!—Sin-purged, and the Sin-purger on the throne!

Ch. ii.—THE VICTOR ON THE THRONE.—

Let us look now at another passage in the second chapter, fifth verse, "For unto the angels hath He not put in subjection the world to come, whereof we speak." That is the world which shall be ordered and blessed after this dispensation is past. Verse 6: "But one in a certain place testified, saying, What is man, that Thou art mindful of him? or the son of man, that Thou visitest him." This is a quotation from the 8th Psalm. Verse 7: "Thou madest him a little lower than the angels (*that is, Adam*): Thou crownedst him with glory and honour (*that is, Adam*), and didst set him over the works of Thy hands" (*that is, Adam*). Verse 8: "Thou hast put all things in subjection under his feet. For in that He put all in subjection under him, He left nothing that is not put under him. But now we see not yet all things put under him."

We do not see Adam, or the sons of Adam, triumphing and reigning and governing this in world. We do not see the fulfilment of that for which God created man at first. Sin came in and the dominion was dashed from the hands of Adam. Sin and death have marred the whole creation. But what do we see?

"We see Jesus." Here is the Man; here is the second Man; here is the last Adam, the Head of the new creation. "We see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels," who came down to take the very position that Adam had at first. He became partaker of flesh and blood because the children were partakers of it. "We see Jesus crowned with glory and honour." There is the pledge of the ultimate dominion of man; there is the pledge of the fulfilment of God's purpose concerning man; and though at the cross it would seem as if God had allowed Satan to go on without restraint, yet at the end we see Jesus exalted and "crowned with glory and honour." There is the pledge that those who trust Him will be crowned with glory and honour too. There is the pledge that sin and misery will come to an end. In the first chapter He is exalted as the Sin-purger; and in the second He is crowned as the mighty Victor.

Ch. iv.—THE HIGH PRIEST ON THE THRONE.—Now take another passage. The fourth chapter, verses 12 and 13: "For the word of God is quick (the old-fashioned word for living), and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart." "Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in His sight: but all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of Him with whom we have to do." May we allow the Word of God to search us and to expose us to ourselves. It is not pleasant, but it is good for us to be detected and exposed to ourselves, to show how unlike Christ we are; and that is the process of sanctification. "Sanctify them through Thy truth: Thy Word is truth." But how does the Word sanctify? It enters into the heart like a sword. Sometimes Nature would take one course, and the Spirit of God would take another. The Word of God comes in to show what is natural and what is spiritual; but Satan is constantly watching to take the edge off it. Never does he better succeed than when he gets us to apply it to others and not to ourselves. "Now, is that not a right hint to Brother So-and-so? I wish he were here to hear it"; and "that suits Sister So-and-so." Let us cease judging one another, and allow the Word of God to search

us. Let it get home, and let it have its whole effect upon conscience and heart. Satan does not object to us reading the Word of God with a cold heart and a hard head. But you say, "I am afraid of the light." What does verse fourteen say? Look at it: "Let us hold fast our profession" (don't give it up, don't sink down in despair), "for we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities." We have not got a lofty, indifferent high priest. Look at the word again in chapter ii. 16-18: "For verily He took not on Him the nature of angels; but He took on Him the seed of Abraham. Wherefore in all things it behoved Him to be made like unto His brethren, that He might be a merciful and faithful High Priest in things pertaining to God; to make reconciliation for the sins of the people. For in that He Himself hath suffered, being tempted, He is able to succour them that are tempted." In order that He might be perfected—not perfected in the sense of being better than He was, but perfected as "the Captain of our Salvation"; perfected as the High Priest to enter into our sorrows and temptations, now that He has passed through the heavens up to the very throne of God. We have in Scripture the first, second, and third heavens, but Jesus passed *through the heavens* as the One who bore our sins as the Victim, and now is the Perfected One; and He is there in the efficacy of His own blood. There is an Advocate for God within our hearts—that is the Holy Ghost; and there is an Advocate for us in the bosom of God, and that is Jesus. Oh, how near God has brought us to Himself, and how near He is brought to us.

Let us glance again at this word before we leave it. Heb. iv. 15, 16: "For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as *we are*, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need." When we draw nigh to God in prayer, it is well always to get one steady look at this merciful and faithful High Priest, this One that has suffered being tempted, this One that is touched with a feeling of our infirmities, now at the right hand of God. He bears our names upon His

breast, He makes intercession for us, He lives for us, and is prepared to supply to us all needed grace. Do you not know what it is to bow the knee and try to approach God and yet feel as if you were afar off? If you feel like that, just look right away to the person of the Great High Priest, the Sin-bearer on the Throne. When you feast for a moment or two on His love, you will find you are insensibly drawn near to God. The Spirit would thus direct every eye to Him there.

Ch. vi.—THE FORERUNNER ON THE THRONE.—Now another point—chapter vi. 17—“Wherein God, willing more abundantly to show unto the heirs of promise the immutability of His counsel, confirmed it by an oath.” O it is a blessed thing to know that all our prospects, all our blessings, all our hopes, are secured to us by the Word of Him with whom it is impossible to lie!

“How firm a foundation, ye saints of the Lord,
Is laid up for your FAITH in His excellent Word!”

The strength of our consolation is the impossibility of God telling a lie. Verse 18—“That by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us.” Now that verse is completely spoiled when you read, “the hope set before us in the Gospel.” It is rather that we who have believed have fled for refuge from the wreck, from the ruin, from the death, the corruption and misery of all connected with Nature, with the first Adam, with the first creation; we have fled for refuge to the hope that God has set before us. There are not two hopes in the New Testament. *The hope* is the coming of Christ. It is not the hope of world reformation, &c.; it is a thing that God has promised, and He cannot lie; and though it may seem to some that there is no appearance of it being fulfilled, yet God has promised it. “The hope set before us” we have “as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast, and which entereth into that within the veil; whither the Forerunner is for us entered, even Jesus, made an High Priest for ever, after the order of Melchisedec.” We saw that Jesus had passed *through* the heavens. The high priest went in through the door of the tabernacle into the holy place, and from that into the holiest of

all. That is but a type. Jesus has gone within the veil into the immediate presence of God. The Son has gone into the bosom of the Father. And in this passage we learn that He has gone in there in the character of the Forerunner, and, by-and-by, He is going to bring the priestly family there. He is going to bring them all there, for He has gone in there as the Forerunner; that means there are others to follow after. So that the sixth chapter shows us Jesus, the hope that God has set before us, and we are to wait till He comes to take us to be with Himself.

Ch. viii.—“THE MINISTER OF THE SANCTUARY ON THE RIGHT HAND OF THE THRONE OF THE MAJESTY.”—One more point in chap. viii. 1.—“Now of the things which we have spoken this is the sum: We have such an High Priest, who is set on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens.” Here He is the Minister of the Sanctuary in behalf of a worshipping people. We are to gather around Him in spirit, and we are to be in the true tabernacle which the Lord pitched and not man. In spirit we follow Jesus within the veil—worshippers around the throne, with Jesus the Great High Priest in the midst—Jesus in the midst of the seven candlesticks. Not a prayer, not a hymn, not a single word of worship that we present can enter the ear of God except by that “Minister of the Sanctuary.” “By Him, therefore, let us offer to God the sacrifice of praise continually.” I believe we often forget this; for as the Israelite came with his basket and gave it to the priest, and the priest offered it, so we have to come to our Great High Priest, because nothing we can offer is fit to come before God except He presents it. That is the only ground of acceptance. As the high priest of old had a golden plate, and in that plate was graven “Holiness to the Lord,” so Jesus bears on His brow “Holiness to the Lord.” May He lead us with more diligence to “consider the Apostle and High Priest of our profession, CHRIST JESUS.”

OUR true growth is more known by our growing downwards in humility than by all the outward things put together.

MOMENTS in life may be agony, but life itself is a blessing.

THE LIBERTY, HOLINESS, AND GLORY OF ROMANS VIII.

IN Romans viii. we get liberty, we get holiness, resurrection glory. Instead of the condemnation of chapter vii., we have full blessed

LIBERTY,

we have no condemnation : as is said, "There is therefore now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus," or, as it might be rendered, "Now, therefore, nothing is a condemnation"; and why? Because, first, that which was condemnation in God's thought, sin and the nature in which sin is, have been like the rags of the prodigal, once and for ever put away; so that God can say, "Your sins and your iniquities will I remember no more." There is nothing now before God which could receive a condemnation. It has been all brought to an end at the Cross of Christ.

Again : the condemnation itself has had its way. The condemnation fell on *Him*; and now the believing sinner stands where not one bolt of Divine vengeance can reach him, where not one droplet of Divine wrath can be poured out on him. He is where the wrath is over-past. Like Noah's dove from the ark, that strayed away over where the water had been, found a resting-place where *no more wrath or judgment could touch it*. The wave of death, the billows of wrath, had subsided.

But some may say, "Then is there no more trouble for the Christian?" I did not say so. He may be troubled, there may be tribulation, there may be temptation; but no condemnation. He may groan; not because of condemnation, not because of his bondage to the law; but because, seeing its holiness and purity, he longs to be like Him who was perfectly the expression of that law. And then the groaning is not from ignorance, but rather from knowledge; because so much light has been brought in, that he sees not only the deliverance, but the Deliverer Himself, even Jesus. And he groans for complete conformity to Him who has so graciously and gloriously delivered him.

Ah, yes! a Christian may have groaning enough. You remember Jesus at the grave of Lazarus. Why did *He* groan? If you were

about to raise one from the dead, would you not rather sing than groan? Why, then, did He groan? Was it from any bondage He was in? Ah, no! it was the sorrow which He saw around Him, and the terrible havoc and devastation which sin had made. Besides, the Lord was perfect man. Would any one with perfect human sympathies not have sorrowed? It was only when He came and saw that He wept. Have you never gone where there has been bereavement? Have you never seen the bereaved bending over the corpse of their loved dead? And have you not wept?

And then, "We that are in this tabernacle do groan" (2 Cor. v). Surely this is nothing less than sorrow; but sorrow for what? Why, sorrow to be in the full blessedness of resurrection—to be clothed upon with the house which is from heaven. Who but a Christian has this sorrow? Take the man of the world; if only he has life, if only he has riches, if only he has position and influence, he can be well contented in this life; he would be well satisfied to go on thus through the long years of an immortality here. But how different with the children of God. *We* are exiles; we are far from our home; we are treading a stranger soil; are breathing an uncongenial atmosphere. *Therefore we groan*—*therefore* we long for emancipation into the glory for which we were created. We want heaven—that for which we were born; we want *Him* of whom Paul said: "I know whom I have believed." We want deliverance from the burden of the flesh; we want to be freed from that law of sin which is in our members, and which is still warring against the law of our mind. God give us to understand that which makes us unhappy is not ignorance of the place to which by grace we have been brought; but the knowledge of and longing for the portion we have in Christ.

And this brings me to our second thought in this chapter, which is

HOLINESS.

For after liberty, comes practical personal holiness, or righteousness. We are holy, righteous in Christ. And what we want is to be holy, righteous, in our walk and life. Says the apostle: "For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh." What

could not the law do? The law could not make you holy. Why? Because the flesh had mastery, and was—*is* essentially unholy. And the law could not make us love God, because the flesh is essentially enmity. "What the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh; that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us" (not by law-keeping, for that were impossible; but in us), "who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit." When I see Christ dying for me, a poor, lost, hell-deserving sinner, my love to Him is drawn out, and I love Him who first loved me and gave Himself for me. Did the *law* give me that love? No; but it demands that I should love; and thus, in loving Him who first loved me, I fulfil the law; not by trying to keep it, but by seeing Him and knowing Him as the One who has saved me. Again,—the law demands holiness. And now that I love Him, He asks me for obedience as a proof of that love; and this obedience to *Him* demands death to all that to which *He* died. I am to see to it, that I "mortify the members which are upon the earth," and that, as in Romans vi., *I am dead* to the sin for which He died.

Oh! happy moments, when we thus realise holiness of life—liberty, viz., in Christ—a walk in the Spirit—"no condemnation"—dead to sin, and the mortification of the flesh. Not that the flesh is actually dead; it is not; it is only kept in abeyance: the deadly principle is still within, ready to spring up with new energy at any moment, on any occasion. But *occupied with Jesus, we are not occupied with sin*. Like Mary at the sepulchre, she was so absorbed with Jesus, her mind so engaged with Him, that it was nowhere else; not with angel or disciple; she was occupied with one Person. Oh! beloved, when our Spirit is occupied with the Lord, we are dead to all else. As Paul, caught up into the third heaven, was so occupied with Him, he could not tell whether he was in the body or out of the body. His mind was absorbed, he knew not whether he had a body, or whether he had not a body. Occupied with Him, we walk in the Spirit, and *do not* fulfil the desires of the flesh. Walking in the Spirit, you are walking

with God, you are walking with home in view. Like the child at school, there may be seven, fourteen, or even twenty-one days more of school; it matters not; the mind is filled with home; home-longings fill the heart. Oh! to have a heart—to have a mind—even now *at home* with God.

And now follows a beautiful statement about another thing. We have got liberty; we have got personal holiness. We shall never be satisfied till we get

RESURRECTION GLORY.

The apostle says here (and we get two beautiful truths in this tenth verse): "If the Spirit of Him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you,"—there is the one truth—the Spirit of Jesus is dwelling in you; and here is the second: "He that raised up Christ from the dead *shall also quicken your mortal bodies, by His Spirit that dwelleth in you.*" The Holy Spirit does two things; He dwelleth in you as a Divine occupant—"Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit?" and secondly, He will never lose sight of your person—your body, until He puts you into the glory. This He will do, by raising you from the dead. How near we are to this, who can tell! At one time Israel and their Canaan home,—how near! They were so near to it for three days, that they could look right over into the land. They could see its mountains dropping fatness; its valleys with milk and honey flowing; they were, so to speak, shaking hands with home; so near to it were they, that it was only for the ark to enter, and they were over. Jordan only divided them from it. They were, though, in the desert ground, skirting the land. So, beloved, we are, shall I say, skirting the glory; we are on its very threshold, with only the trump of God between us and our home.

Beloved, do *you* long for full and perfect deliverance? Yes, we groan, being burdened. And who is it that gives it? Who makes you long to be away from this scene? Who makes you long for redemption? It is the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. And believe me, this very dwelling in you is sanctifying. If royalty were coming into your house, what a change would it effect! No dust, not a soil, would be suffered there. Oh! what manner of

person a saint of God ought to be, when he realises that the Holy Spirit is in him.

Well, then, that is one truth; but there is another. The Holy Spirit is not going to leave this dwelling. Monarchs may live for ever separated from theirs. Look at your old home; all left, forsaken. Ah! beloved, but the Holy Spirit will *never* let *this* house go. He dwelleth with you now; and "He who raised up Jesus from the dead will also quicken your mortal bodies by His Spirit that dwelleth in you." There is not a sleeping saint but He has in His safe custody. Sown in corruption, each one will be raised in incorruption; sown in weakness, each one will be raised in power; sown a natural body, each one will be raised a spiritual body. Beloved! thy *brother* shall rise again. We shall see as we are seen, and know as we are known. And then, no more the "O wretched man"; but the full and final, "I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord."

And now, what was God's thought as to the glory? It is stated here: "For whom He did foreknow, He also did predestinate, to be conformed to the image of His Son." How wondrous! Set apart for a particular purpose, just as one selects a plant, and says, "That is for my garden." Or another, a servant, "He is for my household." Ah, did you ever think of it? What was in God's infinite and ineffable purpose, when, passing by angels, He chose you and me? Said God: "I am, going to bring him to Myself; I am going to have him for My son; I am going to put him on the throne of glory, and, therefore, I will have him conformed to the image of My Son." Oh, that is glorious! That is what we shall be in the glory! We shall be *like Him*. The law shows me what I am in myself, and what God demands of me, and what I cannot give. Grace showed me what God is towards me; but glory will show me what grace has made me.

So Romans vii., which leads on to the viii., if not perfectness, is on the way to it. You are put from bondage into liberty and righteousness, and you look on through resurrection into the glory. And now you do not groan, "O wretched man"; but you sing, "Oh, happy day!" You can say, "O death, where is thy sting?"

J. D. S.

Questions and Answers.

Replies are invited to the following:—

Seeing "the time is short," and "the coming of the Lord draweth nigh," is it wrong for saints to neglect studies which would advance them in worldly position, and go and engage in Gospel work, the study of the Word, &c., &c.?

1 Peter iii. 15—Why "with fear"?

Are we who are gathered out to the Lord, and who profess, for His Name sake, to take nothing of the Gentiles, or help them in their schemes, free to benefit by a public subscription in case of an accident, in the same way as the ungodly do?

Will you kindly ask through your paper what we are to understand by the word "worlds," spoken of in Heb. i. 2?

WOMEN'S MINISTRY.

QUESTION 331.—1 Cor. xi. 5—Does this scripture sanction the exercise of the gift of prophecy by women in the assembly, or the leading of the assembly in prayer by women, provided only that they be suitably attired?

(Continued from page 160.)

Editor's Note.—By those who favour the public ministration of women, the ground most commonly taken is, that in this present age there is no difference between male and female as to their gifts and qualifications; that they, as much as the men, are entitled and responsible to minister in the church to the saints, or in the Gospel publicly to the world. 1 Cor. xiv. 34, 35, is set aside as irrelevant, on the understanding that it only forbids talking or asking questions to the disturbance of the assembly, as though this would not be equally reprehensible in men as in women! This limitation we cannot honestly admit on any ground, reasonable or critical. Then 1 Tim. ii. is (as by our correspondent, M. T. B.) relegated to the private sphere, and is said not to apply to the behaviour of men and women in the assembly. Why, then, should it be exhorted that "men pray everywhere?" If it be private prayer, then, was there any need for limiting it to *men* (or "the males"); and if in verse 12 it is the home sphere that is alluded to, can it be reasonably supposed that the wife is forbidden to impart to her husband privately such instruction as she might be able to give him, and yet permitted to teach or preach to him and others as much as she is inclined to do publicly and in the assembly? To us the idea appears absurd. These injunctions, taken in connection with the whole teaching of the Scriptures as to the position and ministry of the woman, seem to us to teach emphatically that hers is not the public or the assembly sphere, but the home and the private sphere. Verse 36 of 1 Cor. xiv. fully confirms this view. The idea that runs through the whole eleventh to fourteenth chapters is that the church, in its Divine ordering, represents heavenly

relationships. The man representing Christ. The woman representing the church. As Christ is Lord and Teacher of the church, and the place of the church is that of learning from Him in quietness and subjection, so in the type the man alone can be the teacher and ruler, the woman must be the covered, subject, learner. Hence the tone of astonishment conveyed in the ejaculation, "What! came the Word of God out from you? or came it unto you only?" If the Word of God had come out from the church, then might women have been teachers in the church. But as the Word of God came "unto," and not "out from" the church, therefore the ministry of the Word in a divinely-ordered assembly will be only by the men, they being "the image and glory of God."

As to "prophecy," notwithstanding the charge of "weakness" by M. T. B., we can hold and teach nothing but that the gift of prophecy does not now exist. God bestowed the gift in His sovereign wisdom upon whom He chose, and, be it patriarch or apostate, Moses or David, a Balaam or a Caiaphas, an elder or a maiden, the person was a mere instrument for the time being; the inspiration of the utterance depending in no degree whatever upon the character or the intelligence of the utterer.

Not so teaching; it is the outcome of spiritual and intelligent acquaintance with the Holy Scriptures, and is invariably in Scripture declared to be the province of men, and men only, and of "faithful men," and such only. See 2 Tim. ii. 2.

But what evidence is there in Scripture that women who prophesied did so in a public capacity? Miriam led the women in praise and dance, not the men. Deborah sat under an oak and judged those who came to her in a day of utter weakness, when there was none else fitted for the ministry. A very different thing from a woman preaching and teaching in the presence of those at whose feet she might well be sitting. Huldah occupied a retired room, and spake the mind of God to those who came to her for help. Anna is alluded to, widow of eighty years, and great stress is laid upon her speaking of Him to "all" those who looked for redemption in Jerusalem. But were they not a little flock? and is it not much more reasonable to suppose that this aged saint spoke to them day by day by twos and threes, than that she harangued a multitude at once?

Philip's daughters prophesied, but no evidence is forthcoming that they did so publicly, and it is noticeable that when a prophetic word was to be spoken to Paul it was Agabus that God chose to utter it, and not one of Philip's daughters.

We are not prepared to deny that women *did* prophesy in the Corinthian church. But we cannot acknowledge, in the face of the whole body of Scripture teaching, that this one incidental allusion to such a practice is intended as a Divine sanction of it, still less as a Divine sanction of *teaching* and *preaching* publicly by women. It is surely misconstruing Rev. xix. 10 to say that all testimony which has Jesus for its subject and object is prophecy. All prophecy, indeed, had Him as its kernel, but still there is the testimony of Jesus ministered from the written word by the teacher; but not thereby constituted a prophetic or inspired utterance.

We would here remark that the Greek word for public preaching (*keerusso*), though it occurs very often, cannot in any one instance be referred to females. Those who desire can certify this by reference to "The Englishman's Greek Concordance."

The Lord did not choose one woman among the twelve, or the seventy, whom He sent to herald the Gospel of the Kingdom.

Women "laboured with Paul in the Gospel," but nowhere is it said they "preached." And, finally, in the Divine synopsis of women's ministry in 1 Tim. v. 10, how comes it that *preaching*, *teaching*, and *prophesying* are not included? In Titus ii. 4, women are to teach women; this is fitting, but no exhortation can we find to women to teach or address a promiscuous audience.

As for "praying," surely the woman "prays" in the assembly, albeit she does not *lead the assembly in prayer*, which, according to 1 Tim. ii. 8, is the province of the men. We have on several occasions heard women attempt to lead an assembly in prayer, and on each occasion she demonstrated her unfitness by so speaking that none could hear, or consequently say "amen," who were beyond a yard or two from where she stood.

It is an evil, lawless day. The world has its cry of "women's rights," and, alas! we grieve to say that this contention for the public ministering of women savours, to us, not a little of the same spirit.

GOD'S RETRIBUTION.

QUESTION 332.—Proverbs i. 26—"I also will laugh at your calamity; I will mock when your fear cometh." How is this to be understood, and to whom does it apply?

Ans.—Isaiah lxx. 12-16, and Isaiah lxxvi. 4, teach the same truth. The form of language used is very solemn; but we must remember the parable-form of the whole portion, and so, comparing it with other scriptures, learn that the denunciations of God (Lev. xxvi., Deut. xxviii.) are clothed in language *needful* for man, and applicable equally in every age to the sin-lover and virtual despiser of "the grace of God which bringeth salvation." A. O. M.

[Editor's Note.]—This passage seems to teach that he who laughs and mocks at the gracious beseechings and warnings of God, if he continue to do so, will find at some time in his experience, sooner or later, God only knows when, that retribution sure and terrible comes upon him, and that prayers and tears avail not to avert it.

A similar experience is indicated in Luke xiii. 25-28. So also dispensationally. Just now the attitude of God toward the world is that of beseeching sinners to be reconciled to Him (2 Cor. v. 19-21), but the time of His gracious beseeching and long-suffering will come to an end, and instead thereof, the same God will "send them strong delusion, that they should believe the lie: that they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness" (2 Thess. ii. 11, 12).]

A HUSBAND'S WISHES.

QUESTION 333.—Would it not be breaking a command of the Lord for a wife to be baptised against the wishes of her husband (see Eph. v. 22; Col. iii. 18)?

Ans.—The verses cited are very plain and clear as to the principle of the wife's submission to her husband's authority; but would not the expression, "as it is fit in the Lord," imply that there may be a limit to that subjection? "Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers" (Rom. xiii. 1), is a plain command to all; and yet we find Peter and John, in Acts iv. 19, and the apostles, in chap. v. 29, setting aside that command. When they found the authority of the "higher powers" conflicting with the authority of God, they resisted it. And might it not be the same with a Christian wife regarding baptism, or any other clearly revealed ordinance of God? A wife might get baptised in a defiant spirit, which would provoke a husband; such a thing would not be pleasing to the Lord, nor be a blessing to her; but if a Christian wife is fully convinced that it is the will of the Lord for her to be baptised, let her wait much on the Lord, it may be wisely seeking help in prayer, that the Lord would incline her husband's heart to agree to her baptism. Let her seek to be adorned with the "ornament of a meek and quiet spirit," showing all due reverence to her husband. But if he still refuse to give his consent to her being baptised, I believe she would be justified in finally telling him that she must "obey God rather than man." Much could be said on this question. No wife could be justified in telling a lie in obedience to her husband, which clearly proves there is a limit to a husband's authority, and that *limit is when his authority comes into conflict with Divine authority.* G. A.

SEEING A KID.

QUESTION 334.—What is the spiritual significance of that thrice-repeated injunction of the law—"Thou shalt not see the kid in its mother's milk" (Ex. xxiii. 19, xxxiv. 26; Deut. xiv. 21)?

Ans. A.—It appears that this command has reference to a heathen custom, concerning which God tells His people, "Thou shalt not learn to do after the abominations of those nations" (Deut. xviii. 9).

The following is an extract from an old Karaitic writing:—"It was a custom of the ancient heathens, when they gathered in all their fruits, to take a kid and boil it in the dam's milk, and then, in a magical way, to go about and besprinkle with it all their trees and fields and gardens and orchards, thinking by this means they should make them fructify, and bear again more abundantly the following year."

And, to confirm this explanation of the law, it is observable that in each place where it is mentioned in Exodus it is joined with the command of bringing in the first-fruits into the house of Jehovah, and in Deut. with that of paying tithes.

This mode of magical incantation God had expressly commanded His people not to use: "Neither shall ye use enchantment" (Lev. xix. 26; Deut. xviii. 10, 11).

P. S.—The Karaites are a sect of Jews living in considerable numbers near Sunpheropol, near the Crimea. They still adhere to the law of Moses; they

reject all Rabbinical doctrine, and all interpolations of scriptural texts. T. E. R.

Ans. B.—In the three places in which this injunction occurs, it stands closely connected with the ingathering of the fruits of the land, and there can be little doubt that it was directed against the unnatural heathen custom of boiling a kid in its mother's milk, and sprinkling this upon the trees, fields, orchards, and gardens at the time of ingatherings, in the hope of obtaining a more abundant yield in the following year.

Customs of this character still exist in many places, and we can easily see how hateful they must be in the sight of God, who would have people to trust only in Himself, and to have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them. R. L. S.

Ans. C.—Lev. xxii. 26-28 seems to teach that this injunction was designed as a humane precept, or there may be latent reference to some heathen and abominable custom. Spiritually, may it not enjoin that tenderness and consideration of spirit which are due in family relationship, and in dealing with questions which arise between the young and old, or with parents and children, in the Church? A. O. M.

Ans. D.—No doubt "whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning," but we must not expect to find a "spiritual significance" attached to every injunction. For instance, "Thou shalt rise up before the hoary head, and honour the face of the old man" (Lev. xix. 32.).

To "see the kid in its mother's milk" would be most unnatural and revolting, even as to refuse honour to the hoary head would be; and, though one would be far from dogmatizing, it does seem that this is quite a sufficient reason for the oft-repeated injunction. G. A. S.

JOTTING FROM AN AMERICAN LETTER.—My portion to-day is John vi. 33: "For the *Bread of God* is He which cometh down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world." The manna that fell in the desert for Israel is called angels' food, or the bread of the mighty ones; but our food is the Bread of God. Ah! how little I have ever known of feeding with God on His Son. True, I have enjoyed feeding on Jesus at times, but this morning it seems to dawn on my soul with a new light. The solemnity, and yet the blessedness, of feeding with God on His Bread. I suppose if you were called while over there to dine with royalty you would feel like taking advantage of all you knew of manners, etiquette, &c. But think of being called to feed with God Almighty—the Everlasting God—the Creator of the ends of the earth. Well, I think I can say I long to know more of what it is to feed on Christ in all the aspects of His glorious character, and work, and person. J. S.

THE TWO HEADS OF TWO RACES.

THE SUBSTANCE OF AN ADDRESS BY J. R. C. ON
THE FIRST EPISTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS.

Chap. xv. 45 to 49.*

SO also it is written, The first man, Adam, became a living soul; the last Adam became a life-giving Spirit" (ver. 45, R.V.).

Here are the two Adams, the *heads* of two races. The first man, Adam, had not the power to impart life. He could destroy life; but he could not give it. A little child can kill a fly, but all the power and wisdom of man cannot restore the life that is taken.

But "the last Adam" is "a life-giving Spirit." He had power to give life and to sustain life. Three examples He gave of His life-giving power: He raised the daughter of Jairus, just dead; the widow's son, on the way to the grave; and Lazarus, after corruption had set in. Death is the inevitable heritage of all descended from the first Adam; life—life eternal—is the inalienable portion of all who are in the last Adam.

"Howbeit, that is not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural; then that which is spiritual" (ver. 46, R.V.) Such is God's order. It is a Divine principle that can be traced all down the page of Scripture. Nature is ever associated with sin, ruin, misery, death, corruption. Nature comes first; then, out of the wreck and ruin of nature, comes, by Divine power and grace, the new man—the spiritual—the heavenly. Cain, the natural man, came before Abel, the spiritual; Ishmael before Isaac; Esau before Jacob; Leah before Rachel, and so on. The natural always comes first, the spiritual "afterwards." The first man, Adam, must be fully developed, and four thousand years of testing must expose his utter weakness and shame and guilt, before the last Adam comes upon the scene; and so in the individual history, as well as in the dispensational, it is first the natural, with its sin and guilt and misery, and then, when nature is exposed and despaired of, grace brings in the new creation—the spiritual man, born of God.

*The remaining portion of chapter xv., and the closing chapter of 1 Cor., contain so many interesting and helpful points that we decided, instead of crushing into this number, to introduce two or three papers into next volume.

"The first man is of the earth, earthy; the second Man is the Lord from heaven" (ver. 47). The two titles,

"LAST ADAM"

and "Second Man," are essentially different. "The Word became flesh; "the children" (whom He was to redeem) having been "partakers of flesh and blood, He also Himself, likewise, took part of the same" (Heb. ii. 14). "God sent His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh" (Rom. viii. 3). "He took upon Him the form of a servant and was made (or 'having become' R.V. margin) in the likeness of men" (Phil. ii. 7).

Thus He became identified with the Adam race, and His cross terminated the race judicially in the sight of God. In this sense the cross was "the end of the world," or literally "the consummation of the ages" (Heb. ix. 26.) So also was it the destruction of Satan (Heb. ii. 14), and the abolishing of death (2. Tim. i. 10). Of course there is a sense in which the Adam race still continues and the world or age runs on its course and Satan is powerful, for evil and death still retains its force; but, according to God's reckoning, the cross where the last Adam was executed terminated them all.

But as the

"SECOND MAN"

He is viewed as the risen and exalted head of the new creation. Hence it is not His first coming as the seed of the woman, the infant in the manger, that is presented, but rather His coming "the second time"—as the Lord, the glorified one, invested with all authority—the Lord from heaven. In the "first man," creation fell; and all the sin and groaning that has succeeded is viewed by God as but the working out of the history of the one man. In the "Second Man," creation is redeemed and restored; and all the eternal glories of the new creation are equally connected in the mind of God with the person and work of the Second Man.

The essential character of the first man is that he is "of the earth, earthy." As we read in John iii. 31, "He that is of the earth is earthly and speaketh of the earth," "who mind earthly things" (Phil. iii. 19), sure sign that it is not the spirit but the flesh, not the new man but the old that is at work.

But the "Second Man" "cometh from above." He speaks of "heavenly things." Not only will He appear as head of the new creation—"the Lord from heaven," but, in His essential character, He is the Heavenly One who came from above, and is therefore, in His own essential glory, "above all."

"As is the earthy, such are they also that are earthy; as is the heavenly, such are they also that are heavenly" (ver. 48).

Thus we are taught that the same essential distinction that exists between the first man, Adam, and the second Man, Christ, pertains also to the two races. Those who are natural—fleshly—partakers of the Adam nature; in short, those who have not been "born again" (or "born from above") are of "the earth, earthy." They "dwell on the earth," they "speak of the earth," they "mind earthly things"; they have neither eye, ear, or heart for what is heavenly.

But there is a race who are "born from above." They are "heavenly," because they are partakers of the life of Christ, the Heavenly One. Their new life—the new man begotten in them by the quickening power of the Spirit of God—is heavenly in its origin, heavenly in its character, heavenly in its destiny. As the apostle said, "Our conversation (citizenship) is in heaven." They are "strangers" here because born from above, and "pilgrims" because journeying to a heavenly city.

That the old corrupt nature still cleaves to them in no way invalidates this truth concerning them. It is the new, the inner man that characterises them in the sight of God. The old He reckons to have been judged at the cross. The new man is the eternal: that which must develop and which shall finally overcome and cast off the old. The old may harass for a time, and the oft-repeated groan, "Who shall deliver me from this body of death," may still arise; but its latter end, like that of Amalek, must be that it perish for ever.

"And as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly" (verse 49). How true it is that "we have borne the image of the earthy!" (John iii. 12). Have we not in very deed been the children of our father Adam? In his unbelief and disobedience; in his hiding himself and excusing himself; in his sin, and death, and corruption—oh, how like him we have been!

Whatever be the truth as to our bearing "the guilt of Adam's first transgression," this we know is true that we have inherited his fallen sinful nature. "By nature the children of wrath." "Behold I was shapen in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me." Some hold that an infant is like a sheet of white paper on which any character may be written. But, alas, scripture and experience alike deny it. Where is the child that has not in its earliest years, or almost months, displayed a nature characterised by selfishness and insubjection.

Only one was otherwise—He who was "holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners." But just as really, as fully, as certainly as we have borne the image of the earthly, so really, so fully, so surely shall we bear the image of the heavenly! God has predestinated us "to be conformed to the image of His Son." He begins by creating us anew after His own image (Col. iii. 10); then, as we abide in Him, we are "changed into the same image from glory to glory" (2. Cor. iii. 18), and, by-and-by, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is" (1 John iii. 2). "We look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ: who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto His own glorious body, according to the working whereby He is able even to subdue all things unto Himself" (Phil. iii. 21).

THE GLORY OF GOD IN PREACHING THE GOSPEL.

IF we are to continue to glorify God in the preaching of the Gospel, there must also be a continuing in the truth concerning His character manifested in the cross as a sin-hating God. This must be preached, as well as the love of God; for we must remember that "grace reigns *through righteousness* unto eternal life, by Jesus Christ our Lord" (Rom. v. 21). It is true that God is Love; but it is also true that God is Light. For want of due attention being given to *both* of these truths, a spurious gospel is being preached and received; the result of which is indulgence in sin, and a lack of reverence for God. Now, I have just a few thoughts specially to those of us who are through grace in the

responsible, yet blessed, position of preaching Christ, in however humble a way, to the perishing.

1. *The preacher must himself be converted to God before he can tell others what great things the Lord hath done for his soul.* To this the Scriptures testify; for "how shall they preach except they be sent" (Rom. x. 15)? Are we all satisfied on this point—that God never sent an unconverted man to preach His Gospel? The Lord Jesus said to Nicodemus, "We speak that we *do know*, and testify that we *have seen*" (John iii. 11). John the Baptist said, "A man can receive nothing, except it be given him from heaven . . . And what He hath seen and heard, that He testified . . . For He whom God hath sent speaketh the words of God" (John iii. 27, 32, 34). To this agree the words of the apostle—"The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned" (1 Cor. ii. 14).

2. *Not only must the preacher be converted, but he ought to be confirming the Gospel by a godly walk.* It has been said that preachers are like milestones—pointing the way to travellers. This may be true; but they are more. They are living guides, not only pointing the way, but walking in it. It is true that John the Baptist said, "I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness" (John i. 23); but it is also true that the Lord Jesus said of that same John, "He was a burning and a shining light" (John v. 35). What liberty it inspires in the heart and conscience of the preacher, when he can say, "Our exhortation was not of deceit, nor of uncleanness, nor in guile: but as we were allowed of God to be put in trust with the Gospel, even so we speak; not as pleasing men, but God, which trieth our hearts. For neither at any time used we flattering words, as ye know, nor a cloak of covetousness; God is witness . . . Ye are witnesses, and God also, how holily and justly and unblameably we behaved ourselves among you that believe" (1 Thess. ii. 3, 4, 5, 10).

3. Another needful thing in preaching is to be *able to quote the Scriptures correctly*; for, in so doing, two things will be accomplished: (1) the unsaved will have no cause to sneer at

our ignorance; and (2) the sinner (who is quickened by the Spirit through the word spoken) will be led, with a God-given intelligence, to trust Christ. Moreover, the word of truth must be "rightly divided." When Scriptures belonging to the Lord's people are applied to the unsaved, the effect can only be damaging. Let Scripture be correctly applied as well as correctly quoted. In Luke iv., the Lord Jesus three times says to Satan, "It is written," a precious illustration of Ps. xvii. 4: "By the word of Thy lips I have kept me from the paths of the destroyer." Satan there makes an attempt to quote Scripture; but he fails to do it correctly (compare Ps. xci. 11, 12, with Luke iv. 10, 11). It is one of the devil's designs to get us to quote Scripture incorrectly or out of its connection, and also to apply it to the wrong person, that he may damage the work of the Lord. To be wise on this point it needs that the servant of God be "a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth" (2 Tim. ii. 15).

4. *The preacher should deliver God's message.* "I have a message from God unto thee" (Judges iii. 20). The message may be long or it may be short, just as the Lord may give it. But speaking "on time" should be avoided. For guidance on this point let us hear what the Lord Jesus says, "He that rejecteth Me, and receiveth not My words, hath One that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day. 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. And I know that His commandment is life everlasting: whatsoever I speak therefore, even as the Father said unto Me, so I speak" (John xii. 48-50).

5. *The preacher's attitudes and illustrations should be in harmony with the Word of God.* We read that Jesus *stood* and cried, saying, "If any man thirst, let him come to Me and drink" (John vii. 37). This occurred in His *public ministry*. But, in the *conversation* with the woman, we read, that "being wearied with His journey, He *sat* thus on the well" (John iv. 6). But, whether standing or sitting, one needs to be guided by that wisdom that cometh from above, if we would preach

not ourselves, but Jesus Christ the Lord (2 Cor. iv. 5). We should endeavour to get the eye of the unsaved from being taken up with us, so that they may hear the word through which faith comes. In these days, story-telling is becoming very prevalent instead of preaching the Word. It is true that the Lord used parables in addressing the people, and no doubt illustrations are helpful if in keeping with the Gospel. But what we have to guard against is the practice of story-telling merely to fill up time and to play upon the feelings of the people. We should ever remember that *the Word* is sharper than any two-edged sword (Heb. iv. 12); and that *the Gospel* is the *power of God* unto salvation to every one that believeth (Rom. i. 16). In Acts viii. 4, we read that they that were scattered abroad went everywhere preaching the Word. Among Paul's last words we find him exhorting Timothy to *preach the Word* (2 Tim. iv. 2). Let us avoid manufacturing intellectual converts—that is, urging people to believe on Christ, who have never discovered, by the power of the Spirit through the truth, that they are on the way to hell. There are many who have assented to the truth with their mind who have never embraced Christ with the heart. It is to be feared that there is much of that kind of Gospel preached: a gospel that strengthens the hands of the wicked, that he should not return from his wicked way, by promising life (Ezek. xiii. 22).

6. *The preacher's whole theme ought to be Christ crucified, buried, and risen again.* "I, if I be lifted up from the earth," said Christ, "will draw all men unto Me" (John xii. 32). The cross reveals what *man* is, both by nature and practice; while that same cross manifests the love of God to a guilty world. It was this precious truth—the glorious Gospel of Christ—that Paul carried to Corinth, a city steeped in the wisdom of the natural man. He carried the same Gospel to Ephesus, where idolatry was raging (Eph. ii. 12, 13); Paul knew that everything was powerless but the Gospel. If his hearers rejected this, he had nothing else. He would not supply the Gospel with crutches, such as a Blue Ribbon or Gospel Temperance army. When writing to a place where some preaching *another gospel* had beguiled the believers from the

simplicity that is in Christ, Paul said, "Let such be accursed" (Gal. i. 8). He did not attempt to introduce some "new thing." He simply brought the cross again before them, saying, "God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world" (Gal. vi. 14). The cross pours contempt upon man's wisdom, while it sets forth the wisdom of God.

7. *The preacher's aim should be the glory of God.* "Whether, therefore, ye eat or drink, or whatever ye do, do all to the glory of God" (1 Cor. x. 31). "Jesus saith unto them, My meat is to do the will of Him that sent Me, and to finish His work" (John iv. 34); and again, "I have glorified Thee on the earth: I have finished the work which Thou gavest Me to do" (John xvii. 4). May God enable us, who are privileged to preach the Gospel, either publicly or privately, to be deeply impressed with the responsibility that rests upon us. May we be able through grace to enter into the spirit of the apostle, when he says, "For though I preach the Gospel, I have nothing to glory of: for necessity is laid upon me; yea, woe is unto me, if I preach not the Gospel! For if I do this thing willingly, I have a reward; but if against my will, a dispensation of the Gospel is committed unto me (1 Cor. ix. 16, 17). May the love of Christ constrain us thus to do, in that sphere wherein He has been pleased to set us, that we may "hold forth the Word of life" as of the ability God giveth, that God in all things may be glorified through Jesus Christ our Lord.

W. M.

LEARNING OF JESUS.—The more we have to do with Jesus, the more will our hearts be opened to meet the varied forms of human need, which may present themselves to our view from day to day. It is when we come to Jesus, and empty our whole hearts to Him, tell Him our sorrows and our joys, and cast our whole burden at His feet, that we really learn how to feel for others. We cannot breathe the atmosphere of His presence without having our hearts expanded. Our finest moral lessons are learnt alone with Jesus.

"ONE ANOTHER";

Or, Our Mutual Bond of Love and Service.

THE expression, "one another," is of frequent occurrence in the New Testament, and implies a reciprocity resulting from a Divine fellowship that should know neither selfishness nor pride, wherein would be fulfilled those words as if spoken to us by the Holy Ghost: "If there be therefore any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any bowels and mercies, fulfil ye my joy, that ye be like-minded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind."—Phil. ii. 1, 2.

Most of the passages where the words occur are given in the following texts, which are divided under two heads—(1) Those relating to love itself, and (2) Those that relate to various precepts that flow out of our mutual relationship to God and to each other.

I.—Passages of Scripture on love to "one another."

i. Its *authority*. "A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another."—John xiii. 34; xv. 12, 17; 1 John iii. 23; 2 John 5.

ii. Its *measure*. "Love one another, as I have loved you."—John xiii. 34; xv. 12.

iii. Its *source*. "Love is of God."—1 John iv. 7.

iv. Its *witness* to discipleship. "By this shall all men know that ye are My disciples, if ye have love one to another."—John xiii. 35.

v. Its *characteristic*. "Herein is love, *not that we loved* God, but that He loved us, and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins. Beloved, if God *so* loved us, we ought also to love one another" (*i.e.*, to love unloved).—1 John iv. 10, 11.

vi. Its *results*. "If we love one another God *dwelleth* in us, and His love is *perfected* in us."—1 John iv. 12. "Every one that loveth is *born* of God, and *knoweth* God."—1 John iv. 7.

vii. Its *obligation*. "We *ought* to love one another."—1 John iv. 11. It is a *debt* we owe to God that never can be discharged (Rom. xiii. 8).

viii. Its *Teacher*. "Ye yourselves are *taught of God* to love one another."—1 Thess. iv. 9. It comes not from the natural heart.

ix. Its *importance*. "This is the *message* which ye heard from the beginning, that ye love one another."—1 John iii. 11. Connect this with another message: "God is Light, and in Him is no darkness at all."—1 John i. 5.

x. Its *purity* and *fergency*. "Love one another with a pure heart fervently."—1 Peter i. 22.

II.—Passages showing the precepts that flow out of love in those who are "members one of another."—Rom. xii. 5; Eph. iv. 25.

i. In Christian life, with special reference to personal walk.

(1.) *Serve* one another by love.—Gal. v. 13.

(2.) *Be forbearing* one with another in love, with all lowliness and meekness.—Eph. iv. 2; Col. iii. 13.

(3.) *Forgive* one another, even as God in Christ has forgiven.—Eph. iv. 32; Col. iii. 13.

(4.) *Be kind and tender-hearted* to one another.—Eph. v. 32.

(5.) *Be subject* one to another.—Peter v. 5.

(6.) *Have compassion* one of another). In Greek, *Be sympathising*.—1 Peter iii. 8.

(7.) *Pray* for one another.—James v. 16.

(8.) *Bear* one another's burdens and so fulfil the law of Christ.—Gal. vi. 2.

(9.) *Use hospitality* one to another.—1 Peter iv. 9.

(10.) *Comfort* one another.—1 Thess. iv. 18; v. 11.

(11.) *Have peace* one with another.—Mark ix. 50.

(12.) *Follow what is good* with one another.—1 Thess. v. 15.

(13.) *Wash the feet* of one another.—John xiii. 14.

(14.) *Greet* one another with a holy kiss.—Rom. xvi. 16; 1 Cor. xvi. 16; 2 Cor. xiii. 12; with a kiss of charity.—1 Peter v. 14.

ii. In Christian life, with special, but not exclusive, reference to church walk.

(1.) *Have fellowship* one with another.—1 John i. 17.

(2.) *Receive* one another as Christ hath received you to the glory of God.—Rom. xv. 7.

(3.) *Exhort* one another daily.—Heb. iii. 13.

(4.) *Admonish* one another.—Rom. xvi. 14.

(5.) *Prefer* one another in honour.—Rom. xii. 10.

(6.) *Esteem* others better than yourselves.—Phil. ii. 3.

(7.) *Edify* one another by following things that make for peace.—Rom. xiv. 19.

(8.) *Consider* one another to provoke unto love and good works, not forsaking the assembling of yourselves together.—Heb. x. 24.

(9.) *Minister* to one another of the gift received as good stewards of the manifold grace of God.—1 Peter iv. 10.

(10.) *Submit* to one another.—Eph. v. 21.

(11.) *Be of the same mind* one to another. *Be like-minded*.—Rom. xii. 16; xv. 5.

(12.) *Care* for one another, that there be no schism in the body.—1 Cor. xii. 25.

(13.) *Confess your faults* one to another.—Jas. v. 16.

iii. Passages showing what we are *not* to do to one another.

(1.) *Be not puffed up* for one against another.—1 Cor. iv. 6.

(2.) *Lie not* one to another, for we are members of each other.—Eph. iv. 25; Col. iii. 9.

(3.) *Envy not* one another.—Gal. v. 26.

(4.) *Speak not evil* one of another.—Jas. iv. 11.

(5.) *Provoke not* one another.—Gal. v. 26.

(6.) *Judge not* one another.—Rom. xiv. 13.

(7.) *Grudge not*, or murmur not, against one another.—Jas. v. 9.

May He, who has made all believers one in Christ Jesus, write with His own Spirit on our hearts these precepts, that we may show forth His praises, "giving diligence to keep this unity of the Spirit in the bond (or mutual-bond) of peace," remembering that "there is one body, and one Spirit, even as we are called in one hope of our calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in us all." H. G.

(This Article is issued as a New-year Booklet.
6d. per doz., post free).

WHAT IS MY COMMISSION?—Here are eight Royal commands of the King to His servants, is there *none* of them for *you*?—

- | | |
|---|-------------------|
| 1. Go and teach all nations, . . . | Matt. xxviii. 19. |
| 2. Go and preach the Gospel, . . . | Mark xvi. 15. |
| 3. Go to the lost sheep, . . . | Matt. x. 16. |
| 4. Go into the vineyard, . . . | Matt. xx. 4. |
| 5. Go into the highways, . . . | Matt. xxii. 9. |
| 6. Go into the streets and lanes, . . . | Luke xiv. 21. |
| 7. Go home to thy friends, . . . | Mark v. 19. |
| 8. Go and do likewise, . . . | Luke x. 37. |

ELEMENTARY ARTICLES, No. 5.

"MINISTERS," ANCIENT AND MODERN.

A CONTRAST.

"CLERGY" AND "LAITY."

BEFORE the "world" took the professing Church under its patronage, no such "caste" distinctions as "clergy" and "laity" were known. The word "clergy" comes from *cleeros*, signifying heritage (1 Peter v. 3), and is applicable to all believers. Those not of this *assumed priestly caste* are called "laity," from *laos*, "the common people," "the rabble." The thought of a "clergy" is a class of persons "having *officially* a right to leadership in spiritual things, a nearness to God derived from official place, not spiritual power." On account of this *official* place accorded to the clergyman, he is the only one in the congregation who is supposed to have authority to "administer the sacraments." The others are mere "laymen," and dare not undertake such priestly duties. What portion of Scripture speaks of two classes in the church of God called "clergy" and "laity"?* Where do we find mention of a class of men called "clergy" (distinguished by a special title) appointed to conduct the service and worship of God? Are not all God's children "priests" (1 Peter ii. 5-9)? Have all believers not a title to "draw near" to God and offer up spiritual sacrifices (Hebrews x. 22; Hebrews xiii. 15)? Dr. Stanley, Dean of Westminster, speaks thus in his "Christian Institutes" of the order of the "clergy." "In the first beginning of Christianity there was no such institution as the 'clergy'" (p. 193-6—New edition).

Is it not unscriptural to "give flattering titles unto men" (Job xxxii. 21), and especially a title that belongs to God alone? "Holy and REVEREND IS HIS NAME"

*The heading of the book of "Revelation" in many Bibles is as follows:—"The Revelation of St. John the Divine." Bible students know that the Greek heading is simply "The Revelation." Men speak of a class in the Church of God as "divines," but *all Christians* are "partakers of the Divine nature" (2 Peter i. 4). The floating straw indicates the current, and such distinctions show how Satan seeks to establish two classes in the Church of God—an upper and a lower class—the "clergy" and "laity"—common people and "divines."

(Psalm cxi. 9). When the "church" married the "world," priestly orders, robes, and vestments were established, and professed ministers of Christ so far forgot the spirit of this present dispensation as to set up an order of ecclesiastical nobility to have spiritual dominion over Christendom. Hence they have as the counterpart of His Majesty the King, His Holiness the Most Holy Father, His Grace the Duke, His Eminence the Cardinal, The Most Noble the Marquis, His Grace the Archbishop, The Right Honourable the Earl, The Right Reverend the Lord Bishop, The Right Honourable Viscount, The Very Reverend the Archdeacon, Barons and Baronets, Reverend Doctors and Reverends.*

"DON'T YOU BELIEVE IN 'MINISTERS'?"

We certainly believe in the Divine institution of the Christian ministry. Special "gifts" have been bestowed by the Lord Jesus Christ, the risen Head of the church. "And He gave some, apostles, prophets, pastors and teachers . . . till we all come in the unity of the faith" (Eph. iv. 11-13). We have not, however, been able to find in Scripture any traces of such a person as the modern minister of a church or congregation. On the contrary we find a plurality of "elders," "bishops," or "overseers" (see Acts xx. 17; Acts xiv. 23; 1 Peter v. 1). Whilst contending for a SPECIAL and DISTINCTIVE *ministry on the part of those who are gifted*, we also believe in a GENERAL *ministry in which all Christians have a place*. The Church of God is compared to

*C. H. Spurgeon in speaking of preachers taking the title of "reverend" remarks—"It is at any rate a suspicious circumstance, that among mankind no class of person should so commonly describe themselves by a pretentious title as the professed ministers of the lowly Jesus. Peter and Paul were 'right reverend' men, but they would have been the last to have called themselves so. A lad fresh from the college who has just been placed in the pulpit is called the 'Reverend Smith,' whilst his eminently godly father who has for fifty years walked with God has no claim for such reverence. We wonder where men first sought out this invention, and from whose original mind did the original sin emanate. We suspect he lived in the Roman Row of 'Vanity Fair,' though the 'Rev.' John Bunyan does not mention him. One thing is pretty certain, he did not flourish in the days of the 'Reverend Paul,' or 'Reverend Peter,' or 'Reverend Apollos,' or 'Reverend Cephas.'"

a human body, each member having its own functions to perform. "The eye cannot say to the hand, I have no need of thee" (1 Cor. xii. 21). "Now hath God set the members every one of them in the body, *as it hath pleased Him*" (verse 18). "Having then gifts *differing*" (Rom. xii. 6). Whilst there are different gifts, one is not to be magnified above another. If, however, one member of the body absorbs the functions of other members; "if one member be appointed by man to supply that which God has supplied through 'every joint,' and can only be conveyed to the edifying of the whole, 'according to the *effectual working in the measure of EVERY PART*' (Eph. iv. 16), is it any wonder that Christians should be starved, in bondage, in darkness, in division?" In Christian assemblies there ought to be liberty and scope afforded for the exercise of the "gifts" that Christ has bestowed. That such liberty has been given by the *Holy Spirit* is clearly evident from 1 Cor. xiv. 23-40. At the present day one person is to be found called "*the minister*," claiming to have exclusive right to instruct and exhort companies of professing Christians. The authority is obtained by virtue of his *official position* towards them. The "minister" is expected to have at least three distinct gifts, viz. :—those of the "evangelist," "pastor," and "teacher." Seldom, however, do we find all these possessed by any single person. A "minister" may be an "evangelist" and no "teacher," and is therefore unable to *build up*; or he may be a "teacher" and not an "evangelist," and *the bulk of his hearers be unconverted*.

Every believer is *responsible to the Lord* for the exercise of whatever *gift* he may have received. He does not require to wait for human authority or "license" to preach, teach, or exhort. "As every man hath received the gift, *even so minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God*" (1 Peter iv. 10, 11).

It may be objected that where there is liberty of ministry, incapable men, whom God has not qualified, will attempt to minister. *Failure on the part of those who seek to carry out God's principles can never alter or affect the principles*; and surely Scripture provides for all contingencies!

“CHOOSING” AND HIRING MINISTERS.

There is no Scripture for a church *choosing* its “minister” or clergyman, or in other words, the sheep choosing their shepherd. The Lord *gave* and the church *received*. A church (or assembly) has no right to “choose” which of God’s gifts it will accept. This was how sectarianism began at Corinth. Some preferred Paul, some Apollos, and others Peter. Not contented to receive *all the gifts*, they selected those whom they esteemed best; and, whilst, outwardly one, they were divided in heart. Some have, with singular boldness, contended that Christians have as much right to choose their “ministers” as they have to select their physicians or lawyers. Scripture gives no countenance to such a thought. Acts vi. is often quoted in support of the theory; but it is to be observed that “the seven” selected were not chosen to teach or preach, but to “serve tables.” Their functions were *temporal*, not *spiritual*. Surely there is a vast difference between taking charge of money and taking oversight of souls! It is not the case of one “elected” to minister the Word (the ministry of the Word and the serving of tables being contrasted, verse 2). Though the church chose them at the command of the apostles, they were set apart for their special service by the twelve. Believers are exhorted to “know” them that labour among them (1 Thess. v. 12, 13), to “salute,” “remember,” and “obey” them (Hebrews xiii. 7, 17, 24), but never to “elect,” “choose,” or “appoint” them. Servants of Christ should be known not by *official badges, titles, or clerical costumes, but by their work*. That there are God-gifted “teachers,” “evangelists,” and “pastors” in the various sects, we freely and frankly admit. They are so, however, not by virtue of human ordination or educational acquirements. A good tailor is known by the quality of the work done by him. In the same way are those known who are *Divinely called* “evangelists,” “pastors,” and “teachers.” And though colleges, presbyteries, synods, bishops, or conferences appoint men to offices, Christians are not bound to own such as *called of God* for the special service, unless they have the qualifications specified in Scripture (see 1 Thess. v. 12, 13; Heb. xiii. 17).

The custom of preachers hiring themselves to men for so much a year is most unscriptural and reprehensible. Buying, bargaining, and selling, in relation to ministry in the Church of God must be wrong. Think of the apostle Paul hiring himself to the Corinthians at a fixed salary! “The labourer is worthy of his hire.” “Hire” should be translated reward to be consistent with other passages. *Misthos* is the Greek word, “great is your reward (misthos) in heaven” (Matt. v. 12; Mark iv. 1). If a preacher is “hired” *by men*, he is *their servant*, and of course will look to his “masters” for his “pay.” If his preaching does not please his hearers (most of whom are unconverted) he will soon find out that it is advisable for him to obtain a “call” from some other congregation. It is blessedly true that God has ordained that “they who preach the Gospel should live of the Gospel” (1 Cor. ix. 14); and those whom the Lord has fitted, called, and sent forth to preach the Gospel will have their needs supplied without recourse being had to unscriptural means. Christ’s servants should look to the Lord alone to support them. If the “hire” were stopped, those who are merely “hirelings” would soon be weeded out. If, however, servants of Christ cannot trust Him to supply their need, let them seek some honest occupation by which they can earn their bread. A.M.

(Extract from “Wandering Lights.”)

AFFLICTION.

“MANY are the afflictions of the righteous”; and the query forces itself upon the mind, Why are they so many? It is not useless to search this out. In doing so, we find that affliction has many causes. It is very frequently just the natural result of our own doing. “As a man soweth, so shall he also reap: he that soweth to the flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption.” The Lord often permits His own people, as well as the unconverted, thus to eat of the fruit of their own way. But He also permits trouble to come, not so directly the *result* of wrong-doing, as in *punishment* for it, as in the case of David. Sometimes faults of character bring unpleasantness which is looked upon as grievous

affliction. If one exhibits irritability or peevishness, or anything else unchrist-like, he must not wonder if it provokes unkindness in return. This is not suffering for Christ's sake, or righteousness' sake, but is buffetting for one's faults.

Nor even in the work of the Lord can all affliction be put down as persecution, since it often springs from the use of some method devised out of the human heart, and not commanded by the Word of the Lord; or perhaps the opposition is provoked by a harshness of manner, without which the same truth spoken in love would have been acceptable.

That alone is suffering for Christ's sake which is produced by what Christ would have done, or by what He has commanded to be done. It is not possible otherwise to suffer as a Christian.

But there are times when no fault or mistake can be discovered as a reason for the trouble. Not even in His light can it be seen to have been deserved. The Lord Himself said to Satan, respecting Job:—"Thou movedst Me against him, to destroy him *without cause.*" When the Lord does not point out the reason in reply to our honest inquiry, we may quietly rest in Him that He is permitting it without *cause*, but not without *purpose*.

His chastening is not always chastising, any more than in human families education is always whipping. But in both the heavenly and earthly training there are some things not pleasant to the child, though not intended as punishment. But He is wise, and knows it to be for our profit. There are many traits of character pleasing to Him, which can only be developed by processes hard to be borne. But He has a Father's heart, and will not press one whit too heavily. Though He cause trouble, yet will He have compassion, and in all the trouble "there shall no evil touch thee." It is not evil, for our Father will permit no evil to touch His children. That it cannot come to us without His permission we must not doubt, for "who is he that saith and it cometh to pass when the Lord commandeth it not?"

These are some of the sources of the many afflictions of the righteous. May He help each to strike from the list in future those hitherto brought upon himself.

M. M. A.

HE IS COMING!

Tune—"Austrian Hymn." "Believers' Hymn Book," No. 81.

I.

He is coming, coming for us!
 Soon we'll see His beams, afar
 O'er the mountain summits rising;
 Like the bright and morning star
 Cheering many a wakeful watcher,
 Bearing light, whose kindly ray
 Heralds the approach of morning
 Just before the break of day.

II.

He is coming, coming for us!
 Soon we'll hear His voice on high;
 Dead and living shall be changed
 In the twinkling of an eye—
 Shall be caught up altogether,
 For that meeting in the air,
 With a shout from heaven descending
 Christ shall then Himself appear.

III.

He is coming! Oh, how solemn,
 When the Judge's voice is heard,
 As in His own light He shows us
 Every thought, and work, and word!
 Little words, all lightly spoken,
 He will tell us were but sin;
 Little acts we had forgotten,
 He will show us were for Him.

IV.

He is coming as the Bridegroom—
 Coming to unfold at last
 God's great secret of the future,
 Mystery of ages past.
 And the Bride—to her is given
 In His beauty now to shine,
 As in rapture she exclaimeth,
 "I am His, and He is mine."

V.

Yet again He cometh *with us*,
 Armies follow in His train;
 Many crowns His brow encircle,
 For He cometh now to reign.
 Oh, what joy to share his triumphs,
 On our lips to raise the words—
 "Glory be to Him that cometh,
 KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS!"

IMPROMPTU.

THE hurry and drive of mundane, time-life existence, in this nineteenth century of the Christian era, tends to extrude from the human mind every sentiment but the greed of wealth. In order to amass capital every device will be resorted to; all that is noble and true will be sacrificed. Only, alas! to consummate upon the threshold of eternity in the wail of the utter abandonment of disappointment: "Vanity of vanities; all is vanity."

With accelerating rapidity things are rushing on headlong to the climax, the crisis of modern civilisation, the intellectual and psychological evolution of the *genus homo*. It will ultimate in the unlimited license of luxurious self-indulgence (self-lovers, pleasure-lovers, money-lovers, see 2 Tim. iii. 1-5); in the unbridled exercise of self-will; in the high-mindedness of self-inflation; to be headed up and crowned in the blasphemous usurpation of the Anti-christ of 2 Thess. ii. 8-12, identical with Rev. xvii. 11-17. To such a culmination and catastrophe are things tending!

The occult forces of this final apostasy,—the three unclean spirits out of the mouth of the dragon, (Diabolus, or the Devil); out of the mouth of the beast, the eighth and last head of the Roman Empire, despotic, autocratic, the outcome of the precedent atheistic democracy; and out of the mouth of the false prophet, the personified head of the idolatrous ecclesiastical superstition, now reviving in Romanism and Anglicanism,—have already gone forth and are secretly and effectively accomplishing their mission (Rev. xvi. 13, 14). These spirits of demons are vivifying, gathering together, and compacting into one co-operative league, elements heretofore accounted incompatible and antagonistic; and this for the last supreme effort of the powers of the darkness to extinguish, once and for ever, the light; of Satan, to exclude God from His own creation, that Diabolus may be the one absolute sovereign of the human family, "the god of this world" (2 Cor. iv. 4).

All things, whether in politics or in matters social and ecclesiastical, are grading downward: that is, from God and the Word of His truth; from candour and uprightness, into so-called "advanced thought"; and self-deification,

self-interest, and self-exaltation are the motive-power, the impelling force of human action. The result, however, will be to demonstrate the truth of the Scripture dictum, "That which a man soweth, shall he also reap" (Gal. vi. 7).

Even the spiritually-minded of God's children are slow to grasp the situation, to come out from the Babel-confusion of this world's ways and doings, that, from the vantage ground of God's standpoint, they may survey the "wheel within wheel," the tortuous labyrinth of human action and design. They cling rather to the hope that things will mend, and anon, they venture the opinion that the world may be improving, becoming less hostile to God and to His Christ, and yielding somewhat more to the influence of Christian principle. The wish may be father to the thought, but the deepening darkness soon will dissipate the fond hallucination.

If we but reverently and prayerfully read God's Word, in the light of the present unfoldings of human society, and contemplate the various phases of the world as now developing, in the light of prophetic inspiration, we can arrive at no other conclusion than that the "last perilous times" have set in, soon to close the prophetic "Times of the Gentiles."

May the "sanctified in Christ Jesus" (1 Cor. i. 2) be kept "unspotted from the world" (Jas. i. 27), "looking for that blessed hope, the manifestation of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ" (Titus ii. 13). W. R. V.

WORSHIP.—We ought to worship God *whenever* He is present, and that is always, at all times. We ought to worship God *wherever* He is present, and that is everywhere, in all places. Whoever is in our company, we ought to keep more company with God than with them. Whatever we have to say to others, we ought to have more to say to God than to them.

WHITEFIELD once asked Tennant, a preacher, who was his friend, whether the thought that he might soon be called home gave him joy. Tennant replied: "I have no desire about it; my death does not concern me, my duty is to live as long as I can, as well as I can, and to serve my Master as faithfully as I can, until He calls me away."

WALKING IN THE TRUTH.

WE are not our own. We have been bought with a price—the precious blood of Christ; we are therefore not to live unto ourselves, but unto Him who died for us and rose again. We are to obey and glorify God, because we are His. He hath given us His holy Spirit. In the riches of His grace, He passed by us, saw us polluted in our blood, and said, “Live”; He looked upon us, spread His skirt over us and covered our nakedness, sware unto us, entered into covenant with us, thoroughly washed us, and we became His (Ez. xvi. 6, &c.). We are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus; but let us never forget, “unto good works.” Being now children of God, we should be “obedient children.” We are called into the fellowship of His Son Jesus Christ, to “walk as He walked.” We are born again of water and of the Spirit, that we should “walk in newness of life”—“walk in the Spirit.” “We are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people; that we should show forth the excellences of Him who hath called us out of darkness into His marvellous light.”

The great abuse that Israel of old made of the words and ordinances of God, was to retain the outward form, and seek their own comfort and ease, without obeying the voice of the Lord. The burden of the prophet’s testimony against Israel was their *disobedience*. Saul thought it was of little consequence not to slay all the Amalekites and their cattle; he saw no harm in retaining some sheep, a few oxen, and Agag their king; but it was very hateful to God, it was positive *disobedience* to His holy word, it was self-will, carnal policy, and was evil in the sight of the Lord. Hence the prophet exclaimed, “Hath the Lord as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the Lord? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams. For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry. Because thou hast rejected the word of the Lord, He hath also rejected thee from being king” (1 Sam. xv. 22, 23).

Again and again the prophet Jeremiah sounded in the ears of the people, “Ye have not obeyed My voice, saith the Lord” (Jer. iii. 13). “I spake not unto your fathers, nor commanded them in the day that I brought them out of the land of Egypt, concerning burnt offerings or sacrifices: but this thing I commanded them, saying, Obey my voice . . . but they hearkened not unto Me” (Jer. vii. 21-26). They obeyed the commandment of Jonadab, their father, but they “hearkened not unto Me,” saith the Lord (Jer. xxxv. 14). They walked after the imagination of their own hearts, but they obeyed not the Lord

(Jer. xxii. 21). Daniel, with chastened soul before God, acknowledged this sin, saying, “We obeyed not Thy voice” (Dan. ix. 14).

The prophet Zephaniah also charged Israel with not obeying the voice of God, not receiving correction, not trusting in the Lord, and not drawing near unto her God” (Zeph. iii. 2).

Talking about Jesus may be a sentiment: obeying His word must be a reality; the former may be connected with great profession, while the latter may be scarcely seen. Oh for more exercise of conscience before God, as to how we deal with the Holy Scriptures, which He hath given, to thoroughly furnish us unto all good works! (2 Tim. iii. 16).

Being not under the law, but under grace, obeying the word of our Lord Jesus Christ is surely our only becoming or happy position. Christ Himself is the perfection of obedience, and we have received His word and Spirit to follow His steps. Let us not deceive ourselves. God is not mocked. “Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap.” It was Christ’s delight to do the will of Him that sent Him, and He says, “Blessed are they that hear the word of God and keep it.” To be only hearers, and not doers of the word, is what our great enemy desires. It is an awful deception, for such think they have got blessing when they have not. It is like a man beholding his natural face in a glass and turning away again; he has beheld something, but has neither tasted, nor enjoyed, nor received any good. In keeping His commandments there is great reward; but let us beware of sentimentality, and of that knowledge which puffeth up. We are not to please ourselves, but to glorify God; not to follow men, but to follow Christ; not to obey human rules and systems, but to obey the word of God; not to walk after our own imaginations, but to walk in the truth. O wretched self-will, vile fancied wisdom, miserable unbelief that pretends to a better path than the leading of the Holy Ghost by the written word!

May God keep us abiding in Christ, walking in Christ, bearing faithfully “the testimony” of Christ, waiting for Christ, that we may walk worthy of Him who hath called us unto His kingdom and glory.

WHO hath the Father and the Son may be left, but not alone.

No man ought to flatter himself that he is in favour with God whose life is not consecrated to the service of God.

“HE goeth better that creepeth in his way, than he that runneth out of his way.”—AUGUSTINE.

Correspondence.

WOMEN'S MINISTRY.

To the Editor of *The Witness*.

THIS is not a question to be lightly settled by anyone, seeing some of the ablest teachers differ on the subject.

What I contend for is that God opened the mouth of woman in the assembly (the unmarried and widows) to *prophesy*, but *never to teach*.

You know the difference. A *teacher*, walking in the Spirit, may teach at *any time*, according to his own spiritual judgment. The prophet or prophetess can *only* do it as the Spirit gives them utterance. Thus, there *can be no official* authority in prophesying, as always must be in public teaching.

On the day of Pentecost, we read that the Holy Spirit came down on *all* assembled, and it sat upon *EACH ONE* of them, men and women (), and they *ALL* were filled, &c., and began to speak, &c., as the Spirit gave them utterance (the wonderful works of God). Peter says: "This is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel: Upon My *hand-maidens* will I pour out My Spirit, and they shall *PROPHESEY*."

If we had no other scripture, would not this settle absolutely the question, that God did open woman's mouth to prophesy in that blessed, earliest congregation of saints, who had just been baptised by one Spirit into *ONE BODY, the Church*?

Yes! *THEY* were governed in all things by the Head. Winds of doctrines and ideas had not yet mingled with the holy atmosphere of that upper room.

Now mark, they were all as a family (I question whether they were not in the very act of breaking the bread, as it was the Lord's-day; and we read that those who afterwards were converted continued in the apostle's doctrine, and *breaking of bread* and prayers, which had, therefore, been going on *previously*); all, I repeat, as a family, *SITTING*, praising God; but, when it is a matter of preaching the Gospel, Peter *RISES* up with the eleven. *NO woman* rises; and this is instruction.

Thus, is not the subject of the mouth of woman being opened by God at *times* to *prophesy* settled, and are not the four daughters of Philip some of the very *hand-maidens*, of whom Joel spoke, who prophesied as at Pentecost?

The requisition that they were *virgins* agreeing quite with the word: "Let the *wives* keep silence in the assemblies" (I Cor. xiv.). Not even may they ask a question, except of *their own HUSBANDS* at home. *Can* this scripture apply to virgins who have no husbands, and *might even* have no *male* relation, to ask at home?

You very rightly say: Could a woman be prohibited from teaching her husband in private, and with any consistency be permitted to harangue her own and other husbands in public? *Certainly not*.

I teach that *no married* woman ever had her mouth opened by GOD in the assembly, not even to prophesy; and I now further add, that neither married nor unmarried ever *taught as teachers* in public; neither, even, would I go as far as you to say that females may address classes of females, unless done in a very *private* and family way, on a small scale, from house to

house. I believe *public* work soon mars the female character; neither do I think it at all safe to argue from good said to be done, but only from the Word.

You remark that surely a woman may impart instruction to her husband in private. Certainly, or even as Priscilla did to Apollos. But whether she imparts this instruction to her husband or to Apollos, it is to be done by her in all subjection to the man, and *not to lord* it over him. This all-teaching women, who teach in public, whether classes of males and females mixed, or females only, are more and more tempted to do, violating nature and grace. Evidently, the teaching prohibited in I Tim. ii. 12 is that done in a *lording* way. Anyhow, if you insist that this is public teaching, be it so; yet this in no way affects the question of prophesying. The very fair question to ask is: As there are no prophets or prophetesses now, could man or woman to-day prophesy? Yes; but *NOT* to give any fresh revelation. Holy men and women to-day might earnestly desire the best gift of prophesying; that is, that the Holy Spirit should come on them in power and *give* them utterance of the word of prophecy, causing its meaning to be understood in the power of the spirit of prophecy, which is the testimony of Jesus (Rev. xix. 10). Alas! our habitual unbelief has quenched the Spirit, despising prophesying. Let us take John Gifford's glorious counsel to his flock: "Take nothing on trust from this or that man, but cry mightily to God to convince us of the reality, and by His Spirit through His Word *set us down* upon the Truth." M. T. B.

[Note.—We feel thankful that our editorial note has thus elicited more perfectly the views of our correspondent, M. T. B., on this subject. We are glad to find that he so fully agrees with us as to the public preaching and teaching of women. The question still at issue is as to the nature of the gift of prophecy. Whilst fully acknowledging the dependence of the teacher upon the instant power of the Holy Spirit—in order that His teaching may be divinely effectual—we nevertheless contend that no amount of spiritual power, intelligence, or unction, will ever transform "teaching" into "prophecy." They are two distinct and widely diverse operations of the Spirit of God. We utterly reject every species of claim, however modified, to prophetic gift as necessarily false, however sincere. It appears to us that if this be seen and admitted, the whole controversy is practically at an end. No scripture affords either precept or example for public preaching or teaching by women, whilst a multitude of scriptures indicate that men only are called to such service. When the gift of prophecy did exist in the Church, unmarried women are shown to have received this gift in some cases. The conditions under which the gift was exercised are not specially referred to except in this incidental allusion to the practice in the Corinthian Church. Even this cannot be regarded as a Divine sanction of the practice of the women prophesying in a public assembly seeing "silence" is thereafter enjoined. But the gift of prophecy having necessarily passed away with the completion of the Revelation of God for the dispensation, to which nothing may be added and from which nothing may be taken, we are left without one syllable to warrant the public ministrations of the Word by women, whether in preaching to the unsaved or in teaching the saints.—Ed.]

THE RELATION OF BELIEVERS IN ASSEMBLIES TO THE DENOMINATIONS.

THERE are some thoughts in connection with this important and perplexing question which I feel constrained to give expression to, in addition to what has already been said. I do not wish to find fault with, or criticise, what has already been written, but rather to supplement it, by looking at an aspect of the subject which has not been touched on.

In quoting portions from the Editor's note in the September *Witness*, it is not my purpose to pass a judgment on what he there said; but, in his note, he put the truth in such a clear, terse way, that I wish to take advantage of some of his expressions, to help me to lay what I have got to say more clearly before the reader.

As is well said in that paper, "In the Scriptures of the New Testament there is only one association, THE CHURCH." "All other associations have their origin in the mind of man." And, although devised by good men for good ends, they are "each and all a practical denial of the sufficiency of God's association, and proclaim that God's way is a failure." These are very sweeping statements, but I do not believe they go one whit beyond the truth; and what strikes me is, that there must be something sadly wrong, if gathered-out believers require to go outside of God's all-sufficient association in order to get their children or friends converted. Such a thing surely tells a humiliating tale as to the condition of assemblies which, in principle, are according to the Scripture pattern, and of the homes of those who are in these assemblies. And more; what must be the condition of associations founded after the Divine model, when our God has to go outside of these, and take up men inside associations which have no warrant in Scripture even for their existence, in order to carry out His eternal purposes in Christ Jesus our Lord?

I know the usual way to get over this question is to fall back on Divine sovereignty, and to say that God has a right to use whom He pleases. This appears to me to be evading the question in order to save our own consciences. On what God can do, or on what He has a right to do, it is not our business to speculate. Our duty is, to reverently inquire what is His way in carrying out His purposes. Well, so far as I understand Scripture, the LORD used His people, Israel, in carrying out His counsels in proportion as they were right with Himself. The principle laid down in 2 Chron. xv. 2, "The LORD is with you, while ye be with Him; and if ye seek Him, He will be found of you; but if ye forsake Him, He will forsake you," runs through the whole of Israel's history, from the shores of the Red Sea, until He took the sceptre from Israel and put it into the hand of a Gentile king. And if ever God did depart from His usual way, it was on account of the sin of those who ought to have known and done His will. It will not do for those whom God has called out, to witness to the sufficiency of His simple way, and to contend for a whole unadulterated Bible, to take shelter under the doctrine of Divine sovereignty, as if our God acted now in an arbitrary way, and not on the principles which characterised His dealings with His people in ages gone by. If the Lord is passing those by to whom

He has committed such a sacred trust, and using those who are in unscriptural associations to do His work, there is a solemn reason for it; and if our candlestick is not to be removed by Him in judgment, that reason must be sought for, found out, and confessed "in the sanctuary of God."

It would lead me into writing a paper of undue length to dwell on some of the causes which are helping to increase the confusion amongst the saints of God; but the root cause seems to lie in the lukewarmness, and Laodicean wretchedness and poverty of many assemblies which, in position, are according to Scripture. The pasture has become so barren that, as one has said, "many of the flock are tempted to jump the dyke in order to get a green pluck." Many of those who ought to be preaching the Gospel, and feeding the flock in the power of the Spirit, are sunk in worldliness, so that they have neither heart nor power for such work; whilst others have come to the front who were never called of the Lord, and by their want of fitness have brought the truth of God into reproach.

On the other hand, there has been, and there still is, on the part of many who desire honestly to keep strictly to the Divine pattern, a strong tendency to enforce the truth on less enlightened souls in a way that savours of "Romanism," and these dear souls feel as if their liberty of conscience was interfered with, and, of course, they resent it. Now, all this is deeply to be deplored, and ought to lead us to humiliation before our God. But, notwithstanding all these failures on all hands, we should never forget that man's failure in carrying out the truth of God *never makes it any less His truth*; and man's failure in maintaining God's perfect order in doing His work can never make *His way less binding on a believer's conscience*. Let us carefully avoid everything that would bring any child of God into bondage to man; but let us beware also, lest in protecting the sacredness of the believer's conscience, we are not leaving a loophole for the will of man to set aside the authority of the Lord Christ.

If the Lord has given a clear revelation of His will, and a Divine pattern of how He would have His work done, it surely cannot be bondage to man for those who are called to go before the flock to keep strictly to that pattern, and insist, in a gracious and godly way, that others should do the same.

While I have no desire to drive any fellow-saint into a path of separation beyond his light, I do feel it to be a very solemn thing for any of those who have been called out of the Babylonish confusion of the present day to witness unto the Lordship of Christ, to go back and sit at the feet of men whose "position" is a practical denial of that Lordship. And whilst deeply deploring the want of grace on the part of many of us who are seeking to "contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered unto the saints" (Jude iii.), yet I cannot help trembling lest, under the plea of exercising forbearance, we are allowing the foundations of "church position" to slip from under our feet. "If the foundations be destroyed, what can the righteous do?" (Ps. xi. 3).

If we had a clearer conception of the glory of the person of Christ, and a conscience that could not touch anything that robs Him of the pre-eminence which the Father has bestowed on Him, and had we a more

enlightened apprehension of how God values implicit obedience to His written Word, we would never be found tossed about as many are. Let us repair to Him who alone can supply ALL our need, and we will never need to go into unscriptural associations to get blessing to our own souls, nor blessing to those dear to us.

G. A.

THE LORD'S WORK IN ITALY.

EXTRACT FROM A LETTER FROM JOHN S. ANDERSON.

ROME.—A young Tuscan lodged with me. I believe he has been truly converted to-day. He is an artist, exceedingly clever. I prayed with him that he might dedicate to God his whole being. We read together Paul's letter to the Philippian saints, written from this city. It was much blessed to our souls. These apostolic letters should be read as *letters*. Few saints in these busy days and "difficult times" read these Divine messages from beginning to end. Meeting of believers on Lord's-day very edifying. There are several Protestant sects and "causes" in Rome. Sectarism is a sad sight, especially within view of the Vatican.

The few who meet to the Lord's name are united in the bonds of brotherly love, and the peace of God keeps their hearts in the midst of the abominations of the city on the seven hills. I gave an address to these saints last night on Levi's (Matthew's) feast, called "great" by Luke, not by Matthew himself. What "great" meekness.

I had occasion to visit the Vatican with my young artist friend. The papal soldiers were in full dress at the entrance to Leo XIII.'s "prison" of eleven thousand rooms—a "prison" Peter knew nothing of, nor Peter's Lord. O Babylon the "great"! How little thou knowest of Jerusalem, the *holy city*!

As we were retiring from the Vatican, we saw the Cardinal-Vicar pass. He is said to be Leo's successor, and is known to be an out-and-out Jesuit and an avowed foe of the Gospel. As he passed the papal soldiers he was saluted by them in full military form. What an anti-apostolic state of things, ever developing into more absolute apostasy.

Left for Naples by midnight train. One of the greatest trials to the flesh that I know of is to be "imprisoned" in a third-class carriage all night, in company with as many filthy Neapolitans and Calabrians as can be packed in the space. These poor people travel with large bundles, clothes, and other articles, more filthy than themselves; and they insist on having all their "goods" with them, so that every part of the compartment is literally packed, breathing is rendered more difficult, especially in traversing the *campagna*, when the night air has to be avoided.

I know only one brother in this fair city who is desirous of following the Lord fully according to His teaching, without the sanction of a human president or council. This brother is waiting upon God for direction, and we are praying that soon a few saints may meet together and witness for Him in worship and also in preaching the Gospel.

I met my companion, Brunelli, who has been here for a week, having come from Lecce to accompany me on

the way south. "Two and two." Brunelli was one of the *gendarmes* under the old government, and knows the south of Italy very well. He is a man full of faith, and zealous and jealous for God's truth and glory. In these pan-sectarian days we have few of these men, but the Lord can raise up others.

Brunelli and I left for Calabria by night train. At four o'clock in the morning we reached the solitary station of Grottole. The village is about four miles off, on a hill, and divided from the railway by the river Basante, a stream which, in summer, is dried up by the absence of rain for months. It was about five o'clock when we reached its banks, and the sun had just begun to dispel the utter darkness around, and we now saw our way better. The natives cross the stream on mules when the water is not too deep; but we could see no such appearance of help. Brunelli said he could not cross on foot, as he suffered from fever whenever he attempted such an undertaking, and he added: "Let us kneel and ask the Lord what to do." He prayed with true faith, and I also felt it to be a season of real communion with our ever present Lord. When we rose from our knees I prepared to do the work in faith in the Lord's strength, and at once took off my boots and bound a pair of cork soles to my feet to save them from immediate contact with the stony bed. I chose a shallow part of the stream and carried over our luggage, Bibles, &c. When I returned to carry over Brunelli, we saw three young Calabrians coming, one of whom speedily volunteered to relieve me from this really arduous task. As the Lord rewarded Abraham's faith, so He does in every case, providing His own means and accepting His people's faith.

The hill then presented another difficulty to our wearied bodies; so the Lord sent us a mule, on which I rode with all our luggage.

Our arrival caused great excitement. Strangers seldom, if ever, visit this "out-of-the-way" village, famous for brigandage thirty years ago. Our plan was to leave for another village six miles off, called Miglionies, and to return that evening; and, if possible, gather the people together to hear the Word of God. We got to Miglionies about two o'clock, and met an old ex-priest, a believer, with whom we had sweet and important conversation and prayer. When we returned to Grottole we were met by a Romish spy, who had watched our movements. He accosted us, and was eager to know our plans. In a short time, Brunelli, having gone round the village, returned and told me we must either leave at once or prepare for a public demonstration. We deemed it was wise to leave, and, by moonlight, we left that scene of priest-craft, offering a few tracts and Gospel portions to the people. No one who has not experienced it can tell what sorrow God's servants endure on such occasions. We were comforted, however, with the visit to Miglionies, and with the hope of again returning to Grottole. As with individual sinners, so with hardened towns, the Lord knocks and knocks again in His tender love. Oh! then, let us not be backward in taking His message, even if we have been opposed over and over again.

We got to the ancient city of Taranto, where we found a few saints needing patient and loving teaching. From Taranto we went to Brindisi. Here, also, we met with a few true believers. Brunelli has often

preached here, and has suffered much for the truth's sake in this province. We next visited Lecce, the present "home" of Brunelli.

We held meetings every evening. One evening, three ladies came to me and asked me to speak that evening on the sufferings of Christ for us. I had thought on another subject for that evening, but gladly spoke on that theme of themes which true anxious souls so desired to know more fully.

I believe two of them have been converted. The devil has been hard at work in the "heel" of Italy, but the Lord has greatly blessed Brunelli and me in our testimony for the truth. We visited several villages in the province, and have arranged, God willing, to hold a united three-days' conference for believers, in Lecce, in March. This will be the first such gathering in the south of Italy, and I ask much prayer for it. May you, fellow-saints in England, who periodically enjoy so great blessings at local conferences, not forget these scattered, lonely ones in the "heel" of Italy, whom we hope to see united soon, for worship and ministry of the Word. If the Lord permit, I shall return to this great, and ready, and open field early in March.

I left dear Brunelli to-day in Taranto, with tears of sorrow and joy. How I love that dear servant of the Lord.

My next visit was to the ancient city of Ancona. Here, two beloved saints, a true Aquila and Priscilla, recently come from Rome, received me in the Lord's name. They are hoping, that, by faithful testimony, they may be blessed in winning souls for Christ.

After three days sojourn in Ancona, I went to Bologna. One of the oldest meetings in Italy is that gathered to the Lord's name in this ancient city. The church here has passed through many trials, but still holds fast that which it has. A visit from an evangelist is a season of great joy to these fellow-saints, who, in the grace according to their gifts, edify one another and witness for the Lord.

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Questions and Answers.

Replies are invited to the following:—

Seeing "the time is short," and "the coming of the Lord draweth nigh," is it wrong for saints to neglect studies which would advance them in worldly position, and go and engage in Gospel work, the study of the Word, &c., &c.?

Should a child of God enlist or become a soldier?

How can we in our practice fulfil the passages of Scripture which speak of greetings, or salutations, with a holy kiss, or a kiss of love (1 Peter v. 14; 1 Cor. xvi. 20; 2 Cor. xiii. 12)?

Kindly explain what the baptism of the Holy Spirit means? and whether believers

have any scriptural authority to pray for such? Whether being filled with the Spirit comes gradually (as we overcome sin) or suddenly after much special prayer?

Does the teaching of the Word of God admit of the "breaking of bread" on any other occasion than the "first day of the week"?

In some places Christians in the assemblies, with the view of ministering to the Lord's servants, ask them are they in need. Is it scriptural, and should the Lord's servant answer them?

"THE OATH OF GOD."

QUESTION 335.—Please give the meaning of Heb. vi. 16—"For men verily swear by the greater; and an oath for confirmation is to them an end of all strife."

Ans. A.—This is one of those touching examples in which Scripture abounds of the wonderful grace of God, where He condescends to conform to, or avail Himself of, some custom general among men, so that He may reach their hearts, and afford instruction in a manner most readily understood. God understands us, and comes down to us. The Christian is enjoined not to swear, his "yea" or "nay" is sufficient, he owes all to Christ, and has nothing to pledge; but the Jew who lived under law, under a principle that said, "this do, and live" could "vow a vow unto the Lord," could "swear an oath to bind his soul," but he must keep it, or judgment from the Lord followed (1 Sam. xiv. 37). And, knowing this, men would accept the oath as final for confirmation. And God, in infinite grace, who could swear an oath (for He can do anything, there is no limit to His power) speaking to the Hebrews, that we might have "strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold on the hope set before us," tells us how He confirmed His counsel by an oath. He knew how we had learned to doubt from our intercourse with each other, and that where men are deeply interested the mere "word" is not enough. H. G. H.

Ans. B.—"For when God made promise (of the unconditional covenant) to Abraham, because He could swear by no (one) greater, He swore by Himself." For men verily swear by the greater—i.e., by one higher than themselves; and an oath for confirmation—i.e., to confirm an agreement or covenant is to them an end of all strife in the matter. It clenches all, and is considered irrevocable. So, in condescension to men's minds, God, willing to show unto the heirs of promise the immutability of His counsel, confirmed it (the covenant) by an oath; that by two immutable things (God's word and oath), in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation," &c. A. O. M.

Ans. C.—An oath amongst men was a solemn appeal to a superior being—usually God—in token of the good faith of the person making a statement or a promise, and it was accepted as final in disputes and

binding in covenants. See Ex. xxii. 2; Gen. xxi. 23, 24; xxxi. 53.

When God would solemnly confirm His promise to Abraham, He graciously condescended to seal it with an oath, but, having no superior being to appeal to, He swore by Himself.—Gen. xxii. 16. R. L. P.

THE CHRISTIAN'S RELATION TO PUBLIC SUBSCRIPTIONS.

QUESTION 336.—**Are we who are gathered out to the Lord, and who profess, for His name's sake, to take nothing of the Gentiles, or help them in their schemes, free to benefit by a public subscription in case of an accident, in the same way as the ungodly do?**

Ans. A.—Those mentioned in 3 John 7, are evidently evangelists and teachers, who travelled about the country holding forth the Word of Life, or building up believers. They, walking in the same spirit as Paul, Titus, and others (2 Cor. xii. 18), made it a rule to accept no support from the unsaved among whom they laboured, that the free and disinterested character of the Gospel might be apparent; and that they might cut off occasion from those who desired occasion (2 Cor. xi. 12), that none might be able to reproach them with preaching for gain. But is there not a difference between those thus travelling and labouring, and the ordinary Christian pursuing the ordinary avocations of life? When an accident occurs at a public work, whereby some workmen are injured, it is, in many places, customary for their fellow-workmen to raise a subscription among themselves for the benefit of the sufferers and their families, thus expressing, in a practical manner, their sympathy and kindly feeling. For a Christian to refuse to contribute according to his ability, would surely be a violation of the command, "As we have opportunity let us do good unto all." There is no *yoking* together in this. It is the same as when saved and unsaved, in a lawful manner, strive together in serving their earthly masters, or when Christians unite with unsaved people in assisting fellow-creatures in distress or danger. Surely the Christian should not be outdone by the people of the world in the common kindnesses of life! Then, should it fall to the lot of the Christian to be laid aside by accident, and his fellow-workmen make a subscription for him, might he not accept it as from the Lord, who has the hearts of all at His disposal, whose is "the earth and the fulness thereof," receiving it with thanksgiving through whomsoever it may come? When Paul, the prisoner, and those who sailed with him were shipwrecked and cast on Melita, the inspired historian records, with evident approval, the fact that "the barbarous people showed us no little kindness." They knew nothing about the Gospel, therefore could have had no thought of furthering the Lord's work; they only saw in Paul and his companions fellow-men in distress, and, as such, ministered to them, and in a thankful spirit these ministrations were accepted by those holy men of God. They were then in the condition of Christians having met with an "accident" in common with others. Had they come to Melita in an ordinary way, to plant the standard of the cross as

ambassadors of Christ, and proffered their help in furtherance of "the cause," then the case would have been different. There, as elsewhere, they, *in that capacity*, would have taken nothing from the Gentiles. May there not be a guiding principle in this record, teaching us that in the everyday intercourse which we must have with the unsaved, there is, in certain circumstances, perfect liberty both to do good and to receive? A. W. P. S.

Note.—Abraham's refusal to accept the offer of the King of Sodom may occur to some as against the teaching given above; but the difference of the circumstances brings a totally different principle into operation. Abraham was in no condition of extremity or necessity; he was rather like Paul, when he said, "I have all and abound," than like Paul the shipwrecked and destitute exile.—ED.

ANSWERING WITH FEAR.

QUESTION 337.—**1 Peter iii. 15—"Be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear." Why with fear?**

Ans.—"With fear" means, with that due "*reverence*," as opposed to carnal boldness and presumption, which becomes the Christian. "The fear of the Lord" should ever temper our words and ways, so that we appear not wise in fleshly wisdom, nor strong in merely human strength. A. O. M.

Note.—There is immense difference between the "fear" that "hath torment" and that filial "fear of the Lord," which is "the beginning of wisdom."

"God has not given us the spirit of bondage again to fear," but He has given us the spirit "of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord" (Is. xi. 2).

"I sought the Lord, and He heard me, and delivered me from all my fears" (Ps. xxxiv. 4). "O fear the Lord, ye His saints" (verse 9).

The confession of Christ and testimony as to the privileges and hope of the believer is, in these days, too often accompanied by a light, flippant, irreverent, and self-sufficient demeanour that ill becomes the subjects of such grace, and sadly stumbles many who would, at least, respect a testimony born with "meekness and fear."—ED.

QUESTION 338.—**What are we to understand by the word "worlds" in Heb. i. 2?**

Ans.—The word "worlds" here is literally "the ages," or "dispensations" of time—not material worlds. The truth taught seems to be—that by Jesus Christ, His Son, God made all things connected with this earth—in reference to the display of His purpose of glory connected therewith. See Col. i. 15-18; John i. 1-3. A. O. M.

Note.—Whilst we fully confirm the foregoing reply, let it not be supposed that the great truth, all things, visible and invisible, having been created by or through Christ Jesus, is in any way affected thereby. This is clearly taught in Col. i. 16, Eph. iii. 9, and elsewhere.

—ED.

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